THE CITY, VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL AGENCY IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN FILM AND LITERATURE

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And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere / elsewhere.

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Introduction

In his Nobel address, Gabriel Garcia Marquez draws upon and emphasizes the "madness" (García Márquez, 1982) that has been an inseparable part of the way violence in Latin America has been represented and understood. The violence and turmoil that accompanied the shaping of nationhood in Latin America, when viewed from a Western perspective appeared horrific and magical both in nature and proportion. The nature of the representation of Latin America has been such that in the words of García Marquez, Europeans have received it as "the unearthly tidings of Latin America, that boundless realm of haunted men and historic women, whose unending obstinacy blurs into legend" (García Márquez, 1982).

The representation of Latin American reality has been shaped by the decontextualized appropriation of aspects of that reality which has been accompanied by a discourse that emerged out of the colonial encounter—the rhetoric of civilization against barbarism. The violent laying of claim on the part of European powers over the land, natural resources, and the people inhabiting these newly discovered territories was framed within a discourse of civilizing the forces of barbarism, a civilizing mission that Europe saw itself as undertaking. The use of violence on the part of Europe was thus rendered legitimate within the discourse of civilization against barbarism, the colonial encounter framing the actions of the European forces taking over the new territories as representing Christianity brought by the conquistadors against the 'Devil worshipping' indigenous population. (Taussig, 1980) However, through accounts such as that of Bartolomé de Las Casas (Casas, 1552), a counternarrative was created that ruptured the narrative of the colonial powers from a very early stage in the history of Latin America.

Colonial rule ended in Latin America within the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Towards the end of the century, the emergence of Latin American nations as modern nation states can be witnessed with the project of modernization and the rhetoric of "order and

progress" driving state policies and developmental efforts. (Howard, Hume, & Ulrich, 2007) As Latin American nations tried to model their urban centers based on centers of urban modernity in the global North, policies designed to change the racial demography of the countries were also undertaken as part of efforts to bring about to fruition an idea of modernity that was associated with the European reality. (Castro-Gómez, 2007) (Zimmermann, 1992)

In terms of representation of this projected reality of a modern nation, cinema was appropriated at a very early stage in its presence in Latin America. News reels or *actualidades* routinely depicted cities across Latin America in terms of their modern architecture emphasizing aspects that made it appear similar to the centers of modernity of the global North. (Guerstein, 2004) (Navitski, 2014) The Mexican Revolution ruptured this monopoly on the image of modernity as captured through cinema in the Mexican context. (López, 2000) In the early decades of the twentieth century, Latin American film industries developed in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. Cinematic forms such as the *comedia rancheras* in Mexico, the *chanchadas* in Brazil or the musical melodramas drawing on tangos in Argentina became the popular forms of Latin American cinema.

Hollywood films of the 1930s and 40s would use Latin American centres as the backdrop to a number of films, particularly in mind to exploiting the Latin American market. Hollywood turned to Latin America as an exotic locale that could be used as background for their stories. It was also part of the "Good neighbor policy" that was adopted during the Second World War when Latin American countries were important allies for the United States and hence it was considered necessary to disseminate a greater "understanding" of their "southern neighbors". (USWPA, 1935) Such films depicted the Latin American urban spaces as a hub of criminal activities and a paradise for the Mafioso. Cities such as Havana, Mexico City, or Rio de Janeiro were viewed largely as spaces characterized by an exotic mix of seedy nightclubs, gambling dens, and brothels. The countryside was treated similar to the wild west in Hollywood westerns

where the indigenous population was viewed in terms of the Other, bandits and savages who posed a constant threat to the protagonists who are the representatives of civilisation.

The exception to this perspective of the Latin American reality can be found in the films made in Mexico by Luis Buñuel. The film *Los Olvidados*/*The Young and the Damned* (1950) set in Mexico City for instance portrays a subterranean aspect of the reality that was part of this developing urban centre and attempts to reflect a violent world that is created out of poverty and underdevelopment. As Octavio Paz notes, the film depicted an aspect of the Latin American modernity that had been repressed by the juggernaut of the progress of civilisation and development. Five years after the release of the film, Paz wrote,

> Esos filmes son algo más que un ataque feroz a la llamada realidad; son la revelación de otra realidad humillada por la civilización contemporánea…. *Los olvidados* es algo más que un filme realista. El sueño, el deseo, el horror, el delirio y el azar, la porción nocturna de la vida también tienen su parte. Y el peso de la realidad que nos muestra es de tal modo atroz, que acaba por parecernos imposible, insoportable.
> Y así es: la realidad es insoportable; y por eso, porque no la soporta, el hombre mata y muere, ama y crea.[1] (Paz, 2016)

Buñuel's films had a profound influence on subsequent generations of Latin American film makers in their attention towards those aspects of reality that are forgotten in official accounts and records. Together with Buñuel, the writings of Juan Rulfo also proved to be extremely influential for filmmakers. Russek states, "Rulfo's narrative technique constructs a story full of empty spaces, and the lives of the main protagonists revolve around a central void which becomes impossible to repair. The crevice, the gap and the hollow space are a set of images through which critics describe the dominant structures of Rulfo's world." (Russek, 2008, p. 24)

[1] Trans: "These films are something more than a fierce attack on that which is called reality; they are the revelation of another reality humiliated by our contemporary civilisation…. *The Young and the Damned* is something more than a realistic film. The dreams, the desire, the horror, the delirium and the randomness, the nocturnal portion of life also have their part. And the weight of the reality that it depicts is of such an awful nature that it ends in appearing to us as impossible, unbearable.
And so it is: the reality is unbearable; and for this, because he cannot bear it, man kills and dies, loves and creates."

Rulfo's writings portrayed the plight of those sections of the society that were forgotten in the nation building project by the Mexican state, post-Revolution, and a world of violence and melancholia that was only exacerbated by the Revolution. What makes Buñuel or Rulfo's depiction of aspects of the Latin American modernity significant is the rejection of the narrative of urbanisation and modernity as development and progress. This was a perspective that grew in strength through the works of the writers and filmmakers who emerged in the 1950s and 1960s.

Latin American cinema found an original and unique voice in the 1960s with the emergence of the New Latin American cinema. In his inaugural address to the 1967 Latin American film festival held at Viña del Mar, Chile, Miguel Littin would declare,

> Desde el mar Caribe al Pacífico y al Atlántico, desde la selva tropical hasta la Cordillera de los Andes, una voz subterránea y mineral recorría el Continente, removiendo sus entrañas, reconociendo a sus diversas resonancias la identidad común, cuestionando los valores establecidos por el régimen neocolonial, buscando incesantemente proyectar los principios de una nueva filosofía que surgía, dando una respuesta entusiasta a una civilización desgastada por el escepticismo.[2] (Littin, 1990)

A cinema committed to a philosophical treatment of the reality of Latin America, the poverty, the malnourishment, the exploitation and the violence, the New Latin American cinema emerged in response to the dominance of Hollywood within the Latin American film market following the end of the Second World War as well as the development of the European auteur cinema as manifested in the French New Wave and the idea of the *caméra-stylo* ('camera-pen'), a term coined by Andre Bazin, where the role of the filmmaker is "seen more as a creative writer than camera technician" (Hart, 2015, p. 32). The conflicts and contradictions within

[2] Trans: "From the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific and the Atlantic, from the tropical jungle to the Andes Mountains, a subterranean and mineral voice has traveled the Continent, stirring its entrails, recognizing the common identity in its various resonances, questioning the values established by the neocolonial regime, incessantly seeking to project the principles of a new emerging philosophy, giving an enthusiastic response to a civilization worn out by skepticism."

Latin American modernity was presented through structural analyses in the cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. While in no way homogenous in terms of style, the aim of the filmmakers who were part of this movement is what gave them common ground. The commonality was in the structures of exploitation and violence that were an intrinsic part of the social reality which the films wished to lay bare. The sentiment is echoed in the statement, "Macondo, as a town, doesn't exist because it exists everywhere. It is a part of the consciousness of South America." (Drieske, 1986) The films of this period saw violence within a framework of a revolutionary optimism with film being viewed as a tool in political and social change. Violence was represented within the framework of class struggle. This was a perspective that was greatly influenced by Frantz Fanon's articulations on violence within a context of colonial or neocolonial forms of repression and exploitation. As Idelbar Avelar states,

> For Fanon, colonial violence is the name of that particular manifestation that makes us see the true universality of the concept. In colonial situations the system and its victims agree that violence is absolutely inevitable and necessary. The system knows it must deploy it daily and implacably just to sustain itself. The oppressed know that no liberation will be given to them for free, that they will need to fight for it with all their weapons. In the colonial world we understand that violence is ubiquitous. In its extremely atrocious nature, colonialism makes us see that violence not only happens in the colonial world. (Avelar, 2004, p. 7)

The New Latin American Cinema viewed itself as an extension of the socio-political movements that were taking place in the 1950s and 1960s across Latin America demanding greater social democracy. The films therefore focused on the structures of violence that framed Latin American modernity and the project of development. The influence of the Italian neo-Realist school of filmmaking had a significant influence on the filmmakers of this period. Filmmakers such as Fernando Birri from Argentina and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa from Cuba trained at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia at Rome and their

films stylistically played a major role in influencing and shaping the direction taken by New Latin American cinema as a movement.

While the films being made in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s used a more documentary approach in terms of cinematic representation, towards the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s, one finds a mode of creative articulation that is more inspired by "magic realism" as a mode of representation of Latin American reality. (Chakravarty, 2001) The 1970s also witnessed an escalation in terms of state repression across Latin America with operations such as the Operation Condor and military dictatorships that attempted to physically eradicate the movements demanding greater social democracy across the geo-political region. The very nature of the excess of state sponsored terrorism that shaped the lives of citizens during this period had an impact on the nature of films being made. The films made by the Argentine filmmaker, Fernando Solanas, for instance, on exile, a society reeling from the consequences of the brutalities practiced by an authoritarian regime and the economic exploitation that it carried out or made legitimate find expression in films such as *El Exilio de Gardel/The Exile of Gardel* (1985), *Sur/South* (1988) and *El Viaje/The Journey* (1992).

The 1990s saw the emergence of a cinema in Latin America that showed Latin American society, particularly the urban society, as being caught in a dystopic world of senseless violence. Christian León points out, in the 90s a style of filmmaking emerged which he terms as "dirty realism" where urban reality was depicted in terms of the marginal figures who were presented as part of a disenchanted fragmented world that was framed by a dystopic view of the existence on the streets at the margins of urban modernity. The characters in these films appear to be caught in a relentlessly violent world where there is no possibility of escape. These marginal figures in these films are denied the very possibility of becoming conscious of their oppression or of becoming agents of social change. (León, 2007)

The Latin American cinema emerging in the 1990s was referred to as the New New Latin American Cinema and films such as *Pizza, birra, faso/Pizza, Beer and Fags* (Argentina, 1997), *La virgen de los sicarios/ Our Lady of the Assassins* (Colombia, 1999), *Amores Perros/Love's a Bitch* (Mexico, 2000) or *Cidade de Deus/City of God* (Brazil, 2002) can be regarded as examples showcasing the new kind of representation of violence. According to Paul A. Schroeder Rodríguez (Rodríguez, 2012), the aesthetic style of filmmaking in the 1990s was drew upon a wide range of cinematic influences. He draws connections between auteur cinema and Lucrecia Martel's *La ciénaga/The Swamp* (Argentina,2001), neorealism and Pablo Trapero's *Mundo Grúa/Crane World* (Argentina, 1999) or Adrián Caetano's *Bolivia* (Argentina, 2001), militant NLAC and Alfonso Cuarón's *¡Y tu mamá también!/And Your Mom Too!* (Mexico, 2001), and neobaroque NLAC and Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores perros/Love's a Bitch* (Mexico, 2000). (Rodríguez, 2012) However, the cinematic style was not informed by the ideological framework that had informed the styles originally. The appropriation was a decontextualised one where the aesthetic style is used without being informed by the historical development of the particular cinematic movement that had led to its creation. In the words of Ivana Bentes writing on *City of Gods*, this marked a shift from what Glauber Rocha and Cinema Novo had conceived of as the "aesthetics of hunger" to what she describes as "cosmetics of hunger". (Bentes, 2001)

The 1990s saw drastic reductions in state aid for film companies in countries such as Brazil and Mexico. The role of the state in supporting a national cinema culture was a model that had received renewed impetus through the example of the post-revolutionary Cuban cinema and institutions such as Embrafilme (Empresa Brasileira de Filmes), IMCINE (Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía) and INC (Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía) had provided vital support to the filmmakers. The 90s witnessed the end of the Soviet era and the strengthening of the influence of neoliberal power in the region led. The dominance of neoliberalism as determining

state policies led to a socio-political situation wherein the radical political ideology of the Third cinema movement lost significance to a certain extent. As the role of the state in funding cinematic production ceased or was reduced in strength and significance, private sources of funding emerged with the growing realization of the profit-making capacities of the film industry. Trans-national co-productions emerged as a platform for many Latin American filmmakers. These changes inevitably had an impact on the kind of films that began to emerge post-1990. Globalization and the political changes and transitions that took place in Latin America in the 1980s and 90s, affected society as a whole and the kind of films that were being made.

Aim of Research

The object of this study was prompted by an attitude among filmmakers as well as film critics who see the New New Latin American Cinema as wholly separate from the New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. (Bentes, 2001) (Quintín, 2002) (Cuarón, 2006) (Monsiváis, 2006) (León, 2007) This research attempts to understand the changes that can be observed in Latin American cinema from the 1990s onwards within a historical, socio-political and aesthetic context.

While this research work tries to identify certain patterns emerging in Latin American cinema since the 1990s, a similar treatment of literary production has not been undertaken. Literature, in this study, has aided in the understanding of the socio-cultural discourses that frame cinematic explorations and is part of the context within which the study has been done.

The purpose of this study is to understand contemporary Latin American cinema in terms of the representation of violence framed by the experience of the urban space and whether such a representation holds implications in terms of viewing the subject as a political actor. The ways in which violence features within the framework of urban modernity is a subject that finds

expression in both the films emerging from the New Latin American Cinema as well as the films being made post-1990. Paul Brass states, the power of defining incidents of violence, "to define and interpret local incidents of violence, to place them in specific contexts based on local knowledge, has been removed from the local societies in which they occur." (Brass, 1996, p. 1) He goes on to explain that the authorities make use of pre-conceived frameworks of interpreting incidents of violence which leads to an "…"official" interpretation that finally becomes universally accepted, but which is often, if not usually, very far removed, often unrecognizable, from the original precipitating events." (Brass, 1996, p. 15) Films representing violence in the urban context act as interventions in the dominant forms of narrativizing and structuring of this violence as expressed through the discourse of the state or the media. Cinema like literature can strengthen or rupture the power that the state or the media hold in shaping social and political thought and the perception of quotidian violence.

Methodological Approach

This research is based on secondary literature within the realm of Latin American socio-cultural studies. The study draws on largely two groups within this body of literature. This study has been informed by anthropological findings on Latin American culture and society. Together with that, the study has also referred to socio-cultural and literary studies from the discourse of Latin American cultural studies. While the research is largely based on secondary readings, it has also greatly benefitted from a brief fieldwork in Mexico in 2015 which provided the opportunity to interact with contemporary filmmakers and artists living and working in Mexico. The interviews with filmmakers such as Rodrigo Plá, Gerardo Tort, Marina Stavenhagen, Artemio Narro and Melissa Elizondo were fundamental to structuring the perspective put forth in this study on the relation between the state and the citizen, marginality and development, modernity and the indigenous subject.

This research attempts an understanding of the cinematic developments through analyses of films representative of certain patterns of cinematic experimentation that have emerged post-1990s. The film analyses draw upon larger socio-political discourses around urban violence in Latin America.

This focus in this study is largely on the cinema of Mexico, Argentina and Brazil with reference to films being made in Bolivia, Guatemala and Paraguay. This is mainly because Mexico, Argentina and Brazil are the producers of the highest number of films annually in Latin America. Cuba, one of the significant film producing countries in Latin America, has been left out from this study. In this case, following the changes that have shaped Cuban society since the success of the Cuban revolution, it is difficult to bring forth an assessment of the nature of urbanisation and urban experience in Cuba without extensive field work. Also, the very nature of social structuring and urban life in Cuba are markedly different from the rest of Latin America and therefore requires a different framework of interpretation.

It has to be noted this study is based on mostly secondary material, government and news reports and a very small case study in Mexico City. This study does not provide nor work with primary material. Also, the study does not engage in conventional literary textual study. The literary work has mostly been used as points of reference or departures in terms of contextual understanding. The study also does not engage in elaborate textual analysis of the films. Rather the films have been studied from the point of view of novelty of approaches in terms of cinematic articulation of (urban) space and time and analysed at a discursive level.

Chapter Division

The study is divided into four chapters followed by a conclusion. The first chapter provides an outline of the theoretical framework within which the cinematic development has been studied. The first section of this chapter provides an outline of the way in which violence has been

understood in Latin America as part of a project of progress and development. The evolution of the discursive framework of civilisation and barbarism that emerged out of the colonial encounter and the responses it drew over time from Latin American socio-cultural theory and artistic movements has been referred to from the perspective of how it has shaped the understanding of violence. The next section attempts to give an overview of the way the urban space has been conceived from the colonial period to the significance it holds within the project of Latin American modernity. Here the rise of categories employed by the state to render certain sections of the population as being "alien to modernity" (Franco, 2013) is discussed within a historical framework and tied to the understanding of marginality within the Latin American urban space. This section also lays the foundation to understanding how violence, both direct and structural, perpetrated against sections of the national population is rendered invisible. Finally, this chapter traces the concern over representation that has dogged Latin American aesthetic and cultural discourse, specifically with regards to violence as part of Latin American reality. This section focuses on the evolution of a distinct Latin American aesthetic framework for understanding and representing violence and the socio-cultural influences it draws upon.

The second chapter of this dissertation begins with an overview of the images of urban violence in cinema from the early cinema to the New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s culminating in the projection of the urban space and urban violence encountered in the post-1990 Latin American cinema. This is followed by a study of the significant ways in which critics and filmmakers have analysed and defined the cinema post-1990 with specific reference to the (limitations within) representation of violence in the urban space. Following this, the chapter attempts to point out a body of films emerging from the mid-2000s onwards in Latin America that provide an alternate view of urban violence. Building on the concept of urban fragmentation and the fragmented perception of urban life, these are films that focus on what can be termed as the "Architecture of fear" (Gardenberg, 2008). The films discussed in this

section represent a particular turn in the cinematic treatment of urban violence and the urban space. The final section in this chapter analyses the significance of the gated community as a form of urban development and implications it bears in terms of the urban experience of violence.

The third chapter deals with the development of the idea of the citizen within the context of modernity in Latin America. This is studied within the context of the concern of the state as well as the ideologues of modernity in Latin America in terms of conceiving a notion of a citizenship most amenable to the project of modernity. This is followed by a charting out of the ways in which the state has marked out certain sections of the population as being "alien to modernity" (Franco, 2013) in Latin America and tries to locate the development of such a perception within a larger historical context. This is followed by the idea of urban marginality in terms of space and the way urban spatial development in Latin America has been shaped by the conflict between the state driven planning and development and the grassroot movements that have attempted to lay their claim on the city. This chapter culminates in a discussion of the cinematic treatment of urban violence in terms of marginality that is encountered in what has been termed as "Cinema of Marginality" (León, 2007). Finally, through the analyses of certain films and artistic endeavours emerging out of marginalised communities within the urban space in Latin America, a study is done of alternate visions of marginality.

The fourth chapter builds on the idea of the "public secret" (Taussig, 1999) as defined by Michael Taussig that frames the way certain forms of violence are rendered invisible within the modern nation state. This chapter dwells on the ways in which the "public secret" and the power it holds through its unarticulated status can be ruptured. The chapter begins with the role the Truth Commissions have played in historicising the violence perpetrated by authoritarian regimes and the problems that are encountered in this process. A study of the socio-political contexts within which the Truth Commissions were formed aid in this assessment. Following

this, a study of public monuments and murals is undertaken in order to further delve into the ways in which past traumas can be interpreted and historicised. This chapter studies the problematic nature of memory formation and how this gives rise to diverse forms of literary and artistic articulations of the memory of collective trauma. Finally, this chapter engages with a study of cinematic treatment of the memory of state repression and state-sponsored violence through analyses of selected films on this subject.

This study attempts to understand the ways in which Latin American cinema has responded to the changes in urban reality and experience of violence within the urban context since the 1990s. This work tries to locate the cinematic explorations within a larger historical trajectory of the development of Latin American cinema within the discourse of modernity in Latin America. The study tries to explore the shifts in the expression of political agency that the cinema attempts to capture. In the process, an attempt has been made to explore the question of the very possibility of the articulation of experiences of violence that have been structurally and historically rendered invisible within dominant and official discourse.

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Chapter 1

Violence, City, and the Political subject

1.1 Violence and the Latin American Subject

The discourse emerging out of and framing Latin American modernity is built upon the discourse revolving around civilization and barbarism as evolved through the colonial experience in this geopolitical region. Within that discourse, violence has played a significant role. Early writings that have pointed out the violence inherent in the colonial experience in Latin America include the *Brief Report on the Destruction of the Indies/La Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias: Análisis histórico y biográfico de lo sucedido en la conquista española* (1552) by Bartolomé de las Casas (Casas, 1552). This work presented an account of the treatment of the indigenous populations by the Spanish in areas such as Española and New Spain (Mexico) with a faithful narration of the violence inflicted on the native population through massacres and slavery in the early period of European presence in the region.

One of the significant individuals who played a foundational role in the constitution of Latin America as a geopolitical identity, Simon Bolivar, in his address delivered before the Congress of Angostura, 1819, describes the Latin Americans thus:

> Let us bear in mind that our people are not European, nor North American, but are closer to a blend of Africa and America than an emanation from Europe, for even Spain herself lacks European identity because of her African blood, her institutions, and her character. It is impossible to say with certainty to which human family we belong. **Most of the indigenous peoples have been annihilated.** The European has mixed with the American and the African, and the African has mixed with the Indian and with the European. All born in the womb of our common mother, our fathers, different in origin and blood, are foreigners, and all differ visibly in the color of their skin; this difference implies a bond and obligation of the greatest transcendence. (Bolívar, 2003, pp. 38-39)

Bolívar's statement on the racial character of the Latin American peoples lays out the annihilation of the indigenous peoples of this land as being a significant historical fact that has determined the nature of the genesis of Latin America. Furthermore, he points towards the necessity for creating a Latin American identity that transcends racial frames of identity formation.

Simultaneous to the brutal genocide of the indigenous populations across the region of Latin America as recorded by Bartolomé de las Casas, developed the discourse of the violent barbaric savage who must be civilized or annihilated in order for civilization to take hold in the New World. Cuban intellectual Roberto Fernández Retamar in his 'Caliban: Notes towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America' (Retamar, Garafola, McMurray, & Márquez, 1974), examines the nature of the colonial project of civilizing the colonized subject. Retamar writes of the image of the savage inhabitants of the lands newly "discovered" by Europe that was popularized in European accounts of the New World, referring to the description of the Caribs, a people described in the accounts of Christopher Columbus as vicious savages who practice cannibalism. Retamar writes:

> **It is a question of the typically degraded vision offered by the colonizer of the man he is colonizing.** That we ourselves may have at one time believed in this version only proves to what extent we are infected with the ideology of the enemy…. **The colonizer's version explains to us that owing to his irremediable bestiality, there was no alternative to the extermination of the Carib.** What it does not explain is why, even before the Carib, the peaceful and kindly Arauaco was also exterminated. (Retamar, Garafola, McMurray, & Márquez, 1974, pp. 13-14)

Retamar's examination of the Western bourgeois conceptualization of the colonized subject in the Latin Americas further points out the way in which violence framed the discourse on "civilization" and the "civilizing" project undertaken by European powers in these newly occupied territories.

The framework of understanding violence as used in this study is formed largely based on how Latin American social studies have understood the relationship between state power and the experience of quotidian violence. The study attempts to understand how this framework has evolved historically. The impact of the Euro-centric understanding of state power as domination with a necessity of the state to have "the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a certain territory" (Weber, 1994, pp. 310-311) can be seen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the way the countries across Latin America attempt to build legitimacy and establish themselves as modern nation-states. However, this model is ruptured and it becomes difficult for such a form of state formation in the case of countries in this region. As Miguel Angel Centeno points out, "the control of violence is not enough if those on whom it is imposed do not believe in its inherent "rightness"." (Angel Centeno, 2013, p. 17)

In the Latin American context, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is a period when the modern nation-state is attempting to form and establish itself along the models of modernity drawn from the global North. It is a time when the state can be seen to be building a narrative of legitimacy in terms of the various roles assumed by it among which control over violence forms a large part. The attempt on the part of the state to demonstrate the fact that it has control over its subjects and territory can be seen in the way in which cultural narratives in the late 1800s and first decade of the twentieth century are controlled by the state. Early cinema is part of this narrative as demonstrated by studies conducted on early cinema in Latin America by Navitski (Navitski, 2014) and López (López, 2000) in the context of Mexican cinema, Guerstein (Guerstein, 2004) in the context of Argentinean cinema and Arbeláez and Mayolo (Arbeláez & Mayolo, 1974) in the context of Colombian cinema. Starting from the 1920s in Latin America counter-narratives on violence begins to assume greater significance and like literature, cinema too becomes a medium for carrying out such debates.

The debate around civilisation and barbarism that is a central theme that runs through Latin American socio-cultural thought has formulated a trajectory for the understanding of violence and its impact on the formation of the self and the nation-state. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's work, *Facundo: Civilización y Barbarie* published in 1845 is significant in the way it articulates a tension that was deep-seated within Latin American socio-cultural thought. As Roberto González Echevarría explains, "In proposing the dialectic between civilization and barbarism as the central conflict in Latin American culture it gave shape to a polemic that began in the colonial period and continues to the present day in various guises" (Echevarría, 2003, p. 2) Evelyn Fishburn's appraisal of the ways in which Sarmiento's work has been interpreted lays out what the immediate response to the work had been. She writes,

> The message at the time seemed clear enough: Americanism was synonymous with barbarism. It was a primitive, cruel, tyrannical and retrograde force. These qualities, Sarmiento argued, were endemic among the rural setting of vast uninhabited tracts of land and should be eradicated and replaced by its antithesis, civilization. This he understood in terms of urban industrialization and took as its example the moeurs and ideas prevalent in the leading capitals of Western Europe. (Fishburn, 1979, p. 301)

This perception of violence as being part of a barbaric world order that had to be eradicated through the establishment of a civilised world order created a justification for the violence of the process of social transformation that was labelled as "civilising" and defined that violence as being a positive step in the eradication of the cruelty and savagery that was part of the barbaric world order. As Fishburn points out that despite his political opposition to Juan Manuel de Rosas who was the cause behind Sarmiento's exile, Sarmiento "considered that the most positive consequence to be achieved by the barbarous wars waged by Rosas would prove to have been the slaughter of a large percentage of the gaucho population, and their profitable replacement by white European immigration." (Fishburn, 1979, p. 307)

One of the most significant critiques of Sarmiento's framework came from José Martí who stated, "the struggle is not between civilization and barbarity but between false erudition and Nature." (Martí, 1977) In terms of the implications of such a framework as Sarmiento expounds, Martí points out that it forces the Latin American identity into one of barbarism as opposed to the European identity which becomes representative of civilisation. Another attempt to break away from the trap of barbarism in terms of formulating the Latin American identity is found in *Ariel* (1900), José Enrique Rodó's conceptualisation of the Latin American identity as Ariel, the character from Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*. Rodó determines to break away from the growing influence of North America on Latin America and as Carlos Fuentes describes, "Rodó's *Ariel* appears as the emotional and intellectual response of Latin American thought and Latin American spirituality to growing North American imperial arrogance, gunboat diplomacy, and big stick policies." (Fuentes, 1988, p. 16) Rodó identifies the culture of the U.S.A. with Caliban and seeks to posit the Latin American culture in opposition to it.

One important conceptualisation in Rodó is that of the word "Raza" in his statement on the "awakening of the consciousness of race" where as Schelkshorn points out, "race" is not treated as a biological notion but rather "stands for the cultural and historical entity of the *pueblos latinos* in southern America." (Schelkshorn, 2019) This is a consciousness of an identity that grows out of the Latin American socio-cultural reality and in opposition to the project of positivist progress and modernisation. However, Rodó's understanding of Latin American culture is one that is based on his idea of the European culture where French takes precedence and the Spanish cultural and linguistic tradition is excluded. As Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert states, "…Rodó's analysis of Latin American culture is uprooted from the very tradition he is trying to save." (Millán-Zaibert, 2007, p. 162) Medardo Vitier, the Cuban critic says that "Ni una

línea para el indio hay en *Ariel*"[3]. (Vitier, 1945, p. 126) Schelkshorn adds that Rodó later in life would write that the conquistadors should not be glorified but rather viewed as "personifications of the brutal execution…the sacrificing of the Indian who is also the body and soul of America." (Rodó, 1967, p. 1211) (Schelkshorn, 2019, p. 196)

Roberto Fernández Retamar in his 1971 essay "Calibán/On Caliban" articulates a conceptualisation of Latin American identity as Caliban, the savage monster from Shakespeare's play who refuses to submit, enslaved but full of hatred for his master including his master's language that he has been taught and now speaks — "the rude and unconquerable master of the island" (Retamar, Garafola, McMurray, & Márquez, 1974, p. 28). Retamar points out that essentially Ariel and Caliban cannot be regarded as opposites, since they are both slaves to their master Prospero. However, as he explains, "Caliban is the rude and unconquerable master of the island, while Ariel, a creature of the air, although also a child of the isle, is the intellectual." Thus, if polarity is to be created, Retamar states then it must lie between Caliban or Ariel and Prospero. One of the statements made in Retamar's essay connects the portrayal of Caliban "seen as deformed by the hostile eye" to the European reception of the Cuban Revolution and particularly the "volcanic violence" of the speeches made by Fidel Castro viewed as "deformations". (Retamar, Garafola, McMurray, & Márquez, 1974, p. 64)

One of the foremost influences on Retamar is that of José Martí in his re-envisioning of the formation of the Latin American intellectual and political subject. In his essay "*Nuestra America*", Martí states,

> The young go out into the world wearing Yankee or French spectacles, hoping to govern a people they do not know. In the political race entrance should not go for the best ode, but for the best study of the political factors of one's country. Newspapers, universities and schools should encourage the study of the country's pertinent components…To know one's country and govern it with that knowledge

[3] Trans: "There is not a single line in *Ariel* for the Indian (i.e. Indigenous American).

> is the only way to free it from tyranny. The European university must bow to the American university. (Martí, 1891)

Martí significantly emphasises the need for a Latin American knowledge system that is based on the socio-cultural reality not of Europe but of Latin America. As Schelkshorn explains, "While Martí is by no means anti-European, if the fledging states in southern America are to be able to ever govern properly, then the education institutions must re-orientate their focus onto the cultural reality of the continent." (Schelkshorn, 2019, p. 195)

Ntongela Masilela points out Martí's influence on Retamar in the way in which the latter draws on writers such as C.L.R. James, Aimé Césaire, George Lamming and Frantz Fanon in the essay *Caliban*. Masilela states,

> Among other things, what makes *Caliban* a seminal text in Latin American cultural and political history is that a white or mestizo (biracial of the admixture of Europeans and indigenous people) Latin American intellectual integrates the black intellectual culture of the Antilles or Caribbean into a central place within Latin American culture which had never been done before (Masilela, 2011)

In his analysis of the consciousness of the colonised or the oppressed, Retamar can be seen to have been influenced by Frantz Fanon's conception of the decolonisation of the mind of the colonised, the oppressed native as encountered in works such as *Wretched of the Earth*. In his seminal essay "Periodizing the 60s", Fredric Jameson writes,

> Fanon's great myth [of violence] could be read at the time, by those it appalled equally well as by those it energized, as an irresponsible call to mindless violence. In retrospect, and in the light of Fanon's other, clinical work (he was a psychiatrist working with victims of colonization and of torture and terror of the Algerian war), it can more appropriately be read as a significant contribution to a whole theory of cultural revolution as the collective reeducation (or even collective psychoanalysis) of oppressed peoples or unrevolutionary working classes. (Jameson, 1984, p. 188)

Frantz Fanon is one of the chief influences behind the framework of reading or understanding the dialectical nature of violence that is part of the anti-imperial struggle as symptomatic of the Cuban Revolution of 1959 as well as popular movements across Latin America through the 1920s to the 1950s (that saw the beginning of authoritarian regimes across parts of the region or the rise of the surveillance state through the Operation Condor). Jameson in "Transformations of the Image in Postmodernity" (Jameson, 1998), points out how Fanon's study of the colonial or colonizing gaze of the Coloniser or Colonised was shaped by Sartre's ruminations on the "objectifying reversal of the look" (Jameson, 1984, p. 188).

Idelbar Avelar describes Fanon's intervention in the understanding of colonial violence thus:

> Atrocities happen in the colonies with an intensity unknown in the First World, not because there is a moral or cultural difference between the two spaces, but because colonial, scandalous violence helps keep invisible the daily, institutionalized economic and political violence in the metropolis. Anchored in Marx, Frantz Fanon was the thinker who made us understand that *global dialectic of violence* implemented by colonialism. (Avelar, 2004, p. 7)

Another important Latin American intellectual theorisation of the formation of the political subject is found in Paulo Freire whose *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* puts forth a revolutionary model of pedagogy at whose core is the concept of "conscientização". As Myra Bergman Ramos explains, *conscientização* is the process of "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality." (Freire, 1970) Freire's dialectical understanding of the condition of "humanisation" and "dehumanisation" was an entry into an analysis of a society under oppression. Freire states, "Concern for humanisation leads at once to a recognition of dehumanisation, not only as an ontological possibility but as a historical reality." (Freire, 1970, p. 43)

Violence of oppression and as exercised by the oppressors, functions as an obstacle to the achievement of humanisation which Freire describes as "man's vocation" (Freire, 1970, p. 44).

This "vocation" is negated through the violence but according to Freire, it is the negation that confirms the fact that humanisation is the vocation of humanity. He states, "It (humanisation) is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity." (Freire, 1970, pp. 43-44)

Freire, a Christian and a Marxist, analyses the struggle of the oppressed against their oppression as a "humanistic and historical task" (Freire, 1970) that not only changes their own condition but also that of their oppressors. The response to the violence of the oppressors, according to Freire, is an assertion of the subject's natural affinity towards freedom and humanity. He states, "Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human." (Freire, 1970, p. 56)

Freire's conception of the struggle for liberation is one that places the onus of the struggle on the oppressed who must free themselves and by doing so, liberate the oppressors as well. However, as he notes that liberation cannot be achieved by "semihumans" but rather who wish to assert their condition of humanisation. Freire states, "The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things. In order to regain their humanity they must cease to be things and fight as men." (Freire, 1970, p. 68) Thus, Freire asserts that the instrument for the rehumanisation of the oppressed cannot be propaganda but rather a "humanising pedagogy" where "the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed." (Freire, 1970, p. 68)

This has very clear implications on the role of the individual and the intellectual within the struggle for liberation. Furthermore, Freire's pedagogy was a significant influence on the emergence of a section of the church in Latin America that was committed to the struggle for

liberation across the region. In 1968 the Second Episcopal Conference of Latin America was held in Medellin, Colombia. The Conference saw official incorporation of Liberation Theology into the objectives of the Church.

Freire's influence can be seen in Enrique Dussel as well. Dussel's politics of liberation can be seen as a break away from the understanding of power as domination which Dussel states is a part of Eurocentric modernity. He points out the presence of such a view in writers starting from Machiavelli to Hobbes, Bakunin, Trotsky, Lenin and Weber when he states, "En la modernidad eurocéntrica, desde la invasión y la posterior conquista de América en 1492, el pensamiento político ha definido por lo general el poder como dominación[4]". (Dussel, 2010, p. 25)

Dussel views such a manifestation of political power as a fetishized, corrupted and denaturalised form. According to him the material definition of political power, in terms of content and motivation, is expressed through the "will-to-live" of the community. He states, "En este sentido, en cuanto al contenido y a la motivación del poder, la "voluntad-de-vida" de los miembros de la comunidad, o del pueblo, es ya la determinación material fundamental de la definición de poder político."[5] (Dussel, 2010, p. 26)

1.2 Marginality and Urban Space in Latin America

From the accounts of the violence experienced by Latin American societies through the mid-1900s to the end of the century to the more contemporary quotidian violence, works such as Sergio Aguayo's *De Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa: Las Violencias del Estado* (Aguayo, 2015),

[4] Trans: "In Eurocentric modernity, since the invasion and after the conquest of America in 1492, political thought has in general defined power as domination."
[5] Trans: "In this sense, in terms of content and motivation of power, the "will-to-life" of the members of the community, or of the people, is already the fundamental material determination of the definition of political power."

Michael Taussig's *Law in a Lawless Land: Diary of a Limpieza in Colombia* (Taussig, 2005) and Beatriz Sarlo's works such as *La Ciudad Vista: Mercancías y Cultura Urbana* (Sarlo, 2009) and *Tiempo Presente: Notas Sobre el Cambio de Una Cultura* (Sarlo, 2001) helped to bridge the understanding of how violence is experienced and understood in the mid-1900s and the change that takes place with the breakdown of nation-building projects and ideologies at the turn of the century with the entrenchment of globalization and the neoliberal order. Hardt and Negri point out the crucial role played by the nation-state with respect to the interests of the transnational corporations that dominate the contemporary system of global economy. They state,

> The nation-states serve various functions: political mediation with respect to the global hegemonic powers, bargaining with respect to the transnational corporations, and redistribution of income according to biopolitical needs within their own limited territories. Nation-states are filters of the flow of global circulation and regulators of the articulation of global command; in other words, they capture and distribute the flows of wealth to and from the global power, and they discipline their own populations as much as this is still possible. (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 310)

According to Hardt and Negri, the government plays a role of a mediating body and politics too is subsumed into this order. This is a transition that occurs in countries that have not gone through authoritarian military dictatorships as well. The space for autonomous political action and movements is reduced. As Hardt and Negri elaborate,

> Government and politics come to be completely integrated into the system of transnational command. Controls are articulated through a series of international bodies and functions. This is equally true for the mechanisms of political mediation, which really function through the categories of bureaucratic mediation and managerial sociology rather than through the traditional political categories of the mediation of conflicts and the reconciliation of class conflict. (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 307)

It is the necessities of the role played by the state within the global economic system that led to the end of the extreme authoritarianism that had imposed the neoliberal order on many of the countries in Latin America. An example of such a role played by the state can be seen in the case of the Mexican government filing a lawsuit against a group of U.S. gunmakers for 10 billion dollars accusing the companies of engaging in malpractice that has led to loss of life and damages incurred by Mexico amounting to billions of dollars per year. (Andone, 2022)

Jean Franco's analysis of the violence inherent in the adoption of modernity in Latin America lays out the experience of Latin American nations as they established themselves as modern nations. In her work *Cruel Modernity*, Franco charts the pursuit of modernity in Latin America through the mid-1900s till the end of the century focusing on the nature of state authorized violence that was deemed as a necessary part of the project of modernization in these nations. (Franco, 2013) Franco's study situates the pattern of implementation of the modernity project in Latin America within the context of violence of the colonial project. Franco begins with the genocide of Haitians living near the border on the side of the Dominican Republic that was authorized by the government of President Trujillo, an event that took place over a period of six days in October, 1937 when approximately twenty thousand people were killed as part of what Franco explains to be a nation-building project. The racial imaginary was foundational to Trujillo's project of positing Dominican Republic as Spanish and Catholic as contrasted with the African voodoo practicing Haiti.

Franco goes on to explore the implications of violence targeted specifically against the indigenous communities in the 1970s and 1980s. The extreme forms of atrocities and the scale of genocidal missions undertaken against indigenous communities during this time was premised on not only centuries of prejudice against the indigenous. It was also because of a perception that the indigenous as both a culture and a body of citizenry had no place in the modern nation. Thus, from the very early stages of its implementation in Latin America,

modernity with its accompanying ideas of democratization of society had to undergo a transformation. This was because certain sections of the population were seen as being an obstacle to the aspired model of modernity. The very demographic character of Latin American countries was seen as a detrimental factor in this pursuit of modernity as a result of which various methods were implemented in order to change this state of things and transform the racial composition of Latin American societies.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Latin American countries emerged as modern nations, adopting a model based on the global north. This project had two central points of focus — "Order" and "Progress"— borrowing from the discourse employed by the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz's government's policy. The concept of Latin American modernity as used in the following chapters is informed by the writings of Angel Rama, Jean Franco, Roberto Fernández Retamar, Ana M. López among others. Angel Rama's idea of the "lettered city" is particularly relevant in terms of understanding the context within which notions of what constitutes as progressive or representative of a civilized society were created.

Angel Rama writes of the "lettered" class who played an important role in the discursive as well as institutional conceptualization of modernity in Latin America, a class that was predominantly urban in character and had close ties with the state power. (Rama, 1996) Rama's assessment points to an important feature of the project of Latin American modernity, the importance of a planned order. In contrast to European centers of urbanization and modernity which according to Rama had a more "organic" process of coming into being, Latin American urban centers, which also by default came to represent at first civilization and later modernity, came into being through a careful process of planning and ordering. Rama draws examples from both the colonial as well as modern era to emphasise this point. The planning and restructuring of Tenochtitlan following Hernán Cortés-led destruction and occupation of the city in 1521 is one of the early instances when a city is crafted on the basis of the imagined

concept of what a city should resemble, a model based on European urban centers. Rama writes:

> Desde la remodelación de Tenochtitlan, luego de su destrucción por Hernán Cortés en 1521, hasta la inauguración en 1960 del más fabuloso sueño de urbe de que han sido capaces los americanos, la Brasilia de Lucio Costa y Oscar Niemeyer, la ciudad latinoamericana ha venido siendo básicamente un parto de la inteligencia, pues quedó inscripta en un ciclo de la cultura universal en que la ciudad pasó a ser el sueño de un orden y encontró en las tierras del Nuevo Continente, el único sitio propicio para encarnar.[6] (Rama, 1984)

Rama's assessment of the development of urban culture in Latin America makes it important to draw a distinction from the way the genesis of European centres of urban culture and space is studied. In terms of the production of space, according to Rama, it was not only the spatial character that was determined by a pre-ordained imperial dictate emerging from the Spanish colonial rule. The very character of the urban life and culture too was determined by this same imperial mandate. As Eduardo Mendieta describes this phenomenon, "Cities in Latin America become transcontinental prostheses of an imperial semiotics." (Mendieta, 2006, p. 236) The process of conquest that accompanied the colonial project was the attempt to erase and obliterate one system of semiotics, a symbolic order and replace it with another. Rama's study points out the crucial role played by the man of letters, the scribe, in this process both in terms of producing this order as well as implementing it.

The idea of literacy was an intrinsic part of the colonial project in Latin America. Along with Angel Rama, Walter D. Mignolo's study on the significance of literacy, language and the letter in the colonisation of America throws crucial light on how the idea of what is to be considered as "civilisation" or "civilised". At the time of the colonial encounter between the Spanish and

[6] Trans: "From the remodeling of Tenochtitlan, after its destruction by Hernán Cortés in 1521, to the inauguration in 1960 of the most fabulous dream of a city of which the Americans have been capable, the Brasilia of Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, the Latin American city has been basically a creation of the human mind, since it was inscribed in a cycle of universal culture in which the city became the dream of an order which found in the lands of the New Continent, the only propitious place to manifest." (Rama, 1996, p. 1)

Portuguese civilisations with the Amer-Indian civilisations of the New World, Spain and Portugal were cultures with established alphabetic writing. On the other hand, the civilisations the conquistadors encountered were either alien to the concept of the alphabetic system of writing or as Mignolo points out, had picto-ideographic writing systems. (Mignolo, 1992) The very act of transcribing the grammar of these languages into the Latin alphabet, languages very different to the European tongues, was an extension of the conquest. Within this discourse that developed as a direct consequence of the colonial encounter, the letter, as the unit of alphabetic writing took on a much larger significance as the symbol of the civilising process. (Mignolo, 1992)

Angel Rama extends the claim made by figures such as Elio Antonio de Nebrija that grammar itself was a tool for empire building. He states that the lettered class was crucial to this project of empire building together with the projected maps of cities whose foundation was based on creating a bastion of civilisation within a barbaric world and later as a center of a continuous process of colonisation. The significance of the letter as representative of civilising process translated into a simultaneous claim on the fruits of Western enlightenment during the Renaissance, namely scientific reason. The city too thus became identified as a space of reason, an extension of the European "rationality" and hence a space of civilisation. Traditional and rural communities simultaneously became part of the nation that needed to be civilised. Rama underlines the utopic nature of the imperial discourse that lies within the creation of the Latin American city. While being dictated by the imperial project, the city as a constructed space based on a projected plan also lays foundation to alternate projects that may run counter to the imperial mandate. The city emerges as a space for contention of ideas and opposing visions for national identity and political direction. As Mendieta states,

> If the lettered city is a synecdoche for the modern world brought about by and through the conquest and colonization of the new world, then it is possible that Rama is also signalling in the direction of the ways in which the entire Western

> culture, at least since the 16th century, has been in the grip of one symbolic order in which grammar, cartography, urbanization and the public life of the mind have been tethered to an imperial logic. Dreaming of living in other cities begins with offering maps of the ones in which we live, so that we may exit them or transform them. (Mendieta, 2006, p. 237)

The "lettered city" must be understood as an ideologically motivated conception of a utopian vision of civilized society and is maintained through the "lettered class" comprising of the writers, poets, intellectuals. The marginal voices and presence have no space in this vision. Rama's tracing of the development of the "lettered city" has to be read in conjunction with Jean Franco's study of its decline. The Cold War in Latin America led to the rise of extreme forms of authoritarian state-sponsored violence that not only dismantled socio-political movements for alternative political visions but also the fabric of civil, political and economic life of societies across Latin America that had been developed over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was a period that forced a shift from earlier welfare forms of the state to a neoliberal vision of the state which severely limited both the agency of workers as well as movements that spoke of alternate socio-political visions. Franco writes,

> This epochal change was brutal. Repression, censorship, and forced exile ended the utopian dreams of writers and projects of literature and art as agents of "salvation and redemption." Insofar as military governments represented their regimes as essential to the crusade against communism, they were certainly participants in the Cold War; what makes the Latin American situation so distinct is that those same military governments left older structures, both cultural and political, in fragments. Terms such as "identity," "responsibility," "nation," "the future," "history"—even "Latin American"—had to be rethought. (Franco, 2002, p. 12)

This study takes into account the late nineteenth and early twentieth century discourse around urban planning and modernization in terms of understanding the role played by the "modernizing elites" in the shaping of the urban space across Latin American countries. An example can be found in the transition Bogota, the capital of Colombia, as a city undergoes at the turn of the century. In 1959, a biography of Rafael Uribe Uribe was published titled *Espadas y corazones/Swords and hearts*. Borrowing the title from that of the 1911 D. W. Griffith film,

the book shares an evocative account of the city of Bogota at the time of General Uribe's murder, the year being 1914. Yamid Galindo Cardona comments that in Abello's account, Bogota is described as a sad city, with few cars on the streets and where the mule-drawn trams had been displaced; a city peopled with homeless youth hawking the latest newspapers with the extras and the old bulletins. A city where Sundays invited one to a *retreta*[7] in the Independence Park, where water was brought in earthen pitchers from the colonial era freshwater fountain in Chorro de Padilla and hiking along the Tequendama waterfalls was the culmination of leisure time activities. (Cardona, 2016) As Abello describes,

> The chicha was the preferred drink of artisans and workers while beer had a different class signifier. The cost of groceries was through the roof while the coffee could not be exported[8]. The monotony was devastating and the days passed by one by one almost the same as each other. Meanwhile, in the Salon Olimpia, the dainty grace of Bertini, the falling tears of Robine, the gruesome adventures of Juanita Hansen and the antics of Max Linder, the precursor of humor in cinema, fully satisfied the desires of the residents of Bogota of being entertained. (Eduardo Abello, 1959, pp. 75-77)

Abello's description emphasizes Bogota as a city that is entering into modernity signified by the transition from the mule-drawn transports to the entry of the automobile in public life. The water that filled the freshwater fountains such as the one in Chorro de Padilla was brought in through an aqueduct system set up in 1886 which replaced the colonial era water distribution system[9]. Cinema coming from Europe and North America show scenes of modernity to the residents of this tropical city. Also, the mention of the *retretas* in the Parque de Independencia has a particular significance in the history of urban development and modernization in Colombia. Genaro Valderrama, the finance minister of the department of Bogotá at the time,

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[7] Open air music concerts held in public spaces.

[8] This was a consequence of the Thousand Days War (1899-1903) which had negatively affected the landowning class in the country making the upkeep of plantations and coffee production difficult. At the time, despite forays into quinine and tobacco, coffee was the most

[9] Water supply and consumption http://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/water-bogota/water-supply-and-consumption

in 1897 stated in a letter that the urban development of the city necessitated the construction of urban parks. He believed, in modern cities such as New York, London or Paris, parks served as spaces where citizens could gather during their leisure time. (Valderrama 1897) The model of modernity was to be found therein and urban planning done along those lines.

> In all the modern and civilized capitals around the world there is a center that attracts people during their leisure days, such as Central Park in New York, Hyde Park in London, and the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, where they find honest and proper amusements for themselves and their families. This keeps them, especially the youth, far from the headquarters of corruption. Most of the residents of these fortunate cities go there [to the parks] in search of entertainment and happiness, and then return to their jobs or studies free from any sorrow. Our capital city, now growing in population, requires a space that keeps our youth far from clubs and casinos. (Valderrama, 1897, pp. 432-433) (Fernando Velásquez, 2017, p. 152)

The nature of entertainment provided therein was "honest and proper", it created model citizens and model workers. In his article titled, 'From the Plaza to the Parque: Transformations of Urban Public Spaces, Disciplining, and Cultures of Listening and Sound in Colombian Cities (1886—1930)', (Fernando Velásquez, 2017) Juan Fernando Velásquez reflects on the intention behind the transformations that were taking place across Colombian cities in the early 1900s and their consequences on public life. Prior to the creation of parks, the center of public life in cities would be the plazas. Open spaces "where citizens from diverse social origins could converge and interact with apparent freedom" (Fernando Velásquez, 2017, p. 153), plazas were centers of public life in colonial and early republican periods. Manuel Uribe Ángel's description from 1892, throws light on the kind of sights a plaza might have had to offer at the time.

> On holidays, it is nice to see the turnout at the churches or at market squares, because on these days some men wear cloth coats or cloaks, and rich ladies and girls gracefully wear high-heeled shoes. Common women and men wear the better garments that they found in their trunks. (Uribe Angel, 1892) (Fernando Velásquez, 2017, p. 154)

The plazas were an important part of the civic and economic life of a city. In his study of the soundscape of the plazas, Fernando Velásquez notes how the kinds of activities that the plaza would be used for echoed the social and racial diversity of Colombian cities - especially on Sundays during the outdoor market. However, as evidenced by Valderrama's vision of the urban modern city based on European and North American models, this began to change as plazas were slowly replaced by parks around the turn of the century. The diversity of cultural activities encountered in the markets in the plaza was replaced by a more homogenous idea of what the national culture was best represented by. The very nature of these constructed urban gardens made them more of a place than a space. While a space signifies openness and freedom of movement, "a place is a delimited container of meaning and values produced by the affective and reflective mind which also produces physical settings of social activity located geographically". (Fernando Velásquez, 2017, p. 156) (Tuan, (1977) 2014)

Thus, through the new forms of urban development, expressions of public life that were deemed as being of value also were being shaped and controlled by the same powers that were determining the kind of nation Colombia wanted to become and the vision of modernity it tried to emulate. Fernando Velásquez notes that the activities and sounds permitted within the park were based on "a set of values adopted, adapted and promoted by local elites". (Fernando Velásquez, 2017, p. 156) While the band, be it military or otherwise, became a permanent fixture, musical forms popular among the working classes or the "subordinate social classes" would not have been considered to be "honest and proper" and find no place in the park at the time. The minister Genaro Valderrama had tried to differentiate between entertainment that was "honest and proper" and that which was a source of "corruption" in his attempt to promote certain forms of expression of public life over others.

The idea of the urban public space as representative of the ordered nature of modernity in Latin America was a part of the utopic vision of modernity as expressed in Latin American urban

development through the late 1800s and early 1900s. This utopic vision was eventually destroyed by the emergence within the urban space of irregular human settlements of people with low income who migrated to the city for employment and better living conditions in the early twentieth century. Initially ignored by the state as well as the authorities responsible for urban development, these spaces emerged as a site of conflict of visions of urbanity. Fernández Wagner points out how such forms of urban development were viewed as a type of deformity with words such as "cancer", "tumor" or "malformations" being employed to describe such spaces. (Wagner, 2018, p. 19) Under authoritarian rule, attempts on the part of the government were made to forcibly destroy such settlements or in certain cases hide it behind a wall as the Argentine dictatorship of 1975 did to the Villa 15 neighbourhood of Buenos Aires during the Football World Cup of 1978.

The physical status of such urban spaces as being marginal to the city itself as developed by urban planning was eventually transposed onto the identity of the residents of such spaces. Richard Morse's study in urban planning and development in Latin America points out how such irregularly developed spaces were increasingly defined in terms of "marginality" in terms of the terminology used. (Morse, 1971, p. 36) Eventually the term began to be used not only to describe the spaces but the inhabitants as well. (Cingolani, 2009) Oscar Lewis, American urban sociologist and anthropologist, refers to what he terms as a "culture of poverty" in order to assess the marginality of urban slum dwellers in terms of their levels of integration into the cityscape and by extension modernity. He states,

> The disengagement, the nonintegration, of the poor with respect to the major institutions of society is a crucial element in the culture of poverty. It reflects the combined effect of a variety of factors including poverty, to begin with, but also segregation and discrimination, fear, suspicion and apathy and the development of alternative institutions and procedures in the slum community. (Lewis, 1966, p. 21)

1.3 “Right to the city”[10]: Race and Modernity in Latin America

Another aspect of early twentieth century ideas on social reform in Latin America that has informed this study is the contemplations on the racial character of the national population and how that had shaped government policies. Here the work done by Santiago Castro-Gómez (Castro-Gómez, April 2007) in the context of Colombian history and Eduardo A. Zimmermann (Zimmermann, 1992) in the case of Argentina have provided a framework for understanding the state’s response to the racial composition of the national population. Also, Richard Graham and Thomas Skidmore’s work on tracing the historically contextualised development of socio-political discourse around Race in Latin America should be noted as being an attempt to provide a comprehensive overview on the subject. (Graham, Skidmore, Helg, & Knight, 1990) However, Santiago Castro-Gómez and Eduardo A. Zimmerman’s studies which have tried to read the sociological discourse in light of the state’s project of progress and development have pointed out that that these ideas were not the feudal and aristocratic attitudes towards ideas of racial purity or superiority projected under a new guise. Rather, these were put forward as being progressive scientifically determined ideas by liberal thinkers with social reform as aim and crucial to devising state policy with the improvement of the social conditions of the nation in mind.

The case of Colombia and Argentina shows how the simultaneous massacre of indigenous population and the state aided immigration from Europe is seen by the state as a positive step towards progress. This is contrasted with another attitude within the discourse of racial determinism and its implications on the national character that is found in Mexico and Brazil. This is the theory of racial assimilation as encountered in José Vasconcelos’ concept of “la raza cósmica” (Vasconcelos & Gabilondo, 1997) in the Mexican context that he puts forth in 1925

[10] The phrase “right to the city” (Harvey, 2008) is used by Harvey to refer to “the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation” (Harvey, 2008, p. 23).

and Gilberto Freyre's conceptualisation of "the civilisation in the tropics" (Freyre, 1986) in the context of racial miscegenation in Brazilian social history that was published in 1933. In both cases, there is an attempt to read the racial miscegenation as a step towards creating racial democracy and a society without racial prejudice.

The situation is markedly different in the case of countries with a significantly larger indigenous population such as Peru, Bolivia or Guatemala where studies by Brooke Larson (Larson, 2004), Philipp Horn (Horn, 2015), Leslie M. Dow Jr. (Dow Jr., 1982) point out how racial identities of the indigenous as well as the Spanish communities have been very distinctly maintained as a response from the landowning class which is also largely determined on a racial basis to control organised movements emerging out of rural societies. The impact of the *indigenismo* school of thought in these countries is thus one that needed to be taken into consideration. Broadly speaking it was a movement aimed at recognition of the indigenous identity and reviewing the place the indigenous identity and culture would occupy within the modern nation state. Across Latin America, *indigenismo* took on different forms and had varied impact on the socio-political life of the indigenous communities as well as state response in terms of incorporating it into state policy. Laura Giraudo and Stephen E. Lewis (Giraudo & Lewis, 2012) have pointed out that the indigenismo as a school of thought did not necessarily have greater impact or reception in countries with large indigenous population. In fact, as they point out the example of Brazil which despite being a country with a relatively lower percentage of indigenous population as compared to other countries of the region (CEPAL, 2014), established an indigenista institution in 1910, the first in the region. This was the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios (Indian Protection Service). On the other hand, Bolivia, the country with the largest indigenous population established a Department of Indigenous Affairs that was established in 1941 and the national indigenista institute was established in 1949. (Giraudo & Lewis, 2012) However, Giraudo and Lewis also point out that the Bolivian indigenous

movement is an instance of "an unusual articulation between highly mobilised indigenous communities and the urban political sphere." (Giraudo & Lewis, 2012, p. 10) Laura Gotkowitz points out that there lay a marked difference between the events held in countries across the region prompted by the impact of the Inter-American Indigenista Institute on state policy post 1940 and the Indigenous Congress held in 1945 in Bolivia. She states,

> …the main impetus behind the Bolivian assembly was not the state but forceful indigenous movements… In part, the remarkable organizational process that culminated in the 1945 congress was facilitated by the contacts hacienda[11] colonos[12] had forged with urban labor leaders and lawyers in the years just after the Chaco War. The movements of the 1940s also drew some impetus from the social and organizational networks that had been established by the caciques apoderados[13] in the decades before the war, for although the apoderados were weakened after the conflict with Paraguay, the connections formed among far-flung leaders did not dissolve so easily. The caciques remained active in the 1940s, and they offered lodging, and probably also counsel, to Indigenous Congress delegates. (Gotkowitz, 2008, p. 195)

1.4 Representation of Urban Violence

Alejo Carpentier in the prologue to the first edition of his novel *The Kingdom of the World* (1949) discusses the concept of the "marvelous real" or "lo real maravilloso" in the context of writing on the reality of Latin America. Carpentier explains that the very nature of Latin America's past and present reality offers up such aspects of the human experience that the very sense of the marvelous that European art seeks to capture through movements such as surrealism cannot be used to represent a reality that in itself appears to be marvelous.

[11] In Latin America, hacienda refers to plantation-based settlements. The hacienda system signified that land would be granted in return of payment in the form of monetary and material means as well as labour. (Heyduk, 1974)

[12] The inhabitants of a hacienda, chiefly the landless labourers and agricultural workers and their families.

[13] Leaders who had roots in a movement concerning land rights in Bolivia which began in the final decades of the 19th century. It was an organized movement that aimed to defend ancestral land from attacks from landowners as well as the government. Around 1912, it coalesced into a movement which not only demanded restitution of land occupied by landlords and protection of indigenous land, but also demanded access to rights as citizens. (Condori Chura & Ticona Alejo, 1989)

Carpentier's concept is an envisioning of the perception of the reality of Latin America. Frederic Jameson explains it thus:

> Carpentier, however, explicitly staged his version as a more authentic Latin American realization of what in the more reified European context took the form of surrealism: his emphasis would seem to have been on a certain poetic transfiguration of the object world itself-not so much a fantastic narrative, then, as a metamorphosis in perception and in things perceived. (Jameson, 1986, p. 301)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's concept of "magic realism" is an articulation of what can be regarded as a historical concern in Latin America. In his Nobel address, Garcia Marquez draws upon and emphasizes the "madness" that has been an inseparable part of the way violence in Latin America has been represented and understood. The violence and turmoil that accompanied the shaping of nationhood in Latin America, when viewed through the European perspective appeared horrific and magical both in nature and proportion. Europe in its attempt to describe a reality which was not its own had no suitable language to describe it in. The language used was such that not only failed to describe the reality but made it appear marvelous because of its alien character—alien to the culture that tried to relate it. The grotesque depiction of the "dictator" for instance in Garcia Marquez's speech who was responsible for the massacre of thirty thousand peasants in El Salvador and was also the inventor of a pendulum to detect poison in his food and ordered all the street lamps to be draped in red to defeat an epidemic of scarlet fever is only an instance of the way in which the very reality when thus presented can appear to be fantastic.

This essential inability of communication is pointed out by Glauber Rocha, the Brazilian film director, in his film manifesto "A estética de fome/ The Aesthetics of Hunger" (1965), where he states, "The Latin American neither communicates his real misery to the "civilized" man, nor does the "civilized" man truly comprehend the misery of the Latin American." (Rocha,

2014, p. 218) Glauber Rocha refers to the "colonial conditioning" (Rocha, 2014, p. 218) that frames how Latin America is perceived and presented even in the field of art. Rocha points out that Latin America has only exchanged one colonizer for another and continues in a state of political and economic dependency. He writes,

> This economic and political conditioning has led us to philosophical undernourishment and to impotence—sometimes conscious, other times not. The first engenders sterility; the second, hysteria. It is for this reason that hunger in Latin America is not simply an alarming symptom; it is the essence of our society… Our originality is our hunger and our greatest misery is that this hunger is felt but not intellectually understood. (Rocha, 2014, p. 219)

The "hunger" that Rocha speaks of appears in the writing of Paulo Freire as well who describes it as a form of violence experienced by Latin America, thereby broadening the very definition of violence. In his *Letters*, Freire speaks of "hunger" as a form of "violence" whose impact manifests through death just:

> It was a real and concrete hunger that had no specific date of departure. Even though it never reached the rigor of the hunger experienced by some people I know, it was not the hunger experienced by those who undergo a tonsil operation or are dieting. On the contrary, our hunger was of the type that arrives unannounced and unauthorized, making itself at home without an end in sight. A hunger that, if it was not softened as ours was, would take over our bodies, molding them into angular shapes. Legs, arms, and fingers become skinny. Eye sockets become deeper, making the eyes almost disappear. Many of our classmates experienced this hunger and today it continues to afflict millions of Brazilians who die of its violence every year. (Freire, 1996, p. 15)

It is this hunger which finds expression through violence, violence of the oppressed in response to the quotidian violence of the oppression. Rocha's formulations are profoundly influenced by Fanon and has echoes of Paulo Freire's theorisations. According to Rocha, in order for this "culture of hunger" to emancipate itself from its own structural limits, the structures that maintain such a culture must be destroyed. It is for this he says, "The most noble cultural

manifestation of hunger is violence." (Rocha, 2014, p. 219) Rocha's conceptualization of revolutionary violence carries the influence of Fanon when he writes,

> The moment of violence is the moment when the coloniser becomes aware of the existence of the colonised. Only when he is confronted with violence can the colonizer understand, through horror, the strength of the culture he exploits. As long as he does not take up arms, the colonised man remains a slave. (Rocha, 2014, p. 219)

Glauber Rocha, part of the Cinema Novo movement in Brazil, gives expression to what is essentially a theoretical framework for understanding the way in which Cinema Novo presented the Brazilian reality, the intent and aim of such a presentation and the philosophical underpinning of such an approach. Cinema Novo, which emerged in the early 1960s in Brazil, is described as "the first signs of the dawn of a truly independent Latin American cinema" (Hart, 2015, p. 41) which is present in terms of content and in the experimentation in the form which are both driven by a commitment to find a medium to reflect on Brazilian and by extension Latin American reality. Rocha writes,

> Cinema Novo teaches that the aesthetics of violence are revolutionary rather than primitive.… In moral terms, this violence is not filled with hatred; nor is it linked to the old, colonising humanism. The love that this violence encompasses is as brutal as violence itself, because it is not the kind of love which derives from complacency or contemplation, but rather a love of action and transformation. (Rocha, 2014, p. 219)

Rocha's statement on the motive behind revolutionary violence appears as an extension of Paulo Freire's conceptualisation of the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppression. In both, an emphasise is found on the transformative nature of revolutionary violence. Freire writes,

> …in the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppressors…a gesture of love may be found…Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is

> grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human. As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized. As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression. (Freire, 1970, p. 56)

Cinema Novo as a movement greatly changed the way Brazilian reality including that of the urban space found expression in cinema. One of the early examples of films that attempted to portray a realistic depiction of the urban space is found in two films made by Nelson Pereira dos Santos which were *Rio 40 Graus/Rio, 100 Degrees* (1955) and *Rio Zona Norte/Rio, Northern Zone* (1957). The films made by Nelson Pereira dos Santos attempted to structurally analyse urban violence and in this paved the way for Cinema Novo's more radical commitment to political filmmaking. The films *Rio 40 Graus* or *Rio Zona Norte* were specifically a response to the *chanchada* style of filmmaking that became popular in Brazil since the arrival of sound in cinema in the 1930s. Krstic describes the *chanchadas* as "a genuinely Brazilian film genre influenced by the cultural universe of carnival…modelled on classical Hollywood musicals." (Krstic, 2016, p. 197) Urban poverty and inequality when it did appear in the *chanchadas* was portrayed within the framework of an idyllic and colourful world.

The films made by dos Santos are regarded as precursors to the Cinema Novo style of filmmaking. Both the films mentioned above are set in the city of Rio and are influenced by Italian Neo-Realism and the work of Roberto Rossellini in particular. The early experiments that had a significant influence in shaping the direction taken by New Latin American Cinema such as the Cuban documentary *El Mégano* (1955) by Tómas Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa and Argentine Fernando Birri's *Tire Dié* (1958) were influenced by Italian Neo-Realism. Birri and García Espinosa and Gutiérrez Alea were trained at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinema at Rome along with Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Their films were marked by the "depiction of everyday reality, of poverty among the disadvantaged classes, and its use of non-

professional actors." (Hart, 2015, p. 34) Following the end of the Second World War, European cinema responded to the growing domination of Hollywood as well as the devastation left at the wake of the war through experimentation that was shaped by the very reality of a post-War Europe. The first of these was the movement referred to as neo-Realism that found expression in the works of Italian filmmakers such as Roberto Rossellini who made films such as *Roma, città aperta/Open City Rome* (1945) and *Germany, Year Zero* (1948), and Vittorio De Sica, the director of *Ladri di biciclette/Bicycle Thieves* (1948). With the studio system left in shambles following the violence of the war, the filmmakers found liberation in the cinematic medium with the camera being taken out of the studio and onto the streets. Urban reality found expression in neo-Realist films through the camera filming scenes 'on location'. The poverty, suffering and devastation encountered in these films show the reality of post-war Rome or Berlin. These films furthermore used non-professional actors and tried to show the everyday reality of these spaces and people. Latin American cinema which had long faced the problem of low budget and under-developed film studio systems, found inspiration in the neo-Realist style of filmmaking.

Contrary to the romanticised portrayal of life in the favelas as encountered in films such as Humberto Mauro's *Favela Dos Meus Amores/Favela of my Loves* (1935) or Marcel Camus' *Orfeu Negro/Black Orpheus* (1959), dos Santos' films attempted a portrayal of the structural nature of exploitation and violence that is part of the life in favelas. Igor Krstic comments,

> …unlike *Orfeu Negru*, the touristic locales of *Rio 40 Graus* are not depicted as utopian (or multicultural) paradises; they are governed by the ruthless laws of market capitalism, in which a general pattern of exploitation emerges – the exploitation of the peanut-selling boys by their boss, of soccer players by their managers, of the samba school dancers and singers by their sponsors. (Krstic, 2016, p. 199)

Glauber Rocha particularly placed importance on the anthology film *Cinco Vezes Favela/Five Times Favela* (1962) which he described as being aimed towards "the politicization and awareness of the popular masses". (Leite, 2005, p. 155) Two films released in the same year, the Bolivian film *Yawar Mallku/The Blood of the Condor* (1969) made by Jorge Sanjines and the Chilean film *El Chacal de Nahueltoro/The Jackal of Nahueltoro* (1969) made by Miguel Litin, also explore aspects of the experience of urban violence. In *Yawar Mallku*, as the film follows Sixto, the Aymara citizen of Bolivia, traversing the urban cityscape of La Paz in search of blood for his brother who is dying, a cinematic exploration into the structural nature of the violence he faces is presented before the viewer. Sixto's experience is at once seen as an extension of the more direct forms of violence that is experienced by the indigenous communities in the rural space as well as being different in the nature of manifestation. (Hart, 2015) Litin's film *El Chacal de Nahueltoro* is an attempt to employ the documentary style of filmmaking to create a narrative beyond that of the sensationalised account found in the press on a gruesome crime committed by José (or Jorge) del Carmen Valenzuela Torres, a homeless man who murdered a mother and her five children and was eventually tried and sentenced to death. Stephen Hart points out the innovative nature of the portrayal of the violence:

> The camerawork used to portray the murders in *El Chacal de Nahueltoro* is versatile. At times the camera moves around wildly, and we lose focus, thereby echoing the savagery of the events themselves. At other times, we are invited as viewers to step into the mind of the murderer, since the murder scenes are reconstructed via the Jackal's point of view; occasionally the camera looks calmly at the children before they are killed…A chilling moment in the film is when Rosa, just before she is beaten to death, looks directly at the viewer. (Hart, 2015, pp. 56-57)

The New Latin American Cinema that emerged in the 1960s was an attempt to find a cinematic articulation of the socio-political movements of the time. It was a cinema that was committed to the liberation struggle and was eager to experiment in terms of cinematic form in order to

further itself as an extension of the active revolutionary movements of the time. The impact of the Cuban revolution on Latin American cinema was particularly significant both in terms of the ways in which post-Revolutionary Cuban cinema reflected on Latin American reality as well as the experiments that were being made in terms of the cinematic form and how it could be used to study Latin American reality. While the New Latin American Cinema was not a homogenous movement, filmmakers across Latin America realised the commonality they shared in terms of their cinematic vision through a number of encounters that took place among filmmakers at the time. The first of these encounters was at Viña del Mar, Chile in 1967, an unprecedented encounter that was to have profound impact on shaping the direction of Latin American cinema.

In Latin America, as Jean Franco states, the pursuit of modernity was accompanied by extreme violence and cruelty carried out and supported by the state or rogue organizations. (Franco, 2013) It was a forced imposition of a particular worldview that took on tangible physical forms. In the quest for progress, certain sections of the population were seen as naturally subversive or alien to the vision that was modernity. The democratization of society that was part of the process of modernization was seen as an obstacle to the pursuit of modernity with the state's perception of the very demographic composition of the nation as being a detrimental factor in its progress. Efforts were made to change this state of things through attempts to change the racial and cultural character of the society through methods such as targeted immigration policies and dehumanization of certain sections of the population so as to render them criminal, invisible and deprived of the very right to be treated as a citizen and human being. An exploration of early twentieth century sociological theories prevalent in Latin America bears testament to this.

Even as late as 2021 in Peru, the right-wing opposition candidate and daughter of the dictator Alberto Fujimori, Keiko Fujimori, having lost the elections primarily due to lack of support in

the regions with a higher indigenous population, which included Cusco, moved to nullify votes from those regions. (Valencia, 2021) (Kawsachun, 2021) The coup in Bolivia in 2019 saw not only state repression of indigenous communities through military action but also symbolic rejection of the plurinational character of the Bolivian nation. The coup leaders burning the Wiphala and stating that the indigenous population were worshippers of Satan were taking recourse to a century old discourse on the privilege of "Western Christian civilisation" and modernity. (Forster, 2020)

With the end of the Cold War, the paranoid state chasing the "spectre of communism" in the form of military juntas trained and conditioned to be "violence workers" petered out towards the end of the century. However, with little effort at structural change to address large scale inequalities, discrimination against and prejudice about certain sections of the population continue.

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Chapter 2

"Urban Fragility"[1] and Structural Violence

The modern state, as defined by Max Weber, is "that human community which (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a certain territory". (Weber, 1994, pp. 310-11) Through the use of cultural narratives, the state seeks to maintain and justify this "monopoly". In Latin America, the developmental stage of visual and print cultures as part of Latin American modernity can be studied from this perspective. Even cinema as it was introduced to the Latin American audience towards the end of the nineteenth century was not late in being appropriated. At a very early stage in the spread of cinema, the state in the Latin American countries, realized the potential of the medium of cinema for serving as an instrument of propaganda. Cinema became a medium through which the legitimacy of state violence could be advocated as well as events that threatened to destabilise this "monopoly" could be re-presented and narrativized in a chosen manner.

The emergence of cinema in Latin America coincided with the region embracing the positivist ideas of modernity and progress as promoted by development models from the global North. In fact, early cinema (late nineteenth century and early twentieth century) in the form of the *actualidades*[2], generally reflected the way in which the state wished to present itself, which was as a modern nation similar to the centres of development in Europe and North America. What the camera chose to document and what it did not are crucial to understanding the kind of ideological environment within which visual cultures developed in Latin America. Ana M. Lopez points out that early Latin American cinema was "thoroughly aligned with the civilizing desires of the urban modernizing elites and disassociated from the "barbarism" of national "others."" (López, 2000, p. 57) According to José Joaquín Brunner, Latin American modernity

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[1] The concept of "urban fragility" as discussed by Koonings and Kruijt. (Koonings & Kruijt, 2015)
[2] Actualidades were short films about current events, also referred to as news reels.

was determined by how globalised signifiers of modernity were shaped according to "local codes of reception" (Brunner, 1993, p. 41). Angel Rama points out that this local modernity was further defined by a specifically "lettered" culture that simultaneously occupied state power and was located within the urban experience. (Rama, 1996) The exposure to scientific and technological innovations has been an uneven experience in Latin America. As Ana M. Lopez points out, in Latin America, the pre-modern exists simultaneously with the modern and interactions and encounters between the two necessitates a different kind of understanding of history, time and space. (López, 2000) This simultaneity however was not a peaceful one. Rather, encounters between the two were inevitably violent wherein the vision of development and progress as dictated by modernity is repeatedly and brutally imposed on cultures and ways of life that are viewed as being intrinsically opposed to order and progress.

2.1 Early Cinema: The Project of Modernity in Latin America

The performance of state rituals foregrounding the grandeur and absoluteness of state authority formed the subject for much of early Latin American films. These short films were crucial to the way in which these nations visualised themselves as becoming part of the modernity, images of which was carried to them through films from the global North. The cinematic representation of aspects of regional significance, be it important state events or key moments in the history of the emergent modern nation state, were versions of a localised modernity.

In the early 1900s in Argentina, the likes of Eugenio Py and Alejandro Posadas were making short films no longer than two minutes in duration and showcasing the lives of the political elite, the "el esplendor de Buenos Aires[3]" (Guerstein, 2004, p. 17) and showcasing those areas in the city which in appearance seemed the closest to urban centres in Europe. The aim was to portray Argentina as a modern nation, "ordenado y abrazado al progreso y a la modernidad,

[3] Trans: "the splendour of Buenos Aires"

que había logrado imponer su soberanía y la integración de sus habitantes[4]". (Guerstein, 2004, p. 17) Mario Gallo is generally regarded as the first to make a non-documentary film in Argentina— *La Revolución de Mayo*/*The May Revolution* (1909), about the series of events leading to the establishment of the First Junta in Buenos Aires in 1810, a significant development in Argentina's path to independence from Spain. It was followed by another film by him, *El Fusilamiento de Dorrego*/*The Execution of Dorrego* (1908) about the execution of the Federal leader Manuel Dorrego. This film has not survived.[5] These films were made targeting an Argentine population of which a large part comprised new immigrants who would be able to learn of the foundational events that formed Argentine history through such films, strengthening their integration into the *criollo* community. (Guerstein, 2004) However, the film which has not survived reportedly was based on the play that first appeared a year before. David Peña's play was part of his larger oeuvre of national historical dramas. Gallo with his desire to create a cinematic narrative of Argentine history and nation formation, found such a play perfectly suited to his cinematic vision.[6]

Argentine cinema of the time was silent on the violence that had been unleashed on the streets of Buenos Aires. That would have contradicted the narrative that the state would have wanted to project. Guerstein points out that while early twentieth century in Argentina was marked by labour movements, the camera did not document strikes by workers or any opposition to the political system. (Guerstein, 2004) In fact, the period between 1900 to 1910 was a time when the labour movement in Argentina had successfully launched a series of general strikes and the

[4] Trans: "ordered and embracing progress and modernity, having successfully established its sovereignty and the integration of its inhabitants"

[5] The film *El Fusilamiento de Dorrego* was based on David Peña's play Dorrego and portrayed events in the distant past of the nation, recreating the history with actors. Mario Gallo's film portrays a particularly violent time in the history of Argentina, the clash between two visions for the nation's future and character, that between the Unionists and the Federals in the 1820s.

[6] Contemporary accounts of the film point out that the audience was amused by the lack of authenticity in the cinematic portrayal of Argentina in 1828 since cars could be seen passing in the background. (López, 2000)

increased levels of militancy of the organized workers had been met with greater oppressive measures on the part of the government.

Inspired by the 1902 general strike in Barcelona, the Federación Obrera de la República Argentina (Workers' Federation of the Argentine Republic, FORA)[7] began to successfully launch a series of local as well as general strikes in the same year. (Alexander, 1965). One of the existent laws that they protested against was the La Ley de Residencia (Law Nº 4.144, November 1902, Law of Residence) which permitted the government to deport anyone including Argentine citizens whose activities were thought to have "compromised national security or disturbed public order" (Costanzo & Merajver, 2007, p. 4) in the eyes of the government. At a time when the labour movement was increasingly led by anarchists, militant labour leaders often faced deportation if caught and sentenced. Through the decade of 1900 to 1910, the government deployed the military repeatedly in order to bring the labour movement to heel. The year 1910 saw the introduction of the Ley de Defensa Social, (Law Nº 7.029 of 28th June, 1910, Law of Social Defence), a draconian law specifically targeted towards bringing down the anarchist movement, that prohibited the entry of those identified as anarchists into Argentina. The law defined these unsuitable citizens as "Los anarquistas y demás personas que profesan o preconizan el ataque, por cualquier medio de fuerza o violencia, contra los funcionarios públicos o los gobiernos en general, o contra las instituciones de la Sociedad"[8] (Republic of Argentina, 1910) along with people who had been condemned of common crimes. Anarchists who formed a significant part of the labour movement were criminalised through this law. The introduction of this law was followed by mass deportations of radical labour leaders and in a short period, the labour movement was cleansed of its most militant factions.

[7] Established in 1901, the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA) was an organisation comprised of 27 labour unions from Buenos Aires as well as other regions of Argentina. (Schlager, 2004)
[8] Trans: "Anarchists and other people who profess or advocate attacks, by any means of force or violence, against public officials or governments in general, or against the institutions of society."

The Argentine labour movement was extremely diverse, with factions emerging based on the ideologies of anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, syndicalism, and socialism. This was the case in other countries such as Chile and Brazil as well. In Argentina however, anarchist unions were formed, breaking away from the standard individualism characterising such movements. Schlager writes, “Anarchism’s simple conflict ideology and philosophy of action attracted many workers; others favoured the utopian and even millenarian aspects of the ideology.” (Schlager, 2004, p. 346) In early 1900s, in Buenos Aires, around 5% of the working class residing in the city belonged to the anarchist unions, roughly estimated to be around 200,00 workers. A great number of struggles in the form of general strikes were called and led by the anarchist factions of the workers’ movement. (Schlager, 2004)

Through the Law of Residence and Law of Social Defense, an intervention was made on the part of the state to silence a political voice and this was a significant landmark in the development of the Argentine state. Costanzo states,

> The Law of Residence and the Law of Social Defense threatened individuals’ civil and social rights as they continued to shape the authoritarian, persecutory nature of the modern State, in this case, by trying to wipe anarchism off the political arena. (Costanzo & Merajver, 2007, p. 8)

It was not merely through legal measures that the government attempted to curb the movement however. The decade saw factories being targeted repeatedly and on 14th May, 1910, the government declared a state of siege. This declaration had been preceded by mass arrests of labour leaders and following the declaration, the army moved to destroy buildings owned by the trade unions and attacked journalists working on newspapers specifically addressing issues of the working class. Throughout this period of conflict, the encounters between the striking workers and the armed militia or police forces often led to workers being killed or injured and the city became a site of violent encounters. (Trigona, 2009) In such a response from the government, also lay the blueprint for what the military junta led by General Videla would

unleash as part of the "guerra sucia[9]" in the late 1970s. In his analysis of the violence in the *banlieues*, Slooter views such coercive and repressive strategies employed by the state as part of the "technologies of governance for responding to the reading of violent events" (Slooter, 2019, p. 200) that might take place in the banlieues. These methods are therefore part of the exercise of social control on the part of the state that "shows its presence in an attempt to convince, both the local public and the wider audience, that it has control over its subjects and territory" (Slooter, 2019, p. 200).

In other parts of Latin America, a similar narrative of modernity and civilized progress was being created through the use of cinema. Pre-Revolutionary Mexican cinema during the reign of Porfirio Diaz, the Porfiriato era[10] (1876–80; 1884–1911) with its slogan of "order and progress", shows a similar predilection towards displaying state functions and pomp even while violent encounters such as the massacre following the miners' strike in Cananea in 1906 or the workers' strike in Río Blanco in 1907 were ignored. Ana M. López points out a close nexus between cinema and power that developed in Latin America at a very early stage in its development. Not only in Mexico but across Latin America, such films with their close adherence to the ideas of modernity and nationhood as held by the power structures, "were designed to align the new technology with those who effectively controlled and defined the nation and to display them for the enjoyment and recognition of the new audiences" (López, 2000, p. 62). It has to be noted that in Mexico, this state of affairs was interrupted by the eruption of the Mexican Revolution, a period of great social upheaval that lasted between 1910 and 1920. Beginning as a disparate armed struggle against Diaz' government, the early phase

[9] Trans: "dirty war" referring to the period of authoritarian rule when the military dictatorship also referred to as the National Reorganisation Process governed Argentina. (1976 – 1983). The "Dirty war" is often held to start from 1975, a year prior to the military coup since Isabel Perón, the president at the time, when the military took an increasingly more powerful role in the governance of the state and began the process of identifying and killing leftists in an effort to tackle the rise of armed insurgency from left-wing organisations. Their target, however, more than armed guerrillas, became the unions—workers, students, journalists and activists.
[10] The period when Mexico was under the governance of the autocratic leader Porfirio Diaz whose regime saw a combination of popular support as well as brutal repression of peasants and workers.

of the movement was characterised by localised uprisings, limited political objectives, lacking in cohesive social and political ideology. However, the diverse political visions coalesced into an identifiable political vision in the Constitution of 1917. (Tannenbaum, 1955)

The Mexican Revolution with its "violent demand for a more equitable mode of national modernization" (Navitski, 2014, p. 133) had led to a moment of collapse of the state's monopoly on "legitimate" violence. With widespread militarization, the government's claim to political authority and with it the "monopoly of legitimate physical violence" (Weber, 1994, pp. 310-311) too was difficult to maintain. During the Revolution, filmmakers were often patronized by military leaders who were aware of the power of the visual documentation as a source of strengthening their political legitimacy. With the escalation of the conflict, pioneering Mexican filmmakers' shift to the documentation of the accompanying violence of the Mexican Revolution was an organic one. This can be seen in the work of Salvador Toscano Barragán, an engineering student who was the first Mexican to extensively film the realities of his country. He also opened a movie salon in order to screen films that he had shot. He filmed real life events and the scenes filmed by him were later edited by his daughter Carmen Toscano into a film called *Memorias de un mexicano/Memories of a Mexican* (1950). This film serves as a unique testament of pre-revolutionary Mexico as well as the events taking place during the Mexican revolution.

The way in which the camera was used to represent urban crime in fiction films, underlined the fact that violence was a part of how urban modernity was understood. Furthermore, as Navitski explains, the image of violence caught on camera was also an instrument of social control that particularly came to the forefront during the Revolutionary era. (Navitski, 2014) The images of violence and criminality that had existed in the Porfirian era had already established a precedence where a culture of fear was encouraged in the way in which criminality and violence was understood. This was done in order to evoke support for an

authoritarian government and more interventionist methods of social control. During the Revolution, the use of the image in order to exert control over the "management and representation of death . . . keys to the implantation of the modern state" (Lomnitz, 2005, p. 58) was significant in terms of the way the Revolution itself was documented. The films being made at the time carried great relevance in terms of how the violence was viewed and understood in order to establish the legitimacy of the various political factions. For this very reason, film makers were often patronized by different political leaders.

This collaboration between political actors and the filmmakers resulted in a notable commercially successful partnership in early Mexican film history. Enrique Rosas, the cameraman turned filmmaker made a series of films with the support of Pablo González, a general in the forces of Venustiano Carranza. The film *El automóvil gris*/*The Grey Automobile* (1919) was not only commercially successful but also effectively presented a particular perspective on the actions and motives of the Grey Automobile Gang. The Grey Automobile Gang was a group of con-men who committed a series of robberies between 1914 and 1915. They would arrive dressed in military uniform and carrying search warrants with signatures of officials of the military. They would then proceed to rob the households before making their escape. The fact that the criminals carried documents with signatures of military officials sparked rumours of their involvement. Pablo González himself was rumoured to be involved and in December 1915 after he conducted the summary trial of six accused members of the gang and sentenced them to death, it was further said that he had done so to hide his own involvement. The activities of the gang had provoked investigative reporting on the subject. The attention from the press, the sensationalizing of the crime was further viewed through what Pablo Piccato sees as a lens of cosmopolitan imaginary of criminality. (Piccato, 2001) Criminality was perceived as a consequence of urban development and Navitski describes the film *El automovil gris* as drawing upon crime genres popular in the global North in order to

frame Mexican "urban crime as ambivalent signs of local modernity" (Navitski, 2014, p. 135). In fact, as Navitski points out, the very name "The Grey Automobile Gang" was inspired by a French film that had been shown in Mexico City in 1912 called *L'auto gris*/*The Grey Car* about a gang operating in Paris. Just as the actualidades had tried to present Latin American cities as embracing modernity by choosing to display those aspects of urban development that most resembled European or North American urban centers, the representation of crime and violence too was cast into a similar framework. Enrique Rosas' film *El automovil gris* was not the only film that was made on urban crime in that era. Like Rosas' film which had tried to present the story of the criminal gang in a manner that absolved the military of any claim of involvement, another film *Fanny o el robo de los veinte millones*/*Fanny and the theft of the twenty millions* (1922) had also been produced with the help of a military official, General Cal y Mayor and performed a similar function regarding another scandal about a possible involvement of the Mexican army in a crime.

Post-Revolution Mexican cultural landscape saw the rise of two ideological movements — *indigenismo* and *mestizaje*. The term "indigenismo" was first used by the Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio (Gamio, 1916) in his *Forjando Patria*/*Forging a Nation*. Gamio's book, published in the middle of the social and political tumult of the revolution, was intended to serve as "a manifesto for the revolutionary state and meant to provide the intellectual groundwork for the incorporation of diverse classes and ethnic populations into the reconstructed nation." (Johnson, 2011, p. 145) The Revolution was an attack on the socio-political hierarchies foundational to Mexican society since the end of colonial rule. Gamio's understanding of "indigenismo" pointed towards a new ideological conception of Mexican society and national identity. This new identity denied the natural supremacy associated with whiteness and valorisation of the European lineage. The Revolution was to establish a new Mexican society which was forged through the mixing of the indigenous cultures with the

mestizo [11] culture. José Vasconcelos, the Secretary of Public Education of the post-revolutionary Mexican government, also used and extended the implications of the concept of "indigenismo" and its accompanying concept of "mestizaje". As Županović explains, mestizaje "formally propagated racial and social egalitarianism…was more a racial counter discourse to level the national identity, enabling the post-revolutionary rehabilitation of the indigenous population." (Županović, 2016, p. 198)

The rise of the melodrama or genres such as the *comedia rancheras* in Mexico or the *chanchadas* in Brazil, stylistically dominated films produced through the 1930s to 1950s. The *comedia ranchera* was a form where the stories were located in the countryside, the ranch and it incorporated folksongs and music such as the charros, traditional rural songs and songs performed by mariachi bands, the ranchera songs. While comprised of elements distinctly Mexican in cultural and social context, Županović (Županović, 2016) points out that this genre signified a shift from the cultural context of the post-revolutionary Mexico dominated by the political ideology of the revolution and its face, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). He states, "*Comedia ranchera* emerged at the height of the PRI and *indigenismo* power as a relic of the Porfiriato—the era of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship (1876–1911), which was an oligarchy, and a paternalistic society with elite class rule." (Županović, 2016, p. 199)

The repressive socio-political structures that were part of that era were replicated in this very popular genre of Mexican cinema—the patriarchal social structuring within the hacienda, the dominance and privilege enjoyed by white masculinity. Olga Nájera-Ramírez elaborates on the nature of the hacienda system during the Porfiriato thus:

> Despite socioeconomic and ethnic differences, then, the patriarchal hacienda system united men in their domination over women and fostered a paternalistic attitude towards those in the lower levels. Furthermore, movement within these social ranks was extremely limited and certainly had little to do with an

[11] "Mestizo" was a term used to denote Mexicans who were of mixed Spanish (Creole) and indigenous descent.

> individual's ability. Instead, class, gender, and ethnicity largely determined a person's place in society." (Nájera-Ramírez, 1994, p. 3)

Brazilian cinema from the 1930s till the 1950s saw the *chanchada* dominate film production. As Lisa Shaw points out, the very term was employed by both film critics as well as journalists to refer derogatorily to this commercially successful film genre which was influenced by the Hollywood musical but used carnival music and were musical comedies. (Shaw, 2003)

<u>2.2 New Latin American Cinema: Neoliberal Structures of Control and the Struggle for National Liberation</u>

In the 1960s, filmmakers from different parts of Latin America attempted to capture facets of what Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's 1968 film *La Hora de los Hornos*/*Hour of the Furnaces* called the "liberation struggle being waged throughout Latin America". Films such as *Asalto*/*Attack* (1968) or *Me Gustan Los Estudiantes*/*I Like Students* (1968) can be seen almost as a direct response to the gaps in the narrative as presented by early cinema. In 1968, the song 'Me gustan los estudiantes'[12] was used by the Uruguayan film director Mario Handler in his 6 minutes long film using the song as rendered by Daniel Viglietti. The film comprised of testimonials of the repression of a student movement in Montevideo by the police during the Chief of States conference at Punta del Este in 1967. It used interesting counterpoints of the elected representatives of states and the students clashing with the highly militarised police of the time. Carlos Alvarez' film *Asalto* stylistically is inspired by Santiago Alvarez' *Now* (1965). The film was made about the military attack on the University of Bogota in 1967, when over two thousand soldiers entered the university. It was a watershed moment in the troubled relation between military forces and the students of the National University of Colombia. (Mayolo &

[12] The song "Me gustan los Estudiantes" was composed by Violeta Parra. The song was written in the backdrop of the student activism in Chile in the 1960s which was a part of the greater social movements that gave momentum to the eventual electoral success of the Socialist government of Salvador Allende.

Arbeláez, 1974) The film uses photographic material, fragments of articles, images depicting the ensuing violence and the music of Victor Jara, to denounce the invasion. (Arbeláez & Mayolo, 1974) The juxtaposition of images of state pomp and state repression provide insight into the way in which the new style of filmmaking aimed to intervene in the narrative of social control on the part of the state.

The New Latin American Cinema movement had created a community of film makers who while employing different approaches to cinematic style in their work also identified themselves as belonging to a generation committed to giving voice to the struggle for national liberation and against systemic oppression. The possibility of filmmakers across Latin America to meet and view and discuss the kinds of films for the first time happened in the late 60s. The film festivals at Viña del Mar, Chile (1967), Pesaro, Italy (1968) and Mérida, Venezuela (1968) were scenes of vital encounters and debates among the new generation of Latin American filmmakers. In Viña del Mar in 1967, they met for the first time, an unprecedented encounter that provided a platform to understand the commonalities in their approach to cinema. Through these encounters, emerged an understanding of a commonality in terms of the perception of a cinema that was "marginal a las estructuras oficiales y gubernamentales; de un cine directo, ligado a la realidad que llevara como conclusion una expresión política[13]" (Mayolo & Arbeláez, 1974, p. 23). According to Patricia Aufderheide, "film came to be seen as not simply an arm of political struggle, but a staging ground of the battle for political power." (Aufderheide, 1991, p. 62)

The Cold War era and the violence and terror unleashed during the time on the national psyche successfully disrupted the artistic and cultural life as it was developing in different countries across Latin America through the 60s and 70s. In both literature and cinema, Latin American

[13] Trans: "marginal to the official and governmental structures, of a direct cinema, bound to the reality that carries as conclusion a political expression".

writers and filmmakers were discovering a unique voice for themselves, creating new traditions of what literature and cinema could be that would authentically represent the Latin American reality. Not in any sense a monolithic voice, creative expression in the 1950s had become a space for innovation and experimentation spurred on by dialogue and debates facilitated by direct meetings as well as a range of serious committed journals and periodicals on the direction cinema or literature might or should take. Even artists from the United States who were forced into exile by the McCarthy era anti-communist drives, found a safe haven in countries such as Mexico. As Rebecca M. Schreiber says,

> …the Cold War, as a political and cultural project that marginalized and pushed left-wing artists into exile, contributed to the formation of a culture of critical resistance…. the Cold War culture of political exile made possible a space of critique for left-wing U.S. artists, writers, and filmmakers in Mexico. (Schreiber, 2008, p. xii)

The great optimism that flooded through Latin America on the backs of the successes of the Cuban and then the Nicaraguan revolution, created a generation of artists as well as audience and readers who Jean Franco describes as a public "whose imaginations were fired by armed struggle and revolution" (Franco, 2002, p. 2).

The "lettered city" that Angel Rama referred to as shaping regional culture and identity, had already collapsed by the middle of the 1950s with voices from the margins making their presence felt through literature and cinema. (Franco, 2002) Writers such as José María Arguedas, Miguel Ángel Asturias, Alejo Carpentier or Juan Rulfo, addressed the heterogenous and fragmented nature of national identities and lived experience of Latin Americans. The grand narratives of "order and progress" based on racial and cultural lines were being subverted and new narratives being written which as Carlos Fuentes described, was "a healthy break with the language of power" (Fuentes, 1969) (Franco, 2002, p. 4). Works such as the testimonios of Rigoberta Menchú and Domitila Barrios de Chúngara successfully disrupted the absoluteness of a canonical view of literary and cultural lineage. The need to measure the quality of Latin

American cultural expression against the standards of European cultural history that had been a constant feature through the early part of the twentieth century was beginning to disappear. The potential for testimonios such as those of Rigoberta Menchú and Domitila Barrios de Chúngara to present and analyse the structures of violence that shaped the lived experience of their communities was a significant intervention in the representation of the violence that was part of the Latin American reality. These were voices that emerged from local knowledge. The official narrative which as Paul Brass says, divests the communities of "the power to define and interpret local incidents of violence, to place them in specific contexts based on local knowledge" (Brass, 1996, p. 1) was challenged.

Jean Franco describes the Cold War era intervention into the Latin American cultural landscape on the part of the United States as being premised on a certain apolitical creativity hinged on the idea of artistic freedom as opposed to the Soviet Union's emphasis on "peace" as political tactic founded on a realism drawing upon the images of society viewed and analysed in terms of class struggle. (Franco, 2002) The intention then on the part of the USA was to provide the Latin American cultural market with an alternative to the politically committed works emerging at the time and this led to United States having culturally "displaced and invested in essentially anti-political forms of academic aestheticism" (Jameson, 1994, p. 118). Roots of this lay in actions such as that taken by the Motion Picture Division (MPD) in the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) of the United States during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. As pointed out by Seth Fein, the MPD headed by Nelson Rockefeller, through funding and collaboration programs, created the conditions for "ideological collaboration" between the United States and Mexico. (Fein, 1998, p. 156) Drawing upon multidisciplinary historical work done on the connection between the US foreign policy, the

Cold War and commercial cinema[14], Fein studies the collaboration between the US and Mexican film industries in the late 1940s and 1950s as laying out the framework that would be put into the "use of mass culture as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy" (Fein, 1998, p. 156). This form of manufacturing public opinion through mass culture was the more conciliatory aspect of U.S. foreign policy towards the preservation of its corporate interests in Latin America.

This was a time which was also marked by the labelling of all perceived threats as emerging from communism and using all forms of force in order to eradicate that threat. The violent overthrow of Jacobo Árbenz's government in Guatemala was the first of many such moves that would go on to implement programs/pogroms such as the Operation Condor and the dirty wars, using torture, assassinations, mass incarcerations and disappearances in order to ensure U.S. corporate interests in the region would not be affected. In fact, Nelson Rockefeller, in the words of Jean Franco, apparently pursued "a policy of reformed capitalism" (Franco, 2002, p. 23). He advised that "if the United States is to maintain its security and its political and economic hemisphere position it must take economic measures at once to secure economic prosperity in Central and South America, and to establish this prosperity in the frame of hemispheric cooperation and dependence." (Rabe, 1988, p. 11). The collaborations between the film industries of United States and Mexico in the 1950s were a product of that benevolent attempt to "conquer the minds"[15] of the Latin American audience. However, while in the sphere of literature as Jean Franco points out there were two separate inclinations in terms of the political position taken by the author which was appropriated by the Cold War rhetoric, in cinema the choice was more direct and apparent. The New Latin American Cinema movement was an

[14] Works such as Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); and Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 222-274.

[15] Phrase used by General Augusto Pinochet, military dictator who led the military dictatorship that overthrew the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende.

artistic opposition to a cinema which, posing as apolitical mass culture, aimed to manufacture consent for the imperialist view of the world and Latin America. Dorfman and Mattelart in their preface to the book *How to read Donald Duck*, would describe this intervention and the response in counter to it in the context of Chile:

> Each day, with expert U.S. advice, in each newspaper, each weekly, each monthly magazine, each news dispatch, each movie, and each comic book, their arsenal of psychological warfare was fortified…. The popular Chilean cultural offensive, which accompanied the social and economic liberation, took multiple forms: wall paintings, popular papers, TV programs, motion pictures, theatre, songs, literature. (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975, p. 9)

In such times, even silence had a political connotation as the poet Nicanor Parra would write in his poem 'Tiempos Modernos'[16]:

> "These are calamitous times we're living through
> you can't speak without committing a contradiction
> or keep quiet without complicity with the Pentagon.[17]"
> (Parra & Williams, 1972, p. 85)

Within such a socio-cultural milieu, the understanding and representation of violence necessarily saw beyond the physical act of use of force and viewed violence structurally as emerging out of a capitalist and neoliberal world order that created power relations based on exploitation and repression. Fanon's understanding of violence of the colonised echoes in many works of the period. The structural violence present in the socio-economic, political and cultural order was understood in terms of the violence inherent in neo-colonialism. According to Fanon, "colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties.

[16] *Modern Times*
[17]Original: "Atravesamos unos tiempos calamitosos
imposible hablar sin incurrir en delito de contradicción
imposible callar sin hacerse cómplice del Pentágono." (Parra & Williams, 1972, p. 84)

It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence." (Fanon & Farrington, 1963, p. 61) Thus, Fanon states and Sartre in his preface to Fanon's work stresses on, the nature of the violence of the colonised which is the violence of the coloniser turned against himself. (Fanon & Farrington, 1963) Also inspired by the Dependency theory, violence was investigated as part of a process involving "complex, and often invisible, nonviolent actions and mechanisms" (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 21) that frames the act itself. In this regard, a film such as Miguel Littin's *El Chacal de Nahueltoro*/*The Jackal of Nahueltoro* (1969) can be read as an attempt to go beyond the sensationalised account of a murderer's act of violence and represent the cultural and structural violence that shape lives of individuals such as the protagonist, José.

However, this eclectic flourishing of creative expression spurred on by the socio-political movements taking place at the time met with a brutal response as the political optimism and euphoria gave way to the years of terror and unimaginable levels of violence unleashed on citizens under the auspices of operations such as the "war on communism", Operation Condor and culminating in the chaos of the "war on drugs". With the emergence of right-wing dictatorships and governments, politically committed artists increasingly found it difficult to make films in a hostile environment. In Chile, Argentina and Bolivia numerous film workers were imprisoned or forced to go into hiding and exile. The cinema made in exile itself became an extension of the Latin American reality. For those who remained, censorship practiced by the military dictatorships forced filmmakers to self-censor themselves in order to survive and ideologically align themselves with the repressive state. Filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha, Rui Guerra and Carlos Diegues of the Cinema Novo movement went into exile but those who remained in Brazil had to change the very nature of their films so as to be allowed to reach an audience (Schiff, 1993). Fernando Varea's work on the films produced in Argentina between 1976 and 1983 offers an excellent insight into the kind of cinema that would attract state

funding under a military dictatorship. Very specific kinds of films would be produced under such governments in keeping with the ideology the government wished to promote. He points out the conditions laid out by the dictatorship in the words of Jorge Enrique Bitleston, the controller of the Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía (I.N.C./National Institute of Cinematography) in 1976:

> …todas las películas que exalten valores espirituales, morales, cristianos e históricos o actuales de la nacionalidad, o que afirmen los conceptos de familia, de orden, de respeto, de trabajo, de esfuerzo fecundo y de responsabilidad social; buscando crear una actitud popular optimista en el futuro[18]" and which avoid "escenas y diálogos procaces[19] (Varea, 2006, p. 1).

As the military dictatorship in Argentina focused its efforts on eradicating the "Red" elements in society which was seen as being against the ideals of a Western Christian civilisation, it became important for the government to produce a cinema that upheld those same ideals, along with promoting an "optimistic attitude" which possibly precluded any form of criticism of the state or state machinery. Argentine films made during the dictatorship were mostly family adventures, family comedies or sex comedies.

The fact that the literary and filmmaking community in many of the countries taken over through military coups had to go into hiding, into exile, with members imprisoned, killed, disappeared or not allowed to return to their homeland, inevitably led to an end to the way in which literature and cinema was being circulated, received or created. While filmmakers and writers continued to work in exile, their subsequent work bore the impact of such an existence, the impact of living in a state of constant insecurity, anxiety and fear. Such horrific levels of quotidian violence would inevitably lead to a disruption of the way in which artists would

[18] Trans: "all films that exalt spiritual, moral, Christian and historical or current values of nationality, or that affirm the concepts of family, order, respect, work, fruitful effort and social responsibility; seeking to create an optimistic popular attitude in the future"
[19] Trans: lewd scenes and dialogues

envision their role in society, further challenging the methods and modes of expressing this violent and traumatic reality. In a report on the 11th Pesaro film festival (Mostra) in 1975, Julianne Burton described the trajectory of the artistic energy displayed in the politically committed cinema that the film festival was designed to give a platform to as moving from "banality through genius to the current powerlessness in the face of governmental suppression (Burton, 1975).

2.3 Post-1980 Latin American Cinema: "Atomised"[20] reality of a Neoliberal Urban Culture

The end of the Cold War-era war on the "Red Menace" did not end the violence that ensued in Latin America as part of the "War on Drugs"[21] (Vulliamy, 2011), particularly affecting countries part of the drug supply chain such as Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico, though its repercussions were felt across the region. The systematic targeting of sections of citizens perceived as a threat to neoliberal interests (through the Operation Condor or the state-perpetrated authoritarian violence under the dictatorships) was succeeded by the use of the infrastructure built for the Cold War for the purpose of a conflict that led to a perpetual state of violence and counter-violence with no apparent end. One of the most significant features of the War on Drugs was that it legitimised direct intervention on the part of the U.S. military in Latin America in a manner that was unprecedented. (Mabry, 1988)

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of capitalist globalisation as the dominant ideology governing state policies, and following a period of brutal human rights violations, the return of Latin American countries to a semblance of democracy with all social welfare policies heavily curtailed, a new generation of filmmakers emerged who were able to garner international attention. Critics and scholars on Latin American cinema and culture were

[20] A term used by the director Benjamin Naíshtat to refer to the social reality of Argentina in the 1990s. (Macfarlane, 2018)
[21] A term first used by U.S. president Richard Nixon in a speech delivered on 17 July 1971.

quick to notice the formal break from the New Latin American Cinema movement of the 60s apparent in the kinds of films that were emerging in the 1990s in Latin America. Terms such as "New Argentine Cinema" and "New Brazilian Cinema" were put to use to refer to the films which were gaining attention on the international stage. Critics such as Ivana Bentes in Brazil or Quintín and Sergio Wolf from Argentina pointed out a rupture between the emergent generation of filmmakers and the generation that preceded them. The term "una generacion de huérfanos[22]" (Wolf, 1994, p. 12) (Wolf, 1994, p. 12) was used to refer to a collective of new filmmakers who were emerging in post-dictatorship Argentina and in a neoliberal world that had accepted the Washington Consensus as inevitable and absolute. The term was viewed as indicative of the break in the inheritance of cinematic influences between these two generations. Inspired by the official version of viewing the Latin American countries, post-dictatorship and neoliberal transformation, as situated within a "moment of reconciliation and prosperity" (Podalsky, 2011, p. 6), the rupture is seen indicative of the break from the past histories of trauma and injustice.

Critics such as Edouard Waintrop were less inclined to point out a rupture and instead would describe this generation as, "One cannot categorize this group as a school nor as a "new wave" of Argentine cinema in the strict sense of the term. Instead, it is more of the entrance of a new generation on the screen". (Montesoro & Batlle, 1999) (Falicov, 2003, p. 59) In a conversation with Walter Salles Jr. of Brazil in May, 2002, the Argentine filmmaker Daniel Burman said,

> I think that we need to learn that we have not invented anything new. Birri and other filmmakers existed before we did. We have retrieved a way of making films and, given that times have changed, the results are different now. But we are not the first to reconceptualize filmmaking. (Salles Jr., et al., 2003, p. 66)

In the same discussion, Lucrecia Martel describes the work done by the new generation of Argentine filmmakers as a "transition" rather than a rupture however alluring the idea of a total

[22] Trans: "a generation of orphans"

rupture might be. (Salles Jr., et al., 2003, p. 67) The Mexican filmmaker Francisco Athié would describe the developments in Mexican cinema in the 1990s as the "fourth or fifth reincarnation" of the New Cinema movement that began in Latin America in the 1950s (Martin, Paddington, & Athié, 2004, p. 119).

The new generation of Latin American filmmakers produced work that could be seen as appropriating the formulaic conventions of mainstream cinema which had been rejected by filmmakers in the 1960s and simultaneously shifting the focus towards the micropolitics of emotion or the individual experience in place of the focus on communities caught up in a struggle. Laura Podalsky in her analysis of the use of genre in Latin American cinema post-1990, points out that the requirements of the formal conventions of a genre may necessitate the eliding over of socio-political and historical specificities. (Podalsky, 2011, p. 61) Paul A. Schroeder Rodríguez states that in terms of aesthetics, these films were drawing upon cinematic conventions across the spectrum. In terms of aesthetics, he makes connections between auteur cinema and Lucrecia Martel's *La ciénaga* [Argentina,2001], neorealism and Pablo Trapero's *Mundo Grúa* [Argentina, 1999] or Adrián Caetano's *Bolivia* [Argentina, 2001], militant NLAC and Alfonso Cuarón's *¡Y tu mamá también!* [Mexico, 2001], and neobaroque NLAC and Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores perros* [Mexico, 2000] (Rodríguez, 2012). This was a decontextualised appropriation since the aesthetic style would be used without the historical development of the particular cinematic movement that had led to its creation informing the final product. In this such an artistic approach can be read in light of Frederic Jameson's concept of the pastiche. Frederic Jameson defines the postmodern creative attitude of parody as "pastiche" which is, "like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. However, it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter" (Jameson, 1991, p. 17). The reduction of aesthetic styles of modernity to

codes where increasingly the past as a referent is reduced to ahistorical codes, a process that Jameson explains as “the past as 'referent' finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts”. (Jameson, 1991, p. 18)

Critics such as Carlos Monsiváis (Mexico) and Ivana Bentes (Brazil) would critique the superficial treatment of the social and economic issues of the subject matter in films such as *Y tu mamá también/And Your Mom Too* (Mexico, 2001) or *Cidade de Deus/City of God* (Brazil, 2002). In her analysis of contemporary Brazilian cinema that was emerging during the 1990s, a period called the “Retomada”[23] in Brazil after the government initiative to provide an impetus to national film production, Ivana Bentes states that while the filmmakers of the Cinema Novo movement of the 60s and 70s were attempting to create a revolutionary cinema for a national audience that revolted against imperialist ideology, contemporary films of both Brazil as well as other Latin American ‘successes’ such as González Iñárritu’s *Amores perros/Love’s a Bitch* (2000) or Beto Brant’s *O invasor/The Trespasser* (2002) provide a “new brutalism” with no ideological purpose apart from that of telling individual stories. She terms this style of filmmaking as “cosmetics of hunger” in an oblique allusion to Glauber Rocha’s concept of the “aesthetics of hunger”. (Echeverría, 2016)

According to Monsiváis, the cinematic imagination of urban reality is dominated by the film noir. The hegemony of North American cinema in Latin America, has produced a condition where he says, the imagining of life in Mexico City is already marked by an Americanisation in terms of the urban aesthetics in the popular imagination. In the search for antecedents to the contemporary portrayal of urban violence and youth cultures, Monsiváis turns to Luis Buñuel’s *Los Olvidados/The Young and the Damned* (1950). He says Buñuel’s cultural formation was not through cinema as much as through literature (such as the novels of Benito Pérez Galdós), and painting (such as the paintings of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo) and for this “la violencia de

[23] Trans as ‘Recovery’, ’Retaking’ or ‘Resumption’.

Los olvidados no surge del cine sino, en primera instancia, de la combinación de lo visual y lo literario"[24] (Monsiváis, 2006, p. 515). In contrast, he says the cultural sensibilities of the new generation of filmmakers such as González Iñárritu and Cuarón have been formed through a video culture (that of MTV and films such as *Twelve Monkeys, Mean Streets,* the cinema of Quentin Tarantino such as *Pulp Fiction* and Abel Ferrara such as *Bad Lieutenant* or the kind of on-screen personas created by the likes of James Dean, Marlon Brando or Robert De Niro in *Taxi Driver*). Monsiváis arrives at the conclusion that literature as the essential origin of aesthetic imagination has disappeared from the kind of "postmodern" cinema as found in the works of the generation comprising the so-called "New Mexican Cinema" and as a result he says, in terms of aesthetic understanding, reality has been replaced by cinema. Hence, the aesthetic structures through which stories are presented in these films have a kind of cinematic self-referential character and it is preoccupied primarily with the observational analysis of violence. It is to be noted that Monsiváis writes this in 2006, at a moment when the domination of video culture is absolute and the digital medium is yet to make a significant intervention in the domain of media culture. Setting aside his understanding of Buñuel's work, Monsiváis is pointing out a particular feature of the films that were emerging just at the cusp of this transition. In his understanding of the cultural aesthetics of films such as *Y tú mama también* and *Amores Perros*, he echoes John Fiske's view on the MTV media culture where Fiske states, "MTV makes not sense but itself: MTV represents not the real but itself: MTV → MTV → MTV → MTV→" (Fiske, 1986, p. 78).

With the end of the Cold War and the establishment of a neoliberal world order, artistic identification in terms of collectives broke down. Cinema emerging in this situation attracted criticism such as that made by Bentes and Monsiváis for lacking what Podalsky terms as "an

[24] Trans: "The violence of *Los olvidados* does not come out of cinema, but primarily from a combination of the visual and the literary"

overarching political project" (Podalsky, 2011, p. 2). Argentine filmmaker Pablo Trapero believes the change that has taken place is that now "the story comes first, not the director" as opposed to the films of the previous militant generation of filmmakers where "the formal discourse came first, followed by the cinematographic one". (Salles Jr., et al., 2003, p. 67) According to this line of thought, the director's authorial vision, be it ideological or aesthetic, was superseded by the demands of the narrative. Filmmakers such as Alfonso Cuarón would distance themselves quite clearly from the very idea that art could be political. In his words, to be guided by ideology was to put "a wall between communication and people" (The Charlie Rose Show (PBS), 2006). This had been the argument of Hollywood regarding the nature of cinema for mass consumption which after the Cuban Revolution had faced strong resistance from a new generation of filmmakers in Cuba who had the added support of the state in finding ways to exhibit their films. In the words of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, "The studios said that we were forcing films on the public that they didn't want to see and that cinema attendance would fall. This didn't happen. Attendances stayed the same. We broke the myth." (Payne, 2003)

By 2006, when Mexican directors such as Cuarón or González Iñarritu were attracting the attention of the international audience, particularly from Hollywood, a deliberate distancing from the cinematic experimentations of the 1960s can be observed in their case. Laura Podalsky's analysis of the films made during the 90s and early 2000s separates the ideological intent of the film's narrative from its emotional and sensorial appeal. Her claim is that

> …a film's ideological stance (as measured through its narrative strategies and levels of formal experimentation) is not the sole determinant of the sociocultural work it may perform. Nor do a film's sensorial appeals always work to serve or uphold its political propositions. (Podalsky, 2011, p. 79)

As Diestro-Dopido points out (Diestro-Dópido, 2014), in 1995 the collection of ten short films released by the INCAA[25], Argentina, had films made by a group of new filmmakers who were

[25] Instituto Nacional De Cine Y Artes Audiovisuales or the National Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts.

collectively viewed as representing the New Argentine Cine. However, these filmmakers, among whom were the likes of Martel and Trapero, had very little similarity with each other in terms of aesthetics, artistic vision or content. This "generation of orphans" as the *Film* magazine had termed them, were "united by a common history who had reacted to it according to their different temperaments, subjects and experiences - and have continued to do so following different trajectories." (Diestro-Dópido, 2014, p. 91). Benjamin Naishtat, the Argentine filmmaker, says "There used to be currents or movements within art, but it's hard to identify today, because each man is his own island". (Macfarlane, 2018) According to him, filmmaking aesthetics have become more "atomised" (Macfarlane, 2018) today.

With the reestablishment of democracy in countries such as Brazil, Argentina or Chile, a concern for filmmakers was to regain agency over what they wanted to create. Lucrecia Martel, Argentine filmmaker and member of the so-called "New Argentine Cinema" group, says,

> We must not forget that our generation succeeded the one that was exterminated in the 1970s. We need to deal with our immediate environment, to anchor our stories to the intimately familiar, to ensure that performances are as authentic as possible and, thus, we tend to use non-actors, or actors who are so unknown that they can look like non-actors. All of these aspects are typical features of recent films, and I think that this is because we feel it so necessary to tell our own story. (Salles Jr., et al., 2003, p. 66)

By the time of the reestablishment of democracy, the transition to a neoliberal structure had become complete and led to defunding of national institutes that had been set up to fund a national cinema. Post-1980s saw a change in the way in which films were being funded.[26] Jens

[26] One of the key propellers of the film movement in the 1950s was the involvement of the state in promoting and sponsoring films. The post-revolution Cuban model of film production and distribution was a definite influence and had powerful resonance across Latin American countries. With the turn towards more right-wing governments, filmmakers found it increasingly difficult to fund their projects as well as find ways to exhibit them. President Collor de Melho of Brazil stopped all government funding for the film industry in 1990 and led to the closing of Embrafilme (Hart 2015, 83).
The Nueva Ley Federal de Cinematografía of Mexico passed in 1993 declared that the government institution in charge of the cinematic arts, the National Film Institute (IMCINE) would henceforth subsidise 60% of the costs of production while the remaining 40% had to be procured by the director through private sources. (Hart 2015,

Anderman writing about the post-1983 cinema emerging from Argentina, states that these transnational co-productions would often require the films to be "recognizably 'Argentine' as well as universally accessible narratives". (Andermann, 2018) . In her assessment of Fernando Meirelles' film *Blindness*, a transnational co-production, Julia Eccheverría points out a guilt in the director who appears to be "torn between the domestic critics' expectations of what a national film-maker should represent and the demands of an increasingly global film market that drives them to explore new transnational territories" (Echeverría, 2016, p. 2). In his response to a question posed during an interview on the Portuguese television programme 'Fotograma' broadcast by Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP), regarding why instead of using Portuguese, the film uses English as the medium, Meirelles demonstrates this internal conflict. The primary argument justifying the use of English is the fact that it would mean a greater audience and hence an increase in the budget of the production (Echeverría, 2016, p. 1).

The emergence of transnational sources of funding, gave a new impetus to Latin American film productions at this moment. Films increasingly were made as part of transnational projects. Julia Echevarria sees this as part of a turn towards internationalisation as a result of "advanced capitalism" and the access brought through globalisation to novel directions of media technologies. (Echeverría, 2016) Juan Poblete sees the format of the transnational productions as emerging out of a combination of the "formal tools of dominant Hollywood productions… with more vernacular, regional forms". (Poblete, 2004, p. 214) According to Poblete, the consequence is one where the final cinematic statement becomes one that gives rise to "a critique of the impact of neoliberalism on the national societies of Latin America in times of

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83) This move on the part of the government was challenged by directors such as Arturo Ripstein who felt it would have devastating consequences on the Mexican film production. In an interview, he said, 'A country without film is a sad country.' (Mora 1999) In Argentina, the state funding of cinema and the arts received a resurgence in the 1990s although the new generation of filmmakers often found themselves at loggerhead with INCAA and what was termed as Menemismo which as Diestro-Dópido points out, signified 'a conservative, provincial and chauvinist politics' (Diestro-Dópido 2014, 92) that was a characteristic of President Carlos Menem's government.

globalization.” (Poblete, 2004, p. 214) Laura Podalsky argues that since the films would be produced keeping in mind the fact that it was not made targeting a single national market, often the specific complexities of a nation’s history and the historical moment would be avoided or diluted so that an international audience would not find it difficult to engage in the narrative. (Podalsky, 2011) Marvin D’Lugo understands the use of identifiable genres in the films of this period as a method to “compensate foreign audiences for their ignorance of local culture or history”. (D'Lugo, 2003, p. 113)

Beatriz Sarlo, the Argentine scholar, views contemporary media culture as enabling the dissemination of a form of consumer capitalism that creates a fragmented urban culture, which generates further segregation and atomisation of collective subjectivities. (Sarlo, 2001) The Brazilian critic, Luiz Zanin Oricchio speaks of the rise of an individualistic ethos of depoliticised thinking in the 1990s which made it difficult for collective identifications. As a result, according to him, it proved an obstacle to the understanding of the trauma of the past under the dictatorship in terms of the power dynamics which operates through collectives. (Oricchio, 2003).

A certain kind of observational representation of fragmented experience of violence in a number of Latin American films of this period can be understood by extending Oricchio’s analysis to the broader spectrum of conceptualisation of structures of violence within the socio-political and cultural domain. As Christian León points out, in the 1990s a new generation of filmmakers across Latin America were making cinema that presented a disenchanted fragmented world, a dystopic view of the existence on the streets at the margins of urban modernity, of characters adrift at the mercy of violence, denied the very possibility of becoming conscious of their oppression or of being agents of social change. (León, 2007) The political and ideological discourse that informed much of the cinematic experimentation of the Third Cinema Movement in the 50s and 60s is discarded in order to present a world where the

alienated marginalized individual is caught in a perpetual postponement of death within a corrosive modernity. León views this film-making style as a form of "dirty realism".

León's categorization uses the term coined by Bill Bufurd in reference to a particular literary movement in North American literature in the 1980s. Tamas Dobozy in his attempt to define dirty realism as a literary aesthetic or ideology says that it is characterized by fragmentation and disparity, comprising "an aggregate of specific, localized, personal narratives contingent upon the particulars of the experience they describe" (Dobozy, 2000, p. 3). "Unillusioned" is the term 'Granta nineteen' employed to describe the view of life as held by this group of writers. (Granta, 1986) Tamas Dobozy sees this as symptomatic of the "non-systematic system" that authors of dirty realism used in order to avoid the "weakness"[27] of fixed political affiliations. (Dobozy, 2000, p. 3) In order to present a "reality of simulation, fractured narrative and social incoherence", dirty realism avoids using ideological structures of understanding and analysing reality (Dobozy, 2000, p. 63). Christian León uses the framework of dirty realism to analyse films such as Carlos Reygadas' *Japón*/*Japan* (Mexico,2002), Lisandro Alonso's *La Libertad*/*Freedom* (Argentina, 2001) and Paz Encina's *La hamaca paraguaya/Paraguayan Hammock* (Paraguay, 2006) which uses visual aesthetics close to the documentary with a camera that is often unstable and handheld, the image granulated (León, 2007).

The cinema of marginality using the technique of dirty realism, according to Christian León, present Latin American urban spaces as corrosive environment that engenders crime, delinquency and violence. León stresses on a style that does not seek to embellish, uses non-actors heightening the aura of anonymity. In reference to the films of Gaviria, León points out the extreme visual documentation of the world of the marginal referring to films such as *La vendedora de las rosas*/*The Rose Seller* (Colombia, 1998) and *Rodrigo D: No Futuro*/*Rodrigo*

[27] A term used reportedly by Charles Bukowski to describe the political aspect of Pablo Neruda's work, as narrated in Cherkovski, Neeli. 1988. *Whitman's wild children*. Venice, CA: Lapis Press.

D: No Future (Colombia, 1990). He states, "En un intento por captar al marginal como es, y no como debería ser, la obra fílmica se convierte en un diálogo abierto con una realidad traumática y dolorosa de la calle.[28]" (León, 2007, p. 142). Jeremy Lehnen views such a portrayal of the marginal subject in the vein of Agamben's concept of the *homo sacer*. He states, "Within these cinematic productions, the poor male subject is reduced to his bare life, stripped of his political component. His body is a force field crisscrossed by the intersecting vectors of exclusion, abjection, violence, and fear" (Lehnen, 2012, p. 170).

2.4 "Urban Fragility" and the Fragmentation of Urban Space

Koonings and Kruijt describes "urban fragility" as the ubiquitous presence of the fear of insecurity in the urban society even though the actual "encounters with violence" may be "unevenly spread across the cityscape" (Koonings & Kruijt, 2015, p. 1). Contrary to the narrative presented by a media that sensationalises urban violence promoting a culture of fear and greater surveillance of society, statistically violence in the form of homicide, rape and drug related conflict is more likely to take place in the less affluent parts of the city (Sarlo, 2009) (Coy, 2006). Yet, statistics cannot correct or aid in changing a fear that is based on an imagined possibility of encounter with violence. As Beatriz Sarlo says, "Dentro de las posibilidades de lo imaginario no esta la de equivocarse. Con el imaginario no se discute.[29]" (Sarlo, 2009, p. 92).

Beatriz Sarlo points out the unique paradox of the imaginary of urban violence found in certain sections of Buenos Aires inhabitants, the *porteños*, post return to democracy. Within that perception, the period of the military dictatorship in Argentina and its experience of the highest

[28] Trans: "In an attempt to capture the marginal as it is and not as it should be, the cinematic work is converted into an open dialogue with the traumatic and painful reality of the streets. Thus, it is that the film captures something that no director or photographer can develop, the unmistaken experience of marginality."
[29] Trans: "To err does not exist within the possibilities of the imaginary. There is no arguing with the imaginary."

level of state sponsored brutality in the history of the nation following the establishment of the modern state, is juxtaposed with a relatively low rate of urban petty crime. The state-sponsored extrajudicial murder of tens of thousands of Argentine citizens is perceived also to be a period when the state was keeping its cities in order (Sarlo, 2009, p. 91). Sarlo points out the irrational yet strong residual imaginary of the city as being more secure, safer during the rule of an "Estado terrorista" (Sarlo, 2009, p. 92) as opposed to the period under a democratic government. A similar view is held by sections of Chilean society as well regarding the years under military dictatorship. (Long, 2013) This paradox hinges on the perception of crime and criminality. As Sarlo says, during the dictatorship the urban youth would be threatened less by delinquency and inter-gang brawls and more by the police enjoying an incredible level of power conferred on them by an autocratic state. (Sarlo, 2009, p. 91)

The spirit of optimism and respect for order and conservative societal values depicted in the cinema produced during the junta government in Argentina found an audience in the sections of the society who were not facing torture and murder or having to go into exile or to come to terms with disappearances of family members and loved ones. The fact that the perception exists of a safe city under an autocratic regime is symptomatic of a blindness to certain forms of violence emerging out of an indirect complicity in the repressive violence of the state. Such a perception apparently disassociates the state violence unleashed on sections of the society from the socio-political discourse structuring public life even though it is this discourse that legitimizes the excesses of violence. In essence, it seeks to justify the genocidal scale of violence on citizens as being part of the legitimate techniques of governance and exercise of social control as performed by the state. The very idea of legitimate or illegitimate aspects of violence is based on the observation and the simultaneous non-observation of certain forms and aspects of violence. As Schinkel states, "the question of the recognition of aspects of violence is a question of *politics*" (Schinkel, 2010, p. 12). It is determined by factors such as

class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion and is understood through the use of law. Taking into consideration the role played by the state in defining as to what constitutes as "violence", Schinkel states violence needs to be understood through the concept of a "regime of violence" (Schinkel, 2013, p. 312) that is aware of the relations that exist between state violence, structural violence and private violence and the translations that take place from one form to another. According to this view, violence has to be understood as emerging from within a "web of social relations" which gives meaning to what constitutes as violence and it is the state that provides this framework to understand and define it as such. (Schinkel, 2013, p. 315) This frame is what Schinkel calls "regime of violence" and he states, "Blindness to an existing regime of violence means an implicit acceptance of the prevalent ways of defining and recognizing violence." (Schinkel, 2013, p. 316) This is very clear in the way violence that takes place in barrios and favelas as depicted in films such as *Cidade de Deus*/*City of God* (Brazil, 2002), *Elite Squad* (Brazil, 2007), *Secuestro Express*/*Express Kidnapping* (Venezuela, 2005) play on the idea of violence being primarily a domain of the poor marginal classes. The state action and policies that help in shaping the structures that create and perpetuate such inequality, maintaining the systems of misery and desperation through the poverty and hunger that almost becomes the fate or destiny of such subjects, is rendered invisible.

2.5 Cinematic Treatment of "Urban Fragility": The Gated Community in Film

Cinema of marginality as Christian Leon sees it, uses a close observational approach towards such marginal lives entrapped in a relentlessly violent world. However, films such as Plá's *La Zona*/*The Zone* (Mexico, 2007), Martel's *La Mujer sin cabeza*/*The Headless Woman* (Argentina, 2008), Mendonça Filho's *O Som ao Redor*/*Neighbouring Sounds* (Brazil, 2012) or Naishtat's *Rojo/Red* (Argentina, 2018) turn the cinematic gaze on the violence that goes

unobserved, that of the upper classes and the code of silence and 'cover-up' that accompanies it. The intention is to make the viewer question their perceptions of society or what they regard as normal or common sensical. Cecilia Sosa in her analysis of Martel's film emphasises the impact of the film on the viewers thus:

> Martel's film performs a contemporary narrative that places the viewers in a double role: each of the spectators becomes not only a witness but also a survivor, and thereby subtly compelled to respond. For if the film turns on the fact that the crime is less the 'accident' itself and more the web of denial that comes afterwards, significantly it offers the opportunity to reverse the web of complicities, inviting the audience to break the silence. It offers a frightening mirror in response to the guilt that flows from one time to another, embracing successive generations. In doing so, the film invites viewers to consider the distortions of their eyes, and eventually to re-make reality. (Sosa, 2009, p. 259)

One of the urban structures that have haunted the imagination of writers and filmmakers in terms of the complex web of encounters between the classes it creates and is founded on is the gated community. Desire for an ordered secure space and the fear of becoming a victim of a chaotic urban violence is at the heart of this particular form of urban development. The fear is transmitted to them through the television in the form of sensationalized accounts of gang war, drug related violence as shown in *Historia del miedo/History of Fear* or the video clips of violent acts committed by gangs that are circulated and viewed with a certain amount of voyeuristic pleasure in *O Som ao redor/Neighbouring Sounds*. In his study of the development of the gated community in Brazil, Martin Coy states the primary reason for residents to choose to live in a gated community is the fear of crime. (Coy, 2006)

Angela Holmes in her assessment of Argentine films about gated communities uses Baudrillard's concept of the "hyperreal" (Baudrillard & Poster, 1988, p. 145) to understand life in such zones as premised on an imitation of community life. Holmes views the lifestyle in such communities as functioning within what Baudrillard describes as the "realm of simulation" (Baudrillard & Poster, 1988, p. 146). Her analysis explores how films such as

Lucrecia Martel's *La Ciudad que huye/The City that Fled* (2006), Celina Murga's *Una semana solos/A Week Alone* (2007), Miguel Cohan's *Betibú* (2014) and Marcelo Piñeyro's *Las viudas de los jueves/The Thursday Night Widows* (2009) delves into the various aspects of living in simulation—the solidifying of class privilege, the fragility of such a performative lifestyle, the capacity for violence that it is founded upon as a means to protect its exclusivity. According to Wendy Brown, "Neoliberal rationality, while foregrounding the market, is not only or even primarily focused on the economy; it involves extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action." (Brown, 2005, pp. 39-40) These films in effect explore what it is to live in a society structured upon such a "rationality".

Perceived as symptomatic of the growing inequalities within the nation, a symbol of affluence, safety as well as segregation, the gated community appears over and over in Latin American film and literature post-1990s as well as being the subject of sociological studies. Films such as Lucrecia Martel's short documentary *La ciudad que huye* (Argentina, 2006), Rodrigo Plá's *La Zona/The Zone* (Mexico, 2007), Kleber Mendonça Filho's *O Som ao Redor* (Brazil, 2012), Benjamín Naishtat's *Historia del miedo* (Argentina, 2014) among others delve into the phenomenon of urban paranoia, segregation and surveillance. These films aim to confuse the demarcations of safe and unsafe, violent and peaceful by delving into the nature of the exclusive lifestyle of the gated community and the structures that help in maintaining it thus. For instance, Rodrigo Plá's *La Zona* (Mexico, 2007) was a very important intervention in films about segregated communities founded upon class and economic privilege. Based on a short story by Laura Santullo of the same name, this film turns the focus away from the marginal subject, the interlopers in a gated community and the supposed source of violence and threat, and instead positions it upon the elite residents and their capacity for violence (Lehnen, 2012). Plá presents urban violence as not something exclusive to the lower classes but instead the film as Lehnen analyses it, "interrogates the role both lower and upper classes play in the escalation of violence

and in the buttressing of social divisions within contemporary society" (Lehnen, 2012, pp. 170-171).

The very safety of a gated community is premised on a certain idea of segregated existence where the inhabitants of such a community experience the city in the form of fragmented spaces of relative security such as shopping malls, centers of entertainment which at the same time isolates them from the public spaces of the street. Naishtat's *Historia del miedo* plays on this idea of fragmented spaces through the abrupt cuts and transition from one seemingly self-contained space to another. Movement is done through the use of a controlled space such as a car. The car does not signify stepping out into a public space but is an extension of the private privileged exclusive space of the home. In Naishtat's *Historia del miedo*, the scene at the tollbooth where Edith and Camilo stop while traveling in their car is representative of the way the car acts as a sort of final barrier between those inside from the world outside. The naked man that appears in front of them is a manifestation of the fears they have regarding the urban space and its potential to harm. Here the violence is targeted at them in the form of the man who tries to open the car door. However, Edith nearly runs him over in her desperation to escape and in that is embodied the capacity for violence that protects her. In *O Som ao redor* there is a similar sequence where Bia, the housewife takes her children out in her car. The threat now lies in the form of the children playing football on the street. Throughout the film, football has a haunting presence as something that crosses the boundaries that have been established to create this secure space of an upper-class residential community. Bia reverses her car and the sound of the engine is loud and aggressive and as the children are scattered by the appearance of the car, she leaves behind a football that she has run over.

The car in both cases prevent the occupants from having to engage with the world outside, in fact the potential to run over anything that threatens them is an expression of violence that denies the public from entering that protected zone. Such a model of urban development goes

contrary to the very notion of the "urban form" which in the words of Lefebvre, is a "place of encounter, assembly, simultaneity" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 118). Instead of providing a space for the encounter of different worldviews, cultures, classes, races, ethnicities which is the very essence of urban existence, a gated community is premised on keeping out certain elements of society, creating an illusion of a homogenous community, unaffected by the socio-political circumstances of what lies beyond its walled premise. Drawing upon the critical commentary of Carlos Monsiváis, Susan Rotker, Jesús Martín Barbero and Néstor García Canclini on the impact of the culture of fear on Latin American urban development in recent times, Lehnen states,

> …the culture of fear that permeates many of Latin America's *urbes* has eroded the notion of the *polis*. As a result, increasingly, the individual has retracted from what were once the more democratic public spaces of the street, plaza, metro, and public markets into the exclusive arenas of gated communities, private cars, and de facto restricted shopping malls, spaces that are many times hidden behind bulletproof windows, fortified walls, and surveillance systems. (Lehnen, 2012, p. 166)

In the media generated and official view of urban crime, the history of violence that lies at the base of the current social and economic classes is not worth noting. However, the soci-economically privileged classes who are the residents of such gated communities are those who have benefitted from the history of violent exploitation be it through a dictatorship or the colonial plantation and slavery. In their urgency to prove that the regime of violence has ended with the end of slavery or the collapse of a dictatorship, governments across Latin America had focused on forwarding a narrative of reconciliation. However, there can be no reconciliation without justice and in effect the legacy of violence breeds a culture of complicity that is insecure because of the constant fear it holds of justice arriving in the form of violent retribution. Possibly that is the reason behind a range of films being made about the world of

urban violence in Latin America in recent times that use horror as a genre with its implications of a return of the repressed 'Other'.

Guatemalan filmmaker, Jayro Bustamante in his film *La Llorona* (2019) situates his narrative within the history of the genocide of the indigenous peoples in Guatemala during the dictatorship of Efraín Ríos Montt in the 1980s and the search for justice launched by the current indigenous organisations which in reality remain unaccomplished. For instance, in the case of Montt himself, the sentence of 80 years in prison for crimes against humanity that was passed in 2013 was not enough to bring him to justice. (Brodzinsky & Watts, 2013) The Constitutional Court of Guatemala had suppressed the judgement and the former dictator died at home in 2018 before the completion of the retrial against him. The film *La Llorona* shows the judicial process against a general in the Guatemalan army who had participated in the genocide of the Mayan communities during the dictatorship and has clearly benefitted immensely in terms of economic and social prestige. The film shows the harrowing nature of the judicial process where the survivors lay out the memory of the violence---the raping, the killing, the rivers of blood. The account of the witnesses is juxtaposed with the total lack of empathy as seen in the elite class to which the general and his wife belong. The general escapes his sentence through a loophole in the judicial process and returns home under the pretense of failing health. However, despite the heavy armed protection and structures of surveillance set up to protect him, his retribution comes from his past. Be it in the form of the protestors who surround his home, imprisoning him in a manner of speaking or the more supernatural haunting of the past in the figure of La Llorona, the Weeping Woman of Central American folklore who cries for her lost children.

A particular genre of horror films has recently emerged in Latin America that focus on the politics of class, race and gender. In his analysis of the two Brazilian films *À Deriva*/*Adrift* (2009) and *O Som ao redor* (2012), Jack Draper names this kind of horror as materialist horror film. He says,

> The contemporary South American 'accent' on horror, or what I am calling *materialist horror*, involves a framing of the genre within a dramatic narrative emphasizing not fantastical characters (as South East Asian ghost films and Latin American magical realist films and literature have done) but the everyday, material reality of class, race and/or gender violence and unequal social relations that are deeply rooted in Latin American history (Draper III, 2016, p. 122).

Films such as Mendonca Filho's *O Som ao redor/Neighbouring Sounds* (2012) or Jayro Bustamante's *La Llorona/The Weeping Woman* (Guatemala, 2019) situate the terror within a history of genocide and violence. In the case of *O Som ao redor*, the film opens with a sequence of still photos of the life on the sugar plantations that formed the economic backbone of the northeastern coastal region of Brazil, which is where Recife is, the city the film is set in. Draper describes this series of photos thus:

> These black and white historical photos include an image of the so-called 'big house' of the landowner (formerly slave master) as well as images of the rural working class (formerly slaves) labouring in the fields, and one image in a city (presumably Recife) of working-class women holding up papers that appear to be voter registration cards or worker identity cards indicating formal employment. The racial hierarchy of this region is such that there is a lot of overlap between the urban and rural working classes and the population of African descent, so many of the workers depicted in these photographs are AfroBrazilian or of mixed racial descent (primarily African and Portuguese, with some of indigenous descent as well). A racial-class hierarchy continues to be evident as the working class and poor characters/extras tend to be of darker skin colour whereas the wealthier characters/extras are of lighter skin colour. (Draper III, 2016, p. 129)

Through this sequence the film reminds the viewer of the history behind the urban settlement the modern-day narrative takes place in. It is this history which eventually resurfaces through the desire for retribution. However, unlike Bustamante's film, *O Som ao redor* does not use the supernatural as a device. The moments of terror are generated through the fear that lies in the heart of upper middle-class privilege particularly in the Brazilian context depicted as the presence of unwanted black bodies in protected white spaces.

Benjamin Naishtat's film *Historia del Miedo* is an intervention into the presence of the possibility of violence that frames urban lives juxtaposed with the actual structural and systemic violence that affects the lives of the marginalized, the "faceless" (Butler, 2004, p. xviii). It explores various aspects of fear as it manifests itself in an urban landscape. The opening scene is the aerial view of Greater Buenos Aires, where the helicopter passes over the 'occupied' lots, the poor neighbourhoods as well as the 'country'[30] that it surrounds, a sprawling gated community with swimming pools and huge grounds[31]. The aerial point of view allows a unique perspective of viewing the entire area in its totality, unencumbered by the walls and wire fences that on the ground separate these two very disparate forms of urbanization.

In her film *La ciudad que huye*, Martel foregrounded the ways in which the very entry into a gated community is controlled through forces that justify their surveillance on the grounds that "It is for your own safety" (Martel, 2006). Martel's film chooses to focus on the seemingly endless walls of the gated community that barred the gaze of the onlooker, the passer-by, the neighbour. The camera captured the residential buildings that surround this gated community, both middle class homes as well as shanties providing an exercise in contrasts. Martel's camera had been denied the opportunity of focusing the cinematic gaze upon the life within the gated community. Her film used that denial to underscore the very essence of such a form of

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[30] In Argentina, 'country' is a term used to denote suburban gated communities that have been developed along the model of North American country clubs.

[31] Beatriz Sarlo describes the post-80s urban development of Buenos Aires thus: "el Gran Buenos Aires ofrece un patético y grotesco entramado de villas miseria y barrios pobrísimos, viejos barrios obreros consolidados donde hoy campea la desocupación y franjas enormes de nuevas urbanizaciones cerradas (los llamados country clubs y barrios privados, que son la versión periférica de las gated communities norteamericanas)" (Sarlo, 2009, p. 92) [Trans: Greater Buenos Aires offers a pathetic and grotesque network of shanty towns and extremely poor neighborhoods, old consolidated working-class neighborhoods where unemployment prevails today and huge swaths of new gated communities (the so-called country clubs and private neighborhoods, which are the marginal version of the North American gated communities)] (Sarlo, 2009, p. 92)

urbanisation, an “architecture of fear”[32] (Gardenberg, 2008). In her analysis of Martel’s film, Holmes writes:

> The high-speed tracking shot alongside the stationary wall of the country emphasizes the imposition of this structure. To enhance this further, the screen segments into various parts –at its busiest, it divides into twelve moving images– and the image sizes shift between full and partial screens. Dizzying and oppressive, these layouts complement the swift camera movement to capture both the imposition of the wall and the unnerving response this structure elicits. Contrasting shots compare opposing landscapes; the apparent vibrancy of community life is juxtaposed with the aggression and exclusivity signaled by a wall of this type. (Holmes, 2018, p. 64)

Unlike gated communities in the U.S. which reinforce a homogenous white middleclass suburban lifestyle within a municipality and creates social segregation at the intermunicipality level, Roitman points out that in the case of Latin America, gated communities create further segregation at the intramunicipality level and one finds only walls separating extremely rich neighbourhoods with the extremely poor ones.

In fact, with the creation of gated communities, areas which had been earlier populated by only the very poor become zones of affluence. (Roitman & Phelps, 2011) Just as the aerial shot in Naishtat’s film shows the juxtaposition of extreme poverty and extreme affluence, so does Mendonça Filho in *O Som ao redor* through the shots of the slums that the apartments of the elite have a view of from their balconies and rooftops. Such a juxtaposition creates an unsettling environment where inequality frames all social encounters that take place in it. In *Historia del miedo* and *O Som ao redor*, this leads to acts of micro-aggression that showcase the latent violence that threatens the upper middle-class psyche. In *Historia del miedo* this is seen when garbage is thrown onto Carlos’ lawn by unknown individuals. In *O Som ao redor*, there is the

[32] Brazilian photographer André Gardenberg used the phrase ‘Arquitetura do medo’ as the title of a photographic display showcasing the rise of urban architecture responding to the fear of violence through heavily armed security personnel, electric fences, sophisticated video surveillance networks and so on. (Gardenberg, 2008)

haunting image of the car washer running his key against the surface of the car of one of the residents who refuses his help with her bags since she has already tipped his friend. The garbage or the scratch on the car are manifestations of the anger within the masses of people denied a life of dignity. Despite the close proximity of wealth and poverty, the affluence does not translate into an overall difference in the community. As Holmes points out, owners of the houses within the 'countrys' of Buenos Aires have resisted paying municipal taxes that would go into funding developmental projects outside the walls of the gated community itself. (Holmes, 2018, p. 64) The difference in the potential and actual economic benefit of such gated communities coming up in otherwise poor neighbourhoods is noteworthy. Gated communities as McKenzie points out is based on an understanding of community where the responsibilities of the resident can be met through the satisfaction of the economic obligations necessary to maintain the ownership. McKenzie adds,

> But cities, states and nations have vast networks of public and private threads that tie citizens together and make them interdependent. We are linked ... in ways that encourage or compel us to be responsible to, and for, each other. These responsibilities extend far beyond maintaining property values and conformity. (McKenzie, 1994, p. 149)

Martel names her film on the gated community as a city that has run away presumably from its civic responsibilities, its role within the Argentine society and its past of complicity with a brutal dictatorship.

Naishtat's film chooses to present this area of contrasts and extreme segregation from a point of view that confuses the viewer as to where the borders between these zones exist[33]. The helicopter is being used to deliver an eviction notice through a loudspeaker to the 'occupants'

[33] None more so than film reviewers who vacillate between interpreting the eviction notice being delivered to the smaller lots belonging to the poor and it being addressed to the gated community.

of the houses between 72nd street and Provincias Unidas street[34] in Moreno part of Greater Buenos Aires. This notice of eviction poses a real threat of violent dispossession of their homes to the inhabitants. It is an intervention on the part of the state imposing a form of absolute social control, designating the residents of the homes within that zone as 'occupants' rather than as owners. The aerial shot in some sense foregrounds the state's godlike dispensation of the status of legal or illegal occupation of land. Moreover, it can be presumed that the eviction notice comes at the back of interest from private property development agencies who wish to convert that 'occupied' land into a cluster of gated communities. Thuillier had noted,

> …upper class enclaves, requiring huge areas of land, spring up at the fringes of the metropolis, which in Buenos Aires do not consist of 'edge cities' but of slums concentrating the poorest and more recent immigrants in town, coming from the most underdeveloped provinces of the country. (Thuillier, 2005, pp. 255-56)

Ownership of the land by such individuals would be difficult to prove legally[35]. (Muñoz, 2017) Here the state is seen stepping in to perform the act of clearing the land for the purpose of private enterprise albeit violently. This in effect will change the area demographically removing the threat posed by the presence of the poor neighbours to the residents of the gated community. The film never shows the violence of the state in action but in anticipation. In fact, these neighbours outside the gated community facing eviction never appear directly yet their presence is a pervasive one. It is there in the garbage that is dumped next to the wire fencing

[34] This image of absolute authority of the state is disrupted by the breakdown of the technology when the loudspeaker does not work properly and the announcement ends up in a torrent of abuse from the frustrated announcer. Jean Franco says the repressive measures used by the state in Latin America in the 60s and 70s made a pretense of being sophisticated. In the words of Jacobo Timerman, the Argentine military engaged in torture during the dictatorship would "try to create a more sophisticated image of the torture sites, as if thereby endowing their activity with a more elevated status. Their military leaders encourage this fantasy; and the notion of important sites, exclusive methods, original techniques, novel equipment, allows them to present a touch of distinction and legitimacy to the world." (Timerman, 1981, p. 39) In a democratic era, when the violence is more structural, the pretense of sophistication continues.

[35] The struggle of working-class communities in their conflict with the government of Buenos Aires regarding housing and urban settlements provide insight into the nature of the housing crisis as experienced by the vulnerable sections of the society. (O'Neill, 2013) (Avalos, 2020)

of the community, in the burning garbage and the smoke it creates (a criminal act as announced from the helicopter but one which the private as well as public authorities cannot control), in the unseen attacks where garbage is thrown onto the pristine lawn of the residence of Carlos, the owner of one of the units within the gated community, in the dogs that hunt around in the dump whose fearsome reputation precedes them, in the Christmas time fireworks that instead of entertaining, frightens Carlos and his guests or when the fence is cut by unknown hands, a dangerous development. It is these neighbours, unseen, faceless, who drive the residents of the gated community, the focus of this film, to shut themselves inside their carefully guarded walls, driving them further into a claustrophobic paranoid state of existence.

In Kleber Mendonça Filho's *O Som ao redor/Neighbouring Sounds* (2012), in the first live action sequence in the film, the camera follows a girl moving freely on roller skates and a boy on a bicycle through the parking lot of an urban residential complex. The girl's movement is followed until she reaches a small playground serving as a football field where children are shown playing while their domestic servants watch over them. The sequence ends with the camera focusing on a group of children pressed against the fence of the building looking at what lies beyond. A reverse shot shows they are looking at a construction worker. The sequence is accompanied with the quotidian noises of the neighbourhood or what Draper describes as "the ambient sounds of children laughing, plastic wheels on concrete, and nearby construction work with unsettling noises…strange bangs and an eerie vibrating noise that establishes an uncanny leitmotif in the film" (Draper III, 2016, p. 130). The sense of freedom that is derived from the vision of a figure on skates moving freely is disrupted by the soundtrack as well the view of the fence shutting the children in. At that moment the playground resembles nothing less than a prison.

In a firmly entrenched neoliberal society, radical social change is not present as a process in effect yet the very possibility of it has the power to threaten. The fear the characters in

Naishtat's film feel is one based on the premise of possibilities. It is a threat which never materialises. In the midst of the darkness as the elderly Amalia calls out, "We must do something, they are getting inside the house", it is a voicing out of the fear held by the upper class of their carefully guarded privilege being impinged upon. It is the fear that makes the security guard move through the thicket of woods with his gun cocked because of the dogs who might bite Carlos. In a frame prior to the sequence of the guard moving through the thicket one can see a dog passing behind Carlos without attacking him. Yet anecdotes are shared where these dogs are presented as feral creatures with human motivation to harm. On the other hand, when glimpses of residents of a poor neighbourhood playing with fireworks are shown, the dogs can be seen excitedly running around the children and are a welcome part of that community.

Naishtat's film, in keeping with a style of filmmaking that has emerged in Latin America since the 1990s, refrains from making any direct political statement. The intent is not to direct the audience towards a fixed conclusion. What it does is bring out the isolation of the gated community that seems to be more and more ignorant of what is happening beyond its borders even while its borders seem to be not as impenetrable as they would like them to be. The fencing is cut by some unknown hands which Carlos and the guard think might be the work of some animal though the doubt remains of it being the work of the people always referred to as "them" or "they". This seemingly vast mass awaiting an opportunity to attack and disrupt the security of their privileged lives is always present in the way these individuals perceive their lives.

During the 'asado[36]' prior to their family dinner, Carlos listens to Marcelo's account of a mayor attacked by an angry mob of possibly evicted families because he had called out their "lies" in

[36] Trans: Barbeque

order to secure free housing. "Did they kill him?" he asks, the answer to which is unknown to Marcelo though they both stare at each other wide eyed, a silent tribute to this horror story they had just shared. It is a very conventional moment in terms of the way ghost stories have been structured. There is an entire literary and cinematic genre of ghost stories for Christmas gatherings which this scene can be viewed as paying tribute to. Only it is not a story about paranormal or supernatural presences but is about the omnipresent class war. Despite the fences, the armed security personnel, the surveillance camera, they are paralysed by their fear of what lies beyond. They fear to call out for help even as they see movement in the midst of the trees because they anticipate attacks from whoever might appear responding to their call for help. In Rodrigo Plá's *La Zona*, the fear had brought the elite community to use extreme violence in order to maintain their exclusivity and privilege. The films *O Som ao redor* or *Historia del miedo* juxtaposes that capacity for violence with the image of them imprisoned in their own architecture of fear that can be breached by those wishing for retribution.

In an interview on his film *La Llorona*, Jayro Bustamante spoke of the extremely difficult position of the indigenous housekeeper in the general's household. On the one hand the general is the author of the genocide of the indigenous communities and yet the housekeeper is expected to serve the family with loyalty, even love. Bustamante says:

> We had to work on her character to address this other form of slavery, because in Guatemala most housekeepers live in the home of their employer and are at their service 24 hours a day. Furthermore, not only is it expected for them to be at their service, but also housekeepers are expected to love their bosses, to be thankful for being allowed to serve them. That was the dramatic line María Telón and I followed for the character of Valeriana, who thinks, "Not only do I have to be this people's slave, but I also have to root for them even though I know what they did to my people. They even want me to be thankful and to love them. (Aguilar, 2020)

This tension between classes and races whose relationships have been structured through histories of violent encounters become a source of fear and climactic revelations in films such

as *La Llorona*, *O Som Ao Redor* and *Historia del miedo*. However, these films also bring out the vulnerability of the extremely privileged and ruptures the aura of invincibility that the "architecture of fear" intends to create. The line between anticipated loss of privilege and actual loss of privilege seems to wear thin in these films.

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Chapter 3

The Marginal and the (re)construction of Urban Space

3.1 Modernity and the Indigenous as the Marginal

The theoretical understanding of crime and social control that developed in conjunction with the idea of the modern nation state in Latin America towards the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century have had a significant impact on the conceptualisation of marginality. At the beginning of the twentieth century, across Latin America, in Mexico, Cuba, Brazil and Argentina, sociological theory was being influenced by contemporary biological sciences of which Eugenics was an important part. (Armus, 2016) (Graham, Skidmore, Helg, & Knight, 1990) Accordingly, "abnormalities" in the population would be explained by biological inheritance with emphasis on racial inheritance (Castro-Gómez, 2007). Influenced by the theories of criminology of Cesare Lombroso and Enrico Ferri, social reformers across Latin America turned to the use of biological, in effect racial, determinism to explain social problems concerning public health, criminal behaviour, anarchism or labour militancy. As Santiago Castro-Gómez (Castro-Gómez, 2007) or Eduardo A. Zimmermann (Zimmermann, 1992) point out, such theories were not merely a disguise adopted by a feudal state to hide aristocratic prejudices and racism. They were accepted by liberal reformers as being progressive ideas that would aid in improving the social condition of these countries.

In an article titled *Criminología/Criminology* delivered as a speech in Bogota on 2nd September, 1916, Dr. Martin Camacho, a member of the Colombian National Academy of Medicine, presented before the scientific community the new theories of criminology developed by Lombroso and his followers which called for an empirical study of crime where crime is seen as a biological pathology wherein the concept of free will played no part. He explained criminal tendencies in individuals as being the consequence of a kind of organic dysfunction resulting

from interbreeding among different races leading to the creation of degenerate offspring. He states “The born criminal is nothing more than criminal by inheritance” (Camacho, 1916, p. 298). By 1920, such ideas had found sufficient currency for the Colombian lawyer Felipe Paz to analyse a homicide that took place on October 24, 1920[1], purely in terms of pathological behaviour of degenerative racial features. (Paz, 1921)

In Argentina, a similar discourse on race prompted social reformers, politicians and intellectuals of the time to view the migration from Europe and the simultaneous massacre and elimination of the indigenous population as a positive step towards progress and modernity. It is this attitude that informs the section titled “El Problema de las Razas/The Problem of the Races” of a speech on the necessity of a national census delivered by Joaquín V. Gonzáles (González, 1935) who had a hand in the revisions of the constitution of his province as well as various laws of the republic. At various points in his career, he had served as a deputy and a senator in the national congress as well as holding the post of governor. (Herrero, 2017) Zimmerman writes on the argument put forth by Joaquín V. Gonzáles:

> He pointed to the importance of a "ley de selección[2]" in order to preserve "the race of tomorrow." The census, he said, must be used as a means to know the composition of the "superior races" that have populated Argentina (where, fortunately, "inferior races have been displaced"). The relevance of this knowledge, according to González, had been conclusively demonstrated by "that

[1] In the city of Montería, a man in the state of intoxication, murdered four women killing them with machetes. He also set fire to his house and went on to wound a horse and three cows, kill two donkeys and attack the people who tried to stop him. Paz in his study of the crime, found it relevant to lay out the fact that this man’s paternal grandfather was a mulatto, his paternal grandmother was a direct descendant of the aborigines, his paternal great-grandfather was a pure Indian and the man’s mother was the illegitimate daughter of a black woman and a rural feudal landlord of pure Spanish blood. Paz declares that in light of the new theories of studying criminal behaviour, it was necessary to take into consideration the findings of biological and sociological sciences and study closely the racial and psychic aspects of the criminal. Paz stated,
“Sin considerar lo impropicio de un cruzamiento de tres razas tan diferentes entre sí –indígena, blanca y negra–, encontramos, tanto en la rama paterna como en la materna, una tradición constante de alcoholismo, complicada con la neurosis […] Por poco observadores que seamos, todos podemos atestiguar que los vicios y estigmas patológicos de los individuos son determinante de la degeneración en su prole.” (Paz, 1921, pp. 80-81)
[Trans: “Overlooking the inappropriateness of a crossing of three races so different from each other –indigenous, white and black–, we find, in both the paternal and maternal branches, a constant tradition of alcoholism, complicated by neurosis […] The slight observers that we are, we can all attest to the fact that the vices and pathological stigmas of individuals are determinant of the degeneration in their offspring.”]

[2] Trans: Law of Selection

> new science incorporated to the science of government . . . eugenic science. (Zimmermann, 1992, p. 44)

Along with the reformist mindset of early 1900 Latin America accepting as natural the assumption of racial superiority and viewing certain races as incompatible with the ideas of progress and modernity, the impact of colonial era social structuring had created a society that was already deeply rooted in racial discrimination and institutionalised racism. The idea of *mestizaje* as a theoretical concept finds expression in nation building discourse with an aim at integration which became part of social policy in countries such as Mexico and Brazil. In Mexico, for instance, in 1925, José Vasconcelos writes of "la raza cósmica", based on the assumption that centuries of racial miscegenation had created a society where racial divisions had become blurred and a new race of mixed origins had come into being resulting in a society where racist divisions no longer existed. (Vasconcelos & Gabilondo, 1997)

In Brazil, a similar narrative of racial assimilation is found in Gilberto Freyre's 1933 work *Casa grande e senzala/The Masters and the slaves*. Freyre's argument refers to the Portuguese "genius for physical and cultural synthesis" which has led to the creation of "a civilisation in the tropics" (Freyre, 1986). This civilisation is the consequence of widespread racial miscegenation with African, Amerindian and Portuguese races mixing to create a new culture and race in Brazil. This proved to be the origin of a theory of racial democracy in Brazil, of a society free from racial prejudice.

In countries such as Peru or Bolivia where the demographic presence of indigenous people was high, the distinction between Spanish and indigenous racial identities were clearly maintained which has been analysed as a response from the elites of the Andean regions in order to control organised movements in the rural societies. (Larson, 2004) In Guatemala, another country with a significant indigenous population, the *indigenismo* school of thought rose towards the

beginning of the twentieth century which concerned itself with the idea of assimilation of the indigenous communities into the national mainstream in order to overcome the obstacles to development. The innate 'backwardness' of the indigenous was considered as such an obstacle. (Dow Jr., 1982)

In Colombia in 1920, Jorge Bejarano, a medic by profession, views the racial assimilation as leading towards "the advent of a democracy, because it is proven that the promiscuity of races, in which the element socially considered inferior predominates, results in the reign of democracies." (Wade, 2018, p. 3) Luis López de Mesa, who served as the Education minister of Colombia, states that Colombia was comprised of people who were an assimilation of America, Africa, Asia and Europe and this had led to a socio-political culture that was not predicated on "the old democracy of equal citizenship only for a conquistador minority, but a complete one, without distinctions of class or lineage." (Wade, 2018, p. 3) This emphasis on assimilation as essential to progress was deeply problematic as Rainer Grote explains,

> …the insistence on assimilation often suggests that Indians could not be treated as full citizens before they had not adopted as their own the individualistic attitudes of their mestizo surroundings. In this perspective Indians were either to be treated as minors or incompetents whose existence and behaviour should be monitored and controlled, or as individuals sophisticated enough to be assimilated and detribalized, and therefore not entitled to any special protection. (Grote, 1999, p. 506)

In his assessment of indigenous urbanisation in Bolivia and Ecuador, Philipp Horn points out that pre-colonial Andean region was not devoid of urbanisation. Drawing on Hardoy's study of Pre-Colombian cities, Horn states, "important urban agglomerations included Tiahuanaco which represented the administrative, political and cultural centre of pre-Inca civilisations living in the areas surrounding Lake Titicaca until approximately 1200AD." (Horn, 2018, p. 46) (Hardoy, 1973) Despite the deficit in information available, scholars have been able to classify Mesoamerican urban centres according to their function—regal-ritual such as Cópan,

administrative as in the case of Tenochtitlan and mercantile such as Cozumel. (Sanders & Webster, 1988) During the colonial era, as Jean Franco points out, the indigenous peoples were systematically separated from the mainstream and pushed out of the urban spaces and into rural settlements where their cultures would be preserved at the same time as making them a reserve of "workforce". (Franco, 2013, p. 46) Such settlements were based on feudal structures where they would serve as peasants or workers for the mines under "semi-feudal conditions". (Horn, 2018, p. 46) (Platt, 1982) At the same time, colonial power took over pre-colonial cities, destroying them and then building new cities on top of the ruins. The Bolivian city of La Paz is one such example which was built on top of Chukiyapu. (Guss, 2006)

This colonial practice became so entrenched that by the beginning of the twentieth century in Latin America, the indigenous communities are naturally associated as being part of the rural sector. The very way of life which was established and maintained through a brutal regime of violence became the natural way of life for the indigenous populations. (Dussel, 1993) (Klor de Alva, 1992) (Walsh, 2010) Even today, international organisations as well as government policies related to the rights of the indigenous peoples often regard the urban indigenous population as not eligible for the support offered to the indigenous population through the said agencies or policies. (Quijano, 2006) In the words of Philipp Horn, "…rights-based agendas, often guided by a static understanding of indigeneity as a social category associated with rurality, tradition and backwardness, mainly targeted 'authentic' indigenous subjects living in rural areas." (Horn, 2015, p. 17)

Thus the 'authentic' indigenous subject is considered to be existentially in conflict with processes of modernity such as urbanisation. As Ana M. López points out, cinema in its early stage in Latin America is viewed as very much aligned with and an instrument of this modernity based on ideas of scientific rationality and progress although the societies themselves were in essence traditional. She states, "It was thoroughly aligned with the civilising desires of the

urban modernising elites and disassociated from the "barbarism" of national "others"." (López, 2000, p. 57) While placing themselves in the role of the harbingers of modernity, this class conceptualised the process of modernisation as being caught between the opposing forces of indigenous cultures and that of European cultures. (López, 2000)

In the mid-1900s, during the "war on communism" in Latin America, Jean Franco points out that the state of civil war in countries such as Guatemala and Peru descended into the targeted genocide of indigenous communities. The period saw the indigenous populations being viewed as naturally inclined towards communism and thus "defined as the enemy on two grounds, as guerrilla sympathizers and as enemies of the modern nation." (Franco, 2013, p. 47) In Peru, for instance, as the president of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, Salomón Lerner Febre said,

> the two decades of destruction and death would not have been possible without the profound contempt towards the dispossessed people of the country, expressed equally by members of the insurgent Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Army, a contempt that is woven into every moment of Peruvian everyday life.[3] (CVR, 2003) (Franco, 2013, p. 47)

The genocidal campaign undertaken in Guatemala after the removal of the elected president Jacobo Árbenz through a military coup saw state-sponsored brutalities committed as part of the new state's avowed war on communism. In its report based on the statements of survivors and witnesses, the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico[4] states,

> According to the racist mentality, any indigenous mobilization brings to mind the atavistic image of a rebellion. In this sense, it can be considered that racism was also present in the bloodiest moments of armed confrontation when the indigenous population were castigated as if they were an enemy to conquer….

[3] The Peruvian Truth Commission was called "Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación" or "The Commission for Truth and Reconciliation".

[4] Full title of CEH being Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico de la Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos y los Hechos de Violencia Que Han Causado Sufrimientos a la Población Guatemalteca (Trans: Commission for Historical Clarification of the Violations of Human Rights and Acts of Violence that Have Caused Suffering to the Guatemalan Population)

> There still persists in the mentality of some Guatemalans the idea that the life of the indigenous is worth less. This notion may explain why the number of Maya victims in some periods of the armed confrontation was greater and the reason for acts of extreme cruelty and crimes of *lèse humanité* committed in their communities. (CEH, 1999, pp. 93-94) (Franco, 2013, p. 49)

Countries with a greater presence of indigenous populations saw the violent methods of social control draw upon the history of race relations and power hierarchies created since the colonial era. Jean Franco sees the fear and revulsion running beneath the exercise of power on the indigenous sections of the population as part of the legacy of discriminations tied to the "habits and attitudes of conquest" (Franco, 2013, p. 45). In 2019 when a right-wing coup in Bolivia saw an interim government come into power, one of the photos that emerged of the new leader of the interim government, Jeanine Áñez, showed her clad in the colours of the Bolivian flag and holding the Bible in one hand while another in the group held the book of Gospels. (Forster, 2020) The intention of such a visual is to emphasise the reinstatement of the Catholic identity of the Bolivian state. Article 1 of the 2009 Constitution of Bolivia that came into effect through a public referendum (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2011), recognises Bolivia as a pluri-national state in light of the ethnic diversity of the country as well as taking into consideration the histories of the indigenous communities and peoples of the region. Moreover, breaking away from the earlier Catholic identity of the state, Article 4 declares the state as being independent of religion while respecting and guaranteeing "freedom of religion and spiritual beliefs, according to their view of the world." (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2009, p. 7) Furthermore, the new constitution grants Bolivians of African descent the same status as the indigenous peoples thereby extending the scope of the movement for the recognition of the rights of the indigenous communities. (Crabtree, 2017) The Wiphala, a symbol of Andean cultures and a symbol of Indigenous resistance is recognised as one of the emblems of the plurinational state of Bolivia as per the 2009 Constitution. This symbol has become a source of provocation for right-wing

supporters who have repeatedly attacked and destroyed such flags found in the public sphere. (Kawsachun, 2021) (Kawsachun, 2021) The visual significance of the interim president holding the Bible in her hand, presumably invoking the spirit of the conquistadors' avowed religious motive in the conquest of the Americas as well as the attacks on the Wiphala have to be viewed as belonging to a politico-cultural discourse around the nature of state power in Latin America that draws upon the socio-political hierarchies created by colonial power in this part of the world.

One of the instances of the deep hatred against the indigenous populations that Jean Franco focuses on is the use of cannibalism by the Guatemalan army in their attack on the indigenous communities. One of the strategies employed to eliminate the perceived threat of indigenous resistance in Guatemala was the creation of the Patrullas de Auto Defensa Civil (PAC), Civil Defense Patrols, which was an armed outfit comprising indigenous people who had been captured and were survivors of army attacks who were then forcibly made to become killers of their own community members, at times including their own family members. (Franco, 2013)

The idea of male superiority and masculine power that the army had was premised on their understanding of what constituted as savagery. One of the most enduring cultural tropes dominating the imagination of Europe regarding the New World was the concept of cannibalism. It was foundational in Europe's understanding of the new cultures encountered as savage and barbaric. Later with the development of postcolonial narratives, the cannibal was reviewed and redefined in light of a Latin American cultural identity in the process of decolonisation. (Jáureguí, 2008) In the case of the Guatemalan army in the 1970s however, cannibalism became more than a cultural trope as Franco points out. Through various eye witness accounts as recorded by the Commission on Historical Clarification, the army was accused of acts that included the consumption of parts of their victims just as they made their captives eat parts of their own body. (CEH, 1999) Jean Franco writes:

> What is most striking in these testimonies is that cannibalism was not only forced on captives but also incorporated into army training. Victims were made to act as they were supposed to act, as savages, while the soldiers were made to become savages in order to kill. (Franco, 2013, p. 53)

The nature of discourse surrounding the use of cannibalism to this effect was such that it was viewed as the domain of the barbaric indigenous communities who were perceived as the enemies of the state. The army saw itself as becoming like the enemy in order to defeat it which effectively transferred the moral burden of the violent actions on to the victims rather than the perpetrators.

3.2 Latin American Cinema on Modernity and the Indigenous Subject

Institutional racism for most indigenous or mestizo people residing in the urban space acted as a barrier, preventing their access to professions other than those designated as suitable for the indigenous peoples such as work as manual labourers, domestic servants or street vendors (Dear, 2014). It is in the works emerging from the New Latin American Cinema movement that a representation of the national 'others' and the structures of violence that shape and determine their lives is encountered in cinema for the first time. In this regard, the work of Jorge Sanjines and the Ukamau group in Bolivia is particularly significant. Films made by the Bolivian Grupo Ukamau such as *Yawar Mallku/Blood of the Condor* (1969) portrayed the experience of marginalisation faced by the indigenous communities within the urban space, the bastion of modernity. *Yawar Mallku* portrays the feudal structures of violence and repression faced by the rural indigenous populations and the violence of the systemic oppression that the urban indigenous populations face as part of the same capitalist neo-liberal power structures that continue to perpetuate the colonial era power hierarchies and structures of violent marginalisation and obliteration of the indigenous populations.

The Brazilian film, *Como era gostoso o meu francês/How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (1971), by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, made at a time Brazil was under a military dictatorship and debilitating censorship is another significant intervention in the cinematic discourse on the national "other". The portrayal of the Tupinambá indigenous community and culture in the film does not conform to the concept of the noble-savage that had been created by the European imagination or the idealised indigenous figure, a creation of the Latin American nationalist literary imagination of the twentieth century. (Sadlier, 2003) In fact, as Richard Peña points out, the film refrains from forwarding a particular perspective on the subject of colonisation. Peña states,

> …the film avoids any sort of facile presentation of the "Indian's point of view" on colonization or on the narrative action, as we might find, say, in a film merely "sympathetic" to native American rights', going on to observe that the camera often declares its "independence from the point of view of any character. (Peña, 1995, p. 193)

According to Lúcia Nagib, the structure of the film as having multiple perspectives is premised on the "self-revealing and self-standing form in which its raw materials are presented." (Nagib, 2019, p. 162) The various perspectives are presented in themselves, quoted directly be it in the form of title cards or being spoken aloud. These perspectives in their very arrangement display contradictions and voiceover commentaries are accompanied with actions that contradict the statements being made. Nagib points out the influence of collage and the aesthetic experimentations of the late 1960s Tropicalism movement in terms of the style employed. Nagib states,

> …the egalitarian treatment dispensed to the Tupi, French and Portuguese cultures, achieved through recourse to the intermedial properties of cinema…. Granting autonomy to its various sources, even allowing for other languages, such as French, Tupi and European Portuguese, to prevail over Brazilian Portuguese, the film promotes the dissolution of national identity, proposing instead a supranational and multicultural platform on which to retrieve Cinema Novo's lost political programme. (Nagib, 2019, p. 164)

Other films showed the consequence of the economic and political decisions taken by the state through studying the impact on indigenous peoples living at the margins of urban spaces. Jorge Sanjines' *El Coraje del Pueblo*/*The Courage of the People* (1971) made in Bolivia about the state-sanctioned massacre of miners who were on strike in the Siglo XX mines located in the Potosí department is particularly significant. The Colombian filmmakers Marta Rodríguez, Jorge Silva and Gustavo Pérez made a film called *Planas* (1970-71) whose subject was the the situation of the indigenous peoples in Colombia and specifically focused on a massacre carried out by the Colombian army on the Guahibo community in Planas located in the Department of Meta in the region of Llanos Orientales. The film situates the massacre within the context of the history of displacement and exploitation experienced by the Guahibo community since the colonial encounter and views the forms of social oppression as experienced by the community in the recent event as an extension of structures of oppression created through an amalgamation of colonial attitudes with the present form of complicity between the forces of neo-colonialism and the national elite.

The history of the Guahibo community is traced from the initial displacement faced during colonisation followed with the exploitation through slavery on the plantations. The film stresses on the persistence of the nature of social relations that had been created through the colonial encounter that guided the state's policies that had an impact on the community. The massacre was conducted by the army with the support of local landlords and elites on the grounds that a "subversive movement" (Mayolo & Arbeláez, 1974) was being planned there. A series of interviews that had been recorded in Bogota of the survivors and other members of the community is juxtaposed with a sequence where the senate is shown to be discussing the matter. The images of elected officials shown to be reading a newspaper or yawning as the decision to close the case thereby putting an end to any legal path to justice underlines the

state's attitude. Finally, the film reveals that the Guahibos actually live on land that is found to be rich in petroleum along with the news of various American companies showing interest in the region. (Mayolo & Arbeláez, 1974)

In Colombia, it was in 1991 that constitution recognised the ethnic and cultural diversity of the indigenous peoples and ensured special political rights for the communities. (Crabtree, 2017) In 1992, in Mexico after a constitutional amendment for the first time legally recognised indigenous peoples, their customs and forms of organisation, and Mexico as a pluricultural nation, members of the Congress saw this as "a threat to national unity, a return to a "caste" society, and an incentive to eventual demands by indigenous peoples for separation or secession." (Stavenhagen, 1994)

Latin American nation states embarked upon a process of modernisation towards the end of the nineteenth century when their economies were gradually integrated into the global capitalist system. (Harris & Nef, 2008) Latin American modernity laid a claim on modernity in terms of the ideas of scientific progress and the supreme order of scientific rationality even as the societies continued to be dominated by a land-owning oligarchy deeply feudal and conservative. Uneven development, neglect of non-urban centres as well as collapse of regional economies led to the economic crisis in the 1950s which saw an increase in migration of indigenous peoples to the cities. (Horn, 2015) (Albo, Greaves, & Sandoval, 1981) (Matos Mar, 1966) (Van den Berghe, 1974) The 2000 census showed that of the approximately 30 million indigenous people in Latin America, around 12 million were residents of urban areas. (UN-Habitat, 2010) Yet, the migration to urban areas did not necessarily translate into a better life for the indigenous peoples. Díaz Polanco in his study of the mainstream society's attitude towards the indigenous presence in Mexico states that what is termed as a "process of assimilation" of these marginalised communities into the mainstream society in effect "implied the abandonment on the part of the natives of all their cultural features, which were visualized

negatively as responsible for the "backward" degree of development in which they were found.” (Díaz-Polanco, 1982, p. 46)

3.3 The Case of Bolivia Post-2005: Urban Indigeneity in El Alto and La Paz

Following the changes brought about by the 2005 election of Evo Morales, the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) candidate for presidency, Bolivia saw the coming into power of a government that was born out of the social movements and organisations that had been protesting against the neoliberal reforms introduced in the 1990s. (Chaplin, 2010) (Crabtree, 2017). Among the demands made by the social movements that brought MAS to power was a new constitution that would bring about a complete revision of the rights granted to the indigenous peoples of the country. This bore fruit in the new constitution of 2009 which paved the way for significant positive changes in the lives of the indigenous peoples of the country. (Crabtree, 2017)

Juan Carlos Valdivia’s film *Zona Sur/Southern District* (2009) reflects the changes taking place in social and personal relationships as Bolivian society enters into a future where the colonial era apartheid premised on racial identity is slowly dismantled. Through a close study of a white upper-class family living in the Southern District (‘Zona Sur’) of La Paz, the film presents a penetrating portrayal of a society where while centuries’ old race relations persist, there are changes happening which increasingly throw up challenges for the old prejudices and stereotypes. Particularly, the film has been the origin of a trope that has entered Bolivian popular cultural and political discourse—" The Aymaran woman, traditionally dressed in pollera skirt and Derby hat, who pays in cash for luxurious properties in the affluent, white area of the Zona Sur”. (Maclean, 2018, p. 2) Maclean’s study focuses on how the very idea of a wealthy indigenous woman capable of making large purchases through payment in cash subverts existing ideas of how development is expected to take place. Her existence offers a

contrast to the existing cultural and gender dynamics that lie at the heart of the structures of urban modernisation shaped by colonial frameworks which have traditionally influenced the relationship between capital and the shaping of urban space. The informal market had been the bedrock of the indigenous community who had been largely denied the possibility of participation in the mainstream economy till then. Within this domain of the informal market, the indigenous community and especially the women who have always played a greater role in this sector have greatly benefitted through what Maclean describes as "the 'decolonial' approach to economic development" adopted in the new government's policies. (Maclean, 2018, p. 4)

Furthermore, in the Bolivian screening of the film, the portions of the film where there is Aymara being spoken did not carry Spanish translated subtitles. This was a deliberate method used on the part of the filmmaker to emphasise to the Bolivian audience how seclusion on the part of the white urban elite is normalised. The indigenous servants who are very much a part of the lives of the elite know details of the most intimate nature but the lives of the indigenous servants remain unknown to their employers who do not even know their language. (Maclean, 2018) Maclean's study refers to the particular policy brought in by the MAS government which has made it compulsory for applicants to certain government posts to know at least one indigenous language. Maclean points out the dual perspective on this policy where on one hand it is seen as a justified attempt to reverse centuries of colonial domination and suppression of indigenous identity and culture within a nation built in accordance with the criollo elite's worldview which Segato calls the process of "criollization" (Segato, 2016, p. 615) of the Latin American nation states embracing modernity. On the other hand, the policy has been criticised for politicising the civil services and the judiciary and also for being discriminatory and a simplistic approach towards reversal of the impact of colonial practices. In effect, this policy

has effected a rapid transformation of the public sector which had till then been dominated by white and mestizo workers and opened it up to the indigenous peoples. (Kohl, 2010)

While *Zona Sur* points towards the ways in which the social changes are having an effect on the urban spaces that were historically marked by privilege where now the marginalised can assume ownership of such spaces, the urban spaces which had been marked by deprivation also are changing. The work of the architect and designer Freddy Mamani in El Alto is symptomatic of this change. The development of the city of La Paz was connected with the history of the wealth generated from mining the rich mineral resources of Bolivia as well as the wealth coming from the agricultural sector of the economy—the *hacienda* system of landownership. While the wealth was largely concentrated in the hands of a minority elite who played a significant role either in controlling the mining or accumulating wealth as landlords, the presence of the mestizo and indigenous population in the city had been historically as "labor to perform activities vital to the sustenance of the city." (Arbona & Kohl, 2004, p. 258) It was this growing population of workers who served the minority elite and whose numbers increased through rural to urban migration, with the increasing demand for space began to settle around the city of La Paz. In the 1950s this urban settlement slowly grew into El Alto.

In 1952 a revolution took place in Bolivia and the new government made some radical changes in the constitution of the country that had existed till then. Particularly significant was the introduction of universal suffrage which ended the practice of voting rights being extended only to owners of property or businesses. Furthermore, as Arbona and Kohl emphasise, bonded labour on the haciendas ended leading to a rise in migration to urban centres. El Alto, which had till then been an extension of La Paz in the sense of providing a space for those who could not find space in La Paz suddenly witnessed a spurt of growth. As Arbona and Kohl explain,

"The first wave of growth came in the 1950s as newly mobile campesinos[5]…freed from the haciendas settled in El Alto." (Arbona & Kohl, 2004, p. 258)

El Alto has been historically associated with marginality and deprivation (Maclean, 2018) however, with the socio-political and economic changes, the urban spaces of La Paz, El Alto and that which lies between the two has also changed. In 2014, a cable car transit system was launched— the "Mi Teleférico (MT) mass-transit areal cable car system opened, ferrying passengers from El Alto to the downtown and back in as little as 10 minutes from end to end stations." (Martinez , Sánchez, & Yañez-Pagans, 2018, p. 2) It was not merely a matter of mobility in terms of the speed with which the commute from El Alto to the centre of La Paz could be conducted in. As Kate Maclean points out, "These connections are limited, but the rapidity with which one can now traverse the city has changed mobility, not only in terms of practical considerations like time, but also in terms of the spaces which people feel entitled to access." (Maclean, 2018, p. 716)

However, it is not only La Paz that is changing owing to this. El Alto, marked by deprivation, poverty and marginalisation, has found ways to assert its own claim on modernity that is expressed most strikingly in the Nueva arquitectura andina or the New Andean architecture which has been created by a Bolivian architect and designer, Freddy Mamani states, "[My] buildings, day by day, are giving more of a modernity to the city." (Howarth, 2019) Mamani's architectural designs are based on the designs and architectural samples found in the ruins of Tiwanaku, a city that was part of the ancient Andean Tiwanaku civilisation. Mamani's attempt is to incorporate the geometric forms that is part of the history of Andean cultures into the contemporary urban space. He says, "All of these elements from Tiwanaku can be translated into symmetrical forms in contemporary architecture…. This architecture has its own language,

[5] Trans: peasants

its own culture, its own identity, and translates these ancient ideas into the contemporary city." (Howarth, 2019)

While the shapes are inspired by Tiwanaku architectural forms, Mamani turns to the weaving patterns of Aymara textile designs. Mamani's designs have had a profound impact on the very landscape of El Alto where now tourists visit to explore this new form of architectural designing. (Red Cap City Walking Tours, 2020) For the residents of El Alto, Mamani's designs are desirable on two counts— "They want to express their culture and identity through these buildings, but they also show economic power in recent years." (Howarth, 2019)

The process of decolonisation as examined in the Bolivian context for instance throws in stark relief that colonial construct of the 'bruto indio', the embodiment of rural backwardness and systematically marginalised and excluded from "direct access to the nation's public political life". (Albro, 2005, p. 434)

3.4 The Marginal as the "Suspicious Person"[6]

While the origin of a "culture of fear" or "terror" based on the potential repercussions of violence lies in the violent history of the "pioneering" quest of colonial expansion in Latin America, the more contemporary form is tied to the immediate histories of state perpetrated violence and human rights violation that took place across Latin America since the mid-1900s. (Moser & McIlwaine, 2004) Governments across Latin America have viewed their indigenous populations with suspicion, as a threat to order, progress, modernity and the very idea of a united nation-state which has delayed the recognition of the indigenous communities as citizens with rights. Across Latin America, the discourse of modernisation and the development of the

[6] As defined by Edelberto Torres-Rivas, the Guatemalan sociologist, in his study of the theoretical underpinnings of the Surveillance state. (Torres-Rivas E. , 1999)

modern nation state created novel categories wherein certain sections of the population emerged as the enemy of the nation and viewed as being alien and in conflict with the ideas of order, progress or development. (Castro-Gómez, 2007) (Zimmermann, 1992) (Graham, Skidmore, Helg, & Knight, 1990)

Foucault's analysis of the intervention of racist discourse within the domain of historical discourse connects the justification of State violence to racist discourse. (Foucault, 1997) Foucault views the transition from the classical sovereign power to the two modern forms of power – biopower and discipline—as "a shift from the right of death to a power over life". (Taylor C. , 2011, p. 41) He states, "The right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established: the right to make live and to let die." (Foucault, 1997, p. 241) It is in this form of power—biopower—that racism becomes necessary in order to justify the exercise of the power to kill. Racism becomes the "break between what must live and what must die" (Foucault, 1997, p. 254). Furthermore, not only does racism fragment the population, it uses the discourse of war and make it "function in a way that is completely new and that is quite compatible with the exercise of biopower" (Foucault, 1997, p. 255). War uses the logic of the survival of one's life as being premised on the death of the enemy, the other. However, racism makes this connection in a way that is not a martial relationship but rather a form of biological relationship. Foucault explains:

> …racism makes it possible to establish a relationship between my life and the death of the other that is not a military or warlike relationship of confrontation, but a biological-type relationship: "The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I—as species rather than individual—can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate." The fact that the other dies does not mean simply that I live in the sense that his death guarantees my safety; the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer. (Foucault, 1997, p. 255)

The association of a good life, a healthy life premised on the death of the inferior or backward in effect structures how citizenship is viewed in the context of the modern nation state. To be a citizen is to be identified as part of the healthy life of the nation, whose existence within the structure of racist discourse is predicated on the death of the enemy be it in the form of an external threat or an internal. In the case of the project of mestizaje as explored, citizenship rights would be given to those "conforming to a homogenous mestizo ideal." (Hale, 2004, p. 16) Thus within the very foundation of the Latin American project of modernity, the concept of an "enemy within" can be found in the way indigenous presence in nation states are conceptualised.

The metaphorical association of the violent methods of social control employed by the authoritarian regimes with biological or medical processes was a common one. Jennifer Schirmer describes the role the Guatemalan army had assumed for itself thus: "the military sees itself as both Creator (Mother to the Fatherland) and Parent-Guardian and Protector (Father to the Motherland), and thus retains full birth right to the Nation in terms of its past and its future." (Schirmer, 1998, p. 114). In an interview published in the *Crónica*, the Guatemalan army general Hector Gramajo, the "ideologue and architect of the policy to restructure indigenous communities" (Franco, 2013, p. 51), describes the military government's Pacification Campaign plan of a projected return to constitutional rule after a successful elimination of all threats to the national security thereby bringing order and stability as "pushing to bring this baby into the light", with the army described as "the only institution giving birth to democracy". (Gramajo, 1988, p. 22) (Schirmer, 1998, p. 114) Schirmer states that this "birthing discourse" (Schirmer, 1998, p. 114) was used repeatedly by the military reflecting the role it saw itself as performing. Another army general and dictator Efraín Ríos Montt had also stated "The democratic baby was very rapidly taken out of its incubator, and that is why we have [the problems] we have [today]". (Montt, 1989, p. 8) Thus, the genocide of the indigenous

communities that was undertaken as part of this “birthing process” was justified as part of a plan to build a healthier Guatemalan nation-state.

Jean Franco (Franco, 2013) points out the similarity of such military discourse in Guatemalan regime with that of the Augusto Pinochet led military dictatorship in Chile following the coup in 1973 as well as the Jorge Videla led Argentine military dictatorship, the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional which in effect started in 1974 with the declaration of a state of siege during the government of Isabel Perón. (Snyder, 1984) In the case of the Chilean military dictatorship established in September, 1973, the speech given by Augusto Pinochet a month after taking over the role of the head of state and leader of the military junta, emphasised the military’s role as a “palliative” to the metaphorically disease-ridden state of Chile. (Toledo-Parada, 2017, p. 76) Furthermore, in the call for national unity and sense of brotherhood based on “the historical values they have inherited from their ancestors”, the aim was to create the concept that anyone who did not adhere to the values deemed as authentic “historical values” by the military would not belong to the Chilean family. (Toledo-Parada, 2017, p. 79) In a similar vein, the Argentine military junta employed the cultural trope of the Argentine family, positing itself as the father of the nation where the nation’s citizens were cast in the role of a feminised and child-like population in the need of guidance. (Filc, 1997) (Bystrom & Werth, 2013) The aim was to have the military’s vision of Western Christian values incorporated into the very fabric of the Argentine family structure. The issuing of guidelines intended for the youth regarding suitable dress codes and hair styles (Taylor D. , 1997) was a more benign aspect of this role the military saw itself in. The women kept captive in the illegal detention centres were also expected to adhere to normative standards of femininity according to Claudia Hasanbegovic. (Hasanbegovic, 1998) (Sutton, 2007) They would be expected to exhibit submissive behaviour, wear makeup, dresses or other feminine clothes such as skirts. Women

who followed these injunctions effectively would then be viewed as being "recoverable" and thereby worth being kept alive (Sutton, 2007, p. 137).

In effect the military dictatorship attempted to control the familial bonds, an extreme extension of the exercise of social control by the state. In this respect the case of Thelma Jara de Cabezas is noteworthy. The mother of a disappeared son, Thelma Jara de Cabezas had joined organisations such as Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo) and Familiares de Desaparecidos y Detenidos por Razones Políticas (Relatives of Persons Detained-Disappeared for Political Motives). She was kidnapped in 1979 and taken to Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA) where she was tortured and then later coerced into giving an interview for a women's magazine 'Para Ti'. She was made to denounce both the activities of organisations such as the ones she had been part of as well as advocating ways of educating children in accordance with the military's vision. The interview was titled "Habla la madre de un subversivo muerto"[7] and only an article in the Buenos Aires Herald which had been critical of the military dictatorship pointed out that the statements given in the interview sounded more like something a military official would say rather than a mother. (Bonasso, 2000) The intention of the interview was to directly exercise control over the mother's bond with the child as well as distinguish between ways of raising children in accordance with the military's vision of the Argentine citizen. Government advertisements on television during the dictatorship would ask viewers "Sabe Usted dónde está su hijo ahora[8]?" (Jelin, 2007, p. 41) Those considered as "subversive" were ultimately not recognised as Argentinian by the military state. In the words of Jorge Rafael Videla, "…the repression is against a minority we do not consider Argentine ... a terrorist is not only someone who plants bombs, but a person whose ideas are contrary to our Western, Christian civilization" (Feitlowitz, 1998, p. 27).

[7] Trans: "The mother of a dead subversive speaks"
[8] Trans: "Do you know where your son is right now?"

The association of right to citizenship with socio-political attitudes in effect created the category for the state to exercise its right to kill. The most explicit manifestation of the Argentine military viewing itself as actively playing a part in the construction of a new Argentine society was elimination of the parents and the theft of babies born in the concentration camps and torture centres who would then be handed over to families close to the dictatorship. This was a direct method of preventing "parental contamination" (Abuelas, 1997, p. 26) through elimination of the very identities of the children that connected them to the parents and the history of political activism as well as torture, murder, extrajudicial killings experienced by them. In the words of the former police chief of Buenos Aires, General Ramón Camps, the aim was to prevent the indoctrination of children into the subversive political and social ideology by the parents. He states, "Personalmente no eliminé a ningún niño. Lo que hice fue entregar a alguno de ellos a organismos de beneficencia, para que les encontraran nuevos padres. Porque los padres subversivos educan sus hijos para la subversión. Y eso hay que impedirlo.[9]" (Nosiglia, 2007, p. 28)

As pointed out by Julio E. Nosiglia, while the parents were hostages of the state, the children would be considered as spoils of war[10]. This was of course the new born children, who were viewed as "having "good genes,"[11] as potentially healthy and intelligent children, if given the "appropriate" environment." (Arditti & Lykes, 1992, p. 463) This act of taking away the child and killing the mother was a method by which the military state exercised control over motherhood and the process of giving birth to new life. As Arditti and Lykes states,

[9] Trans: "Personally, I didn't eliminate any children. What I did do was hand over one or two of them to charity organizations so they could find new parents for them. Because parents of subversives educate their children to become subversives. And that has to be prevented." (Bystrom & Werth, 2013, p. 428)

[10] "Si sus padres fueron los rehenes, ellos se convirtieron en botín de guerra." (Nosiglia, 2007, p. 14) [Trans: "If their parents were hostages, they (the children) were converted into spoils of war"]

[11] Argentina, with a population that was largely of European origin, had developed a different category of identifying the sections of the population considered an obstacle to the nation's progress drawing upon the history of worker movements and the state's response to it right from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

> By taking the children born in captivity and giving them away as “war booty,” the patriarchal military state asserted its power against a distinctive aspect of female identity, motherhood. This most basic human relationship was disrupted, thus supporting the belief that the military state was in total and unchallenged control. (Arditti & Lykes, 1992, p. 463)

3.5 Surveillance as Social Control

Herman Montealegre, the Chilean political and legal analyst declares the prioritisation of an avowed concern over national security over all other aspects of national life by Latin American governments saw a distorted use of the rule of law in order to carry out state sponsored terrorism. According to him the excessive prioritisation of the so-called concern over national security,

> …has led [them] to adopt the extraordinary means established by law to confront dangers to public order: declaration of a national state of war, indictment of citizens on the charge of treason, and attribution of the legal status of enemies of the state to certain persons or organs of the nation. This has resulted in an unprecedented and permanent application of traditional provisions of the legal system . . . contained in the juridical codes in Latin America which hitherto had only been employed in cases of actual war between the states [and] are certainly illegal, since the circumstances which led to their implementation are not those foreseen by the codes. (Montealegre Klenner, 1979, p. 3) (Schirmer, 1998, p. 299)

Thus in effect, while justifying their actions on the basis of protecting the integrity of the nation state, the governments were in effect engaged in what Schirmer describes as “the appropriation of the imagery of the rule of law, of the mechanisms and procedures of electoral democracy.” (Schirmer, 1998, p. 2) The methods such as coups, human rights violations and ethnic cleansing that were employed had little constitutional or indeed international legitimacy. According to Schirmer, the excesses committed by such brutal regimes stemmed from a structural negation of the value of human rights or dissent within a democracy through the introduction and foregrounding of a security doctrine within the constitutional order. (Schirmer, 1998)

The excesses of the dictatorial regimes with their aim to establish a spectral notion of order on society, compromised the democratic social and political institutions to such an extent as to shatter the very fabric of social security. Such a "regime of terror" created an atmosphere of greater insecurity and loss of faith that permeated to the interpersonal level as well (Torres-Rivas, 1999). He states,

> From a position of political power, from the state itself, society was punished in order to defend 'itself' from 'itself'. The search for order via the use of violence left society even more disorganized than before, paralysed cultural life for a significant period, undermined confidence at the interpersonal level, and left entire societies in a continuing state of fear. (Torres-Rivas, 1999, p. 286).

Torres-Rivas points out that the culture of fear was intrinsically connected to the arbitrary form of the state violence enacted by the military dictatorship. The very fact that the enemy that the state was hunting was not a concrete one but was identified in terms of anticipatory threat they might pose made the rendering of violence indiscriminate. The definition of "subversion", a quality the Argentine military junta wanted to cleanse Argentine society of, itself is a case in point. In 1977, Ibérico Saint Jean, the de facto governor of Buenos Aires province during the military dictatorship, stated, "First we will kill all the subversives, then we will kill their collaborators, then their sympathizers, then those who remain indifferent, and finally we will kill the timid" (Ferreira, 2013, p. 5).

Within such a form of state repression, the victims termed as "subversives" were not clearly identified. Ferreira emphasises the obscurity of the term by laying out the various definitions it had been associated with: "The qualities attributed to subversives were as diverse as: atheist, stateless, Freudian, pro-abortion, enemy of the family institution and, in general, anyone lacking in national spirit (an enigmatic trait potentially applicable to anyone)." (Ferreira, 2013, p. 5).

It is in this environment where a most brutal and bloody form of violence is considered as being a legitimate response from the state as a form of governance, that the idea of what Torres-Rivas calls the "suspicious person" (Torres-Rivas, 1999, p. 290) is created. The brutality is justified by the acknowledgment of a "permanent menace" and the justification itself forms the ideological identity of the state (Torres-Rivas, 1999, p. 290). The creation of the "suspicious person" viewed as potentially aligned with those who are actively seen as posing a threat to concepts such as progress, security, order, social and religious values was accompanied by the need for surveillance. In the plan drawn out by Saint Jean for instance the suspicious person lies among those who are sympathisers of subversives. Hence a permanent menace would necessitate permanent surveillance. Torres-Rivas describes the environment of fear and insecurity thus:

> The mere existence of the "suspicious person" implies the existence of permanent surveillance. People spy on each other in order to report each other, and accuse in order to bring punishment upon the other. There can be no punishment without previous accusation and since the aim is punishment, surveillance is the first step. A vicious (and infernal) circle is thus constructed that does not, however, always begin with that implacable logic of watching-accusation-punishment. Sometimes people are punished without accusation, and accused without surveillance. And worse: watched over without motive, while everybody watches everybody else. (Torres-Rivas, 1999, p. 290).

The idea of structural violence that shapes societies was forwarded within the *dependencia* theory that originated in Latin America. By focusing on the structures of global capitalist and Western neo-colonial policies that have played a negative role in the process of development and human rights in the global South, it pointed towards the more invisible violence that shape development and societies. (Howard, Hume, & Ulrich, 2007) Luuk Slooter points out that Galtung's conception of negative peace and positive peace acts as a bridge between the Dependency theory's focus on structural violence and the concern with the more direct manifest forms of violence studied by European and North American scholars of conflict

studies. (Slooter, 2019) Galtung's distinction between "negative peace" which is characterised by absence of direct violence and "positive peace" characterised by absence of both direct violence as well as structural and cultural violence in effect marks a distinction between direct personal violence and indirect structural violence. (Galtung, 1969) (Galtung, 1964) The structural understanding of violence influences theories such as Schinkel's who views violence as "reduction of being" (Schinkel, 2010, p. 45) which can be viewed as the direct result of racist discourse designed to strip a subject of the very right to be recognised as a human being.

3.6 "Marginality" as a Political Force

The rise in migration towards urban centres was a phenomenon witnessed across Latin America. The rise of the urban poor as a political actor is connected to the socio-political and economic structures governing the development of urban spaces. In Brazil for instance a collective struggle to improve the living conditions of the urban poor began in the 1920s. (Cortés Morales & Thompson, 2013) In Argentina, working class struggle had historically been centred around the trade union movement. However, the increasing financial instability leading upto the financial crisis of 2001gave birth to what is now known as the "piquetero"[12] movement wherein the unemployed urban poor have increasingly made its presence felt as a political actor within the working class struggle. (Epstein, 2003) In Chile, the Pobladores movement that coalesced in the 1950s was also a result of rising migration of people to the cities. Alexis Cortés in his study of the Chilean and Brazilian urban movements centred on housing and living conditions points out that the differences within such movements as witnessed in the two

[12] In a speech delivered on 20/06.2022, the former president of Argentina, Cristina Kirchner, while stressing on the need for the state to strengthen policies revolving around social welfare said,
"Los piqueteros, por lo menos en Argentina, son hijos de las políticas neoliberales de los años 90. No nacieron con ningún gobierno populista, fueron el producto de los altos índices de desocupación y la falta de trabajo y oportunidades." (Clarín, 2022)
[Trans: "The piqueteros, at least in Argentina, are sons of neoliberal politics of the 90s. They were not born with any populist government, but were the product of high levels of unemployment and lack of work and opportunities."]

countries is owing to "the different political processes involved in the national disputes that in each country made it possible for a given repertoire to be more successful than its alternatives." (Cortés Morales & Thompson, 2013, p. 171)

The term "marginalidad"[13] enters Latin American academic as well as popular discourse around the 1950s and crystallises into a "theory of marginality" in the 1960s. (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1981) The theory of marginality evolved as a response to the necessity for analytical frameworks for understanding the social inequality that had become part of the process of urban development and industrialisation and emerged as part of theories of development. Delfino points out that the conceptualisation of marginality in Latin America in its early phase was deeply influenced by the immediate visible manifestation of marginality that could be encountered in the peripheral urban settlements that had been forming since the 1930s. (Delfino, 2012)

Cortés states that the theory of marginality was the first theoretical framework of urban development that recognised the political agency of the urban poor. (Cortés, 2021) In terms of theorising marginality, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) can be seen as being highly infuential. This framework of viewing marginality in relation to Latin American development, placed it as a feature of Latin America's underdevelopment. Underdeveloped societies were viewed as consisting of a modern and a traditional sector. Marginality was understood as a part of this latter sector, not yet integrated into the modern sector. Marginality is thereby perceived as resulting from the process of transition into modernity, "antithetical to development" where "yet more development is the only solution." (Cortés, 2021, p. 84) Through further development, the marginal would be assimilated into the mainstream.

[13] Trans: "marginalization"

Roger Vekemans, a Jesuit priest who came to Chile and aligned himself with the Christian Democrat political project, established the Centro para el Desarrollo Económico y Social de América Latina (Centre for the Economic and Social Development of Latin America) referred to as DESAL. Vekemans and DESAL's definition of marginality saw it as "a lack of participation" of a section within the the national society and thereby excluded from urban modernity and the kind of life it represented. As Vekemans viewed it, "marginality of the masses affects all aspects of individual and social life." (Vekemans, S.J., & Giusti, 1969, p. 229) The obstacle to integration lay not only in economic factors but also in differing cultural values. This dualistic view of marginality stressed on the need for integration through reform. The urban settlements, tenements, shanty towns became a social space that rendered tangible the phenomenon of marginalisation. With the mass migration to urban spaces, industrial development causing hyperurbanisation, the marginal had come closer in proximity to the elite which not only enhanced the dualistic structure of such a form of development, but also was seen as a threat to social stability— "The marginal masses are standing, metaphorically, outside the shop window, yet they have no purchasing power…. Four centuries have passed and, faced with this new reality, we must act to prevent the shop window from being violently shattered." (Vekemans & Silva, 1969, p. 61)

In such a statement, as Cortés points out, marginality is viewed as a disruptive force. This sector is seen as disintegrated and not organised, lacking political awareness and yet bears within it "an almost apocalyptic imaginary of urban lumpen promoters of social disruption" (Cortés, 2021, p. 84) This perspective is shared by other theorists such as Italian sociologist Gino Germani who studied the modernisation and the accompanying social change in Argentina as well as the French-Dominican priest Louis-Joseph Lebret who founded the Sociedade para a Aplicação do Grafismo e da Mecanografia à Análise de Complexos Sociais (SAGMACS) in

Brazil. The work done by SAGMACS on Brazil's favelas resulted in the first and one of the most detailed studies of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. (Cortés, 2021)

In the SAGMACS assessment, favelas as a social space represented the social and moral disintegration within urban modernity. The migration from the rural to the urban space was understood as the absorption of national poverty by the city. Accordingly, the favela was in effect the existence of the rural within the urban. The disruptive potential of this marginal presence echoed in the statement, "We must go up the hill before the communists come down it." (Rios, 1960, p. 43) (Cortés, 2021, p. 85) This dualistic approach towards understanding marginality was very quickly critiqued for lacking in awareness of the complex and heterogenous nature of poverty, for not recognising the organisational skills of the marginalised and underestimating the potential for integration that settlements held. (Delfino, 2012) However, theoretically it paved the way for the emergence of institutional structures that were premised on the recognition of the marginalised as social and political actors.

In Chile, the formation of Juntas de Vecinos or in Brazil the Associações de Vizinhança can be seen as attempts on the part of the state to acknowledge the urban poor as an organised collective. The attempts on the part of the state to provide controlled pathways and platforms for the integration of the marginal sectors was to prevent the emergence of a radical political actor who posed a threat particularly in the 1950s in the form of a potential movement influenced by communist ideology. As Cortés states, "The fear was that the amorphous masses would become a political actor outside the predefined boundaries the dominant classes set for the subaltern classes, boundaries based upon the idea of the "good favelado" who "learns" to escape from poverty." (Cortés Morales & Thompson, 2013, p. 173)

However, this vision of assimilation and reform that the theory of marginality promoted was ruptured through the actual shaping of organised social movements by the residents of shanty

towns, the pobladores and the favelados, such as the Pobladores movement in Chile and the organised União de Trabalhadores Favelados in Brazil.

3.7 Marginality and the Urban Space

Among the many brutalities unleashed by the Chilean army and their right-wing supporters after the success of the military coup in toppling the democratically elected Popular Unity government in Chile on 11 September, 1973, one thing that right-wing groups did was whitewash the walls of Chile, erasing the paintings and slogans that bore testament to a popular social and cultural revolution. (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975)

> For the mad dog warriors on that September 11th, there were no paintings on the walls. There were only enormous "stains" which dirtied the city and memory. They, using the fascist youth brigades, whitewashed all the singing, many-colored walls of the nation…. so that nothing would be left to remind anybody of anything about the struggle for national liberation. (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975, p. 10)

The removal of all memory or signs of the very possibility of an alternate to the social, economic, cultural and political regime that the dictatorship wished to establish was an intrinsic part of the violent process of reorganisation that coups across Latin America were engaged in. In Chile, for instance, the whitewashing of walls was but a metaphor for the desired obliteration of those “who bore the "stain" inside themselves, the fighters, workers, peasants, employees, students, and patriotic soldiers, to eliminate these creators of a new life, to eliminate this new life which grew”. (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975, p. 10) The need to whitewash the walls was part of the larger campaign on part of the military to destroy all forms of political as well as symbolic memory of the Popular Unity government. (Errázuriz, 2009) This “operacion limpieza/cleaning operation” (Redaccion el tiempo, 2000) was fundamentally aimed at not only eliminating people the state considered as threats but also dismantling the socio-politico-cultural project of the Popular Unity era and perpetuating a new cultural ideology. Errázuriz

called this the “golpe estético/aesthetic coup” (Errázuriz, 2009). The erasure or suppression of the memory of the support for or character of the Popular Unity government was accompanied by a campaign of misinformation that would justify the military’s violent intervention as well as human rights abuses and cast the dictatorship as a heroic attempt to save the country from those who were trying to destroy it. (Verdugo, 2020) Paulina Pavez Verdugo points out the characteristics of the discourse used to celebrate this phase in Chile’s history:

> …un héroe: Pinochet salvador de la nación; un mito que legitima la violencia: el mito de la “guerra civil”; unos argumentos que exculpan al héroe de la violencia: el “empate moral”; la restauración del orden y la proyección del dictador en la figura paterna parte fundamental y protector del cuerpo social[14]. (Verdugo, 2020)

According to Verdugo’s study, firstly, Pinochet is cast as a saviour of the nation, a heroic figure, a role that the dictator cast himself in as evidenced in the speech given a month into the dictatorship. (Toledo-Parada, 2017) Secondly, a false historical narrative of a situation of “civil war” is created to justify the excesses of the regime. The narrative of “civil war” is then used to create a “moral equivalence” with the death of military officers as being further justification for the violence inflicted. Finally, Pinochet is spoken of as a paternalistic figure, a protector of civil society.

As described by Dorfman and Mattelart, soon after the coup in September 1973, the political murals were whitewashed over alongside the repression that was unleashed. The military government made every effort to erase all signs of the vibrant political discourse and the culture that had grown around it. The resistance to the fascist government was reflected in the struggle for control over the city walls in working class neighbourhoods where the military’s repression

[14] Trans: “a hero is constructed: Pinochet, savior of the nation; a myth that legitimizes violence: the myth of the "civil war"; some arguments that exonerate the hero from violence: the "moral equivalence"; the restoration of order and the projection of the dictator in the father figure, a fundamental and protective part of the social body.” (Verdugo, 2020)

affected the daily lives of the residents. (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016) One such zone was the working-class neighbourhood of La Victoria in Santiago, Chile where despite the military repression of all forms of artistic expression associated with the Allende era social revolution, murals continued to appear on the walls. According to Alexis Cortes,

> Muralism appeared in La Victoria as a form of physical support for brief political messages that kept the flame of resistance alive after the coup d'état. Later this expression became increasingly complex, incorporating iconographic references that captured the visual memory of the time of Allende and consolidated its own imaginary associated with political condemnation of the dictatorship. The silence imposed by the military dictatorship was broken in the murals of La Victoria. (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 63)

The iconography that had characterised political murals associated with the Popular Unity government as well as the leftist movement in Chile in the 1960s in general resurfaced in the murals in La Victoria where the images themselves was a way of remembering what was lost through the repression as well as a method of narrating the lived experiences of the working class who bore the brunt of the military regime's brutal "cleaning operations". The attempts on the part of the military to cover the murals with black paint and the resilience shown by the residents of repainting and reinscribing their narratives onto the walls mirrored the extrajudicial killings carried out by the military and the resistance of the working class. Errázuriz writes, "In La Victoria, as in other working-class neighbourhoods, physical extermination and the "aesthetic coup" converged." (Errázuriz, 2009, p. 67) (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 67)

As pointed out by studies on the "pobladores" movement in Chile, the very physical and geographic existence of La Victoria is rooted in the history of the struggle for securing decent urban housing by the poor working class that began in the 1950s and by extension, the leftist grassroot movement in Chile. (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016) (Zibechi, 2008) The "pobladores movement" was a result of the inadequate response from successive governments in finding an adequate solution to the housing crisis which had come about due to the increasing rate of

migration to urban centres such as Santiago within Chile beginning in the 1930s. (Cortés, 2014) With the growing number of migrant settlers, "poblaciones callampas" or shanty towns and "conventillos" or tenements emerged in and around the city which were generally located in areas otherwise not deemed fit for habitation such as close to riverbanks or ditches or land used for dumping waste. (Cury, 2014) Cury states,

> The workers who reached Santiago would live in the conventillos (tenements) and callampas, which we can describe as favelas or shantytowns mainly built on riverbanks, rubbish dumps, and in waste land in the city, in general in areas cut off from the existing urban fabric. (Cury, 2014, p. 3)

In Chile, the beginning of the Pobladores Movement could be connected to the occupation of La Victoria in Santiago. Chile, like other Latin American countries had witnessed mass migration to the urban centres from the 1920s onwards. This had resulted in urban settlements that were constantly at risk of facing eviction. One such encampment in Santiago was that of Zanjón de la Aguada, located near the waterway of the same name, a settlement which was also referred to as "Cordón de la Miseria"[15]. (Cortés, 2014, p. 241) Such settlements had been created through the process of occupation of land which in the words of Cury were "areas cut off from the existing urban fabric." (Cury, 2014, p. 3) The inhabitants of this settlement had waited for twelve years for the government to find a solution to the housing problem. However, in 1957 they suffered a number of fires which left them increasingly frustrated and in need of dignified and affordable housing. In October 1957, sections of those living in this area organised themselves and with the aid of local leaders mostly allied to the Communist Party came up with a plan to occupy the region of La Feria in Santiago. Around 1200 families participated in this mobilisation and took over the land in a single night which was how La

[15] The narrowness and length gave it the name "Cord of Misery". The section was 5kms in length and 125 mts in width, where approximately five to six thousand families resided divided up into around twelve encampments. (Cortés, 2014)

Victoria was born. (Millas, 1996) This was an example of direct action that challenged "la legitimidad procedimental del Estado moderno[16]" (Cortés, 2014, p. 242) creating a rupture from the importance given to property within the legal and institutional framework of a liberal democracy. It opened up the path to rendering legitimate the notion of the necessity of housing as a fundamental right. (Salazar, 2006)

The Pobladores movement was born out of the complete precariousness of the space of the shanty towns. Made of discarded materials, the houses were fragile in their very structure. In terms of legitimacy of the occupation, threats or the possibility of eviction was not to be discarded. The low quality of hygienic and living standards and the risk of other accidents such as fires made life within such spaces always under attack. (Cury, 2014) Certain measures had been taken particularly under the administration of President Jorge Alessandri (1958-1964) to create some housing settlements that residents of the shanty towns could move into through certain programs that they could be eligible for. The Cooporación de Vivienda (Corvi), an official arm of the government in charge of overseeing the issue of housing, was responsible for this project. Nonetheless, the segregationist logic of the planning of urban space was not challenged by these officially approved settlements. (Pumarino, 1971)

In opposition to the dualistic theory of marginality, a polarised view of marginality existed in Latin America connected to the Dependency theory. This view saw marginality not as a stage in the process of development, rather it was a necessary precondition for the development of the centre. Thus marginality in Latin America was seen as structured by the internal logic of capitalism and resulting from the capitalist model of development. David Harvey in his reading of Henri Lefebvre's concept of the 'right to the city' views it as "the right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2008, p. 23). He explains that this is a collective right where

[16] Trans: "procedural legitimacy of the modern State"

the "transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation." (Harvey, 2008, p. 23) Processes such as Chile's pobladores movement would be an example of such an exercise of collective power that is based on ideas of spatial justice. Edward Soja argues for the need to have a spatial approach to the understanding of justice when he states, "the socialised geographies of (in)justice significantly affect our lives, creating lasting structures of unevenly distributed advantage and disadvantage." (Soja, 2010, p. 20)

In the case of La Victoria, it was not only the occupation of the land that required such collective organisation. Once the land had been occupied and the settlement had been established, efforts were made to organise this territory through effective administration, with no help from the State and at the same time remain vigilant and resist any form of violent attempts to dislocate them. The community organised itself to form committees dedicated to maintaining security through vigilance squads. Certain Communists with professional knowledge collaborated and the area was planned out in blocks where all decisions regarding the planning as well as execution was carried out by the community right to the layout of electric posts and pipelines. Alexis Cortes describes the La Victoria endeavor as "Los pobladores de La Victoria fueron sus propios urbanistas[17]." (Cortés, 2014, p. 243) According to Cortes, the spatial politics that was the basis of the pobladores movement in Chile not only challenged the insitutional ethos of the State but also the political imaginary of the Chilean Left which till then was largely concerned with the trade union movement. The Pobladores movement was aimed at addressing a key issue concerning the social struggle for justice which was how the very living conditions of the workers are shaped by the capitalist structure. (Cury, 2014) Since space can be conceived as a socially produced construct, Soja points out that "geographically uneven development, whatever its particular source, is a contributing factor to the creation and maintenance of

[17] Trans: "The settlers of La Victoria were their own urban planners."

individual and social inequalities and hence to social and spatial injustices." (Soja, 2010, p. 72) Rafael Sanchez made a film called *Las Callampas/Shanty town* (1968) about the occupation and setting up of La Victoria. It was representative of the cinema of the 1960s, "committed to the greatest problems of its time" (Francia, Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano en Viña del Mar, 1990, p. 26) The film is divided into five parts that show the reasons that led to the occupation, the subsequent organisation of the community, the setting up of the homes, the laying out of sewage pipes, plumbing and so on, the community work, the work done by organisations such as Hogar de Cristo.

Collective action such as those carried out by the Pobladores movement are direct interventions into the dominant frameworks of construction and maintenance of the socio-spatial character of the urban space. Through such organised action and movements, it further establishes that "Human geographies are not merely external containers, given and immutable." (Soja, 2010, p. 104) In the context of urban space, the purpose of such social movements is, according to Neil Brenner: "to transform the socioterritorial organization of capitalism itself on multiple geographical scales. The "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1968) thereby expands into a broader "right to space" both within and beyond the urban scale. (Lefebvre, 1978, pp. 162, 317) (Lefebvre, 1979, p. 294) Even as processes of global capitalist restructuring radically reorganize the supraurban scalar hierarchies in which cities are embedded, cities remain strategic arenas for sociopolitical struggles which, in turn, have major ramifications for the supraurban geographies of capitalism (INURA, 1998)" (Brenner, 2000, p. 375)

In terms of the conceptualisation of the agent enacting the transformation of the urban space, Alexis Cortés compares the way the urban social movement for housing in Chile is historically understood and the way it is viewed in Brazil. Cortés points out that in both Brazil and in Chile, one can see a collective united effort on the part of the urban working class in response to the terrible living conditions of the urban poor in both cases. This is followed by a period of effort

on the part of the state to “expand the horizon of citizenship in relation to the state.” (Cortés Morales & Thompson, 2013, p. 170) The way in which political agency can be framed is brought out by Cortés in his analysis. In the case of Brazil, the measures taken by the state to improve the living conditions were seen as part of the reformist attitude of the government formed after the Brazilian Revolution of 1930. The steps taken by the state were seen as part of official policy and a gift from the state rather than something the working class had won through their struggle. In the case of Chile however the attempts on the part of the state to bring in reformist policies designed towards some level of integration were seen as what the working class had achieved through their struggle. Thus through historical narrativisation one is rendered a passive force while the other active. (Cortés Morales & Thompson, 2013)

The year of the occupation of La Victoria (1957) saw an increase in the cost of living in Chile and in April of that year there were mass protests where the *pobladores* joined the students and workers in their agitations. (Cury, 2014) (Bonilla, 1960) Through such mobilisations, in effect a collective identity was forged that laid the foundation for networks of solidarity among the trade unions, student unions and the pobladores. The pobladores movement also grew in terms of a collective as they faced key decisions such as occupations of land and organising collective action. (Cury, 2014) With workers living in the settlements, through the trade unions, networks were forged with leftwing political actors and parties which also led to dialogues being initiated with state agencies such as the Corvi.

Despite this, the space of the settlements such as La Victoria to a certain point remained an unfamiliar space for the state because of its need to protect itself from evictions which during the time of state repression such as the military dictatorship extended to the protection of activists as well as the urban poor living in these settlements. This is an intentional strategy which often characterises working class neighbourhoods that James Scott refers to when writing about the Paris communes: “The geography of resistance was not evenly

distributed…Resistance was concentrated in densely packed, working class quarters, which…had complex illegible street plans." (Scott, 1998, p. 61)

The very structural design of such a space resists efforts at social control and surveillance with the very construction in design creating a space that is "deliberately impenetrable to the state". (Schneider, 2000, p. 784) This is what Baron Haussmann who led the efforts to destroy such neighbourhoods of Paris found to be a danger when he complained of the design of these quarters as lacking means of "any effective surveillance." (Girard, 1981, p. 127) (Scott, 1998, p. 61) Carlos Albrecht, an architect had been requested by the Chilean pobladores to give professional advice on the planning of such poblaciones or settlements. He says,

> I had in mind a more spacious living quarters with parks and grass, but the settlers were adamant. They wanted the población designed like a fort with narrow passage ways and no open spaces. Each house was to be constructed identically. (Schneider, 2000, p. 784)

In effect, the spatial character of a poblacion such as La Victoria reflects the history of popular struggle as well as that of state repression. Mitchell describes a space as "a site activated by movements, actions, narratives, and signs"—a "practiced place". (Mitchell W. , 1994) Even prior to the period of dictatorship, the structures of social control exercised by the state as well as the daily violence of poverty as experienced by the pobladors made it essential that the construction of the poblacion make it difficult for the state to exert control over the subjects through surveillance.

The effectiveness of such a design became apparent during the period of dictatorship when collective resistance by inhabitants made it difficult for the police to carry out targetted "disappearances". (Schneider, 2000) The space of settlements such as La Victoria or Yungay, earlier known as Villa Lenin, evolved through mobilisations which under the dictatorship took the form of extreme political resistance with links to the urban guerilla movement such as the

MIR (Movimiento Izquierda Revolucionario). The experience of repression imbued the poblacion along with the experience of resistance. One of the witnesses of the military repression, Violeta, a resident of Herminda de la Victoria, describes how resistance shaped the very space of the poblacion:

> As the repression grew more severe, we learned new strategies of defense. We began to create new organizations, marching from población to población, by foot, organizing. We had set up a little club in the football field, with a gate and light. On the day of the first national protest, goodbye field, goodbye gate, goodbye light. More protests, more broken light bulbs, more trees torn down, more barricades, more repression, more tear gas. It was as if everyone in the población had this rage. Residents ran to their homes and grabbed whatever they could put their hands on and pah, it was immediately in the street. No one examined what it was they had, they just threw it into the street. The barricades grew higher than seemed possible. (Schneider, 2000, pp. 786-787)

Another statement from a resident of Yungay sheds light on the experience of resistance being permeated by a historical consciousness of resistance against the state:

> Here we have a history of combativeness dating from the struggles in the nitrate mines at the turn of the century. Here we have the capacity to organize and resist. They can kill us as individuals, but the organizations survive and the resistance rises again. (Schneider, 2000, p. 788)

A resident of Granadilla, Chindo, viewed their resistance as similar to the indigenous struggle, “We began to organize militarily, but without arms. Like Indians, we organized silently, in the dark – so that the police could not enter the poblacion.” (Schneider, 2000, p. 788)

The memory of the suffering and the resistance gain an aura of the “sacred” as in the case of the face of André Jarlán or Che Guevara appearing in murals in La Victoria. The use of Che Guevara’s face connects the resistance of the pobladors to the popular struggles across Latin America. André Jarlán on the other hand is specifically a figure connected with the history of the pobladores movement in Chile and La Victoria in particular. A French Catholic priest,

André Jarlán lived in La Victoria during the dictatorship and was killed in his home during an attack carried out on the neighbourhood by the police. Not a part of the leftist resistance against the dictatorship, André Jarlán's presence in La Victoria was representative of the position taken by the Chilean Church vis-à-vis the dictatorship. Unlike the Church in Argentina which openly supported the dictatorship, the Chilean Church had substantial connections with leftist currents of Christianity as well as the progressive factions within the Christian Democrats. While the Argentine Church had not participated in the Second Episcopal Conference of Latin America[18] held in Medellin, Colombia in 1968, the Chilean Church had. As a result, the Church in Chile had sent priests into the poor neighbourhoods. (Schneider, 2000) Another priest of the neighbourhood, Father Pierre Dubois was forced to leave Chile in 1986 and could return only after 1990 when democracy was restored. He continued to live in La Victoria till his death in 2012. (Cardozo, 2019) During the dictatorship, the chapel had been used to hide activists as well as treat the wounded from the police attacks.

After Father André Jarlán's death, his room in La Victoria became a site that embodied the trauma of the loss of lives and suffering inflicted by the dictatorship. The site in effect served as a space for memory, "espacio memoria"[19]. In 2016, the house where Andre Jarlán had been killed and Pierre Dubois lived was declared a national monument by the government in Chile. (ADNradio.cl, 2016) Yet it is important to note the nature of significance of the space, the monument and the mural. María Emilia Tijoux in her study of murals of resistance in Chile states, "Murals of resistance intend to, by their repetition of the inscription, play down the inscription of defeat. Only by *inscribing* defeat in struggle, or death in hope of life, *the repetition is synonymous with new possibility*." (Tijoux, 2009, p. 147)

[18] The Conference in 1968 saw official incorporation of Liberation Theology into the objectives of the Church.
[19] In 2004, "espacio memoria" was a term used by the Argentine government in designating the Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA), as a space for memory.

The space of the room where André Jarlán was shot, the murals listing names of those murdered or disappeared during the dictatorship or showing moments of the resistance of the pobladors which carry images of Salvador Allende, Che Guevara or André Jarlán, in effect reinscribe historical processes that no longer exist, that have been violently removed from social memory. Cortés extends Tijoux's argument stating that for the pobladors, the emphasis on the occupation of the land of La Victoria as well as the resistance to a dictatorship that had put an end to a project of social change, creates a narrative of a continuous project that has never been defeated. Cortés states, "this was not an aestheticization of history but a new claim of victory." (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 72)

3.8 Portrayal of Marginality in the Urban Space in Latin American cinema

In the context of Latin American cinema, Luis Bunuel's *Los olvidados* (1950) made in Mexico and Leonardo Favio's *Cronica de un niño solo* (1965) made in Argentina were some early instances of cinematic exploration into the lived realities of the marginal sectors of society and the regime of violence that structures the lives of the marginal. The New Latin American Cinema Movement as it developed in different countries in the 1960s was deeply invested in exploring the structural violence of marginality and underdevelopment through what was a form of militant aesthetics of filmmaking wherein the marginalised subject was seen as possessing the potential for bringing about social transformation. (Mayolo & Arbeláez, 1974) (Francia, Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano en Viña del Mar, 1990) This was followed in the 1970s and 80s by the neobaroque phase in terms of the aesthetic style of filmmaking which has been seen as a response to the authoritarian regimes that dominated the Latin American socio-political, economic and cultural landscape at that time and their imposition of "discursive monologism". (Rodríguez, 2012, p. 90) The films that emerged in the 1990s could in many ways be seen as a stylistic response to and rejection of the neobaroque aesthetics of the cinema of the previous decade but also a rejection of the structural analysis of society, history,

marginality preferring instead “emotionally charged narratives set in realistic settings” (Rodríguez, 2012, p. 108) which focus on the small histories of society. This was indicative of the postmodern turn in historiography with its rejection of grand narratives and focus on the “petit récit” or the little narratives.

Christian León identifies a certain style of film-making that emerges in the 1990s and has considerable influence on films being made into the 2000s—a film-making style that can be viewed as “dirty realism”. (León, 2007) In terms of aesthetics these films incorporate elements of the documentary as well as a flow of images that are a feature of the contemporary video culture as represented by MTV. (Monsiváis, 2006) These films were very particularly focused on the marginal subject, depicting their quotidian reality which was a violent one. The world that these films wanted to present was that of the streets, the quotidian violence and the micropolitics of the body, what León describes as the “realidad sucia y callejera[20]”. (León, 2007, p. 137) Thematically these films were concerned with the crisis of values and social exclusion where the lived reality of the urban space of the streets causes a rupture in the values associated traditionally with the home, the family and interpersonal relationships. The daily violence of the city, the urban space and that of marginalisation is another theme that runs through these films. The world presented is one of disenchantment and disillusionment from everything including social values, modernity or the possibility of progress or utopias. León says,

> Sus historias de orfandad, frustración, miseria, corrupción, dolor y muerte muestran la bancarrota de la ciudadanía moderna y de la razón, pero también la imposibilidad de un individuo autoconsciente de su condición de oprimido y agente de la revolución social[21]. (León, 2007, p. 138)

[20] Trans: “Dirty reality of the streets”

[21] Trans: “Its stories of orphanhood, frustration, misery, corruption, pain and death demonstrate the bankruptcy of the modern citizenship and of reason but also the impossibility of the individual self-conscious of his condition of being oppressed and an agent of social revolution.”

Within such a worlview, the marginal subjects are viewed as completely lacking in political agency, caught in a world over which they have no control and with no possibility of transforming that reality. There seemed to be no longer any relevance of the politically active national identity that Latin American cinema in the 1960s and 1970s had given voice to.

Some of the early examples of this kind of film are Víctor Gaviria's *RodrigoD. No Futuro/RodrigoD No Future* (Colombia, 1990), Francisco Lombardi's *Caídos del Cielo/Fallen from Heaven* (Peru, 1990), Gonzalo Justiniano's *Caluga o Menta/Candy or Mint* (Chile, 1990) and Adrian Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro's *Pizza, birra y faso/Pizza, beer and cigarettes* (Argentina, 1997). Later films that follow this style of film-making are Víctor Gaviria's *La vendedora de rosas/The Rose seller* (Colombia, 1998), Sebastián Cordero's *Ratas, ratones y rateros/Rats, mice, thieves* (Ecuador, 1999), Barbet Schroeder's *La virgen de los sicarios/Our Lady of the Assassins* (Colombia, 2000), Alejandro Gonzáles Iñarritu's *Amores Perros/Love's a Bitch* (Mexico, 2002) and Fernando Meirelles' *Cidade de Deus/City of God* (Brazil, 2002). All these films display a distrust towards what Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón calls "ideology" (Cuarón, 2006) which is possibly an allusion to the acknowledgement of a political consciousness, rejects any form of collective identification be it in the form of a family, a community, a nation and also denies the possibility of social transformation in the form of revolution. Reality is presented as it is observed, unchangeable and cruel, bordering on the dystopic. The marginal spaces and subjects that the films portray are scenes of crises of individuals and most of these films use the format of multiple narratives that intersect each other through certain moments of encounter of the subjects and their lives. The marginality of these subjects renders transformation or growth impossible and León observes that the narratives conclude with the death, disappearance and effacement of the marginal subject. (León, 2007) Just as the possibility of a future is denied, the marginal subject is presented as

beings of the street, “los seres de la calle” (León, 2007, p. 139), without a past or memories. Life is only a continuous postponement of death in such spaces that these subjects inhabit. In terms of the space of the street, the barrio or favela the narrative is situated within, the cinematic space that is created lacks specificity in any profound way. Apart from the direct mentioning of the geographical place the narrative is set in, the experience of marginality, divested as they are from socio-historical context, as portrayed in these films create a conceptualisation of urban space that could be universal. Irrespective of whichever Latin American city the film may be depicting, the portrayal is that of a violent corrosive urban space. León states,

> Sus películas, rodadas en escenarios reales, evocan el ambiente corrosivo de las urbes latinoamericanas como Medellín, Buenos Aires, Quito o México. Espacios cualquiera, anónimos, sórdidos y lúgubres son el escenario propicio para la violencia, el delito y el crimen.[22] (León, 2007, p. 142)

It is significant that in the light of the collective grassroot movements and organisations within the urban space, these films choose to deny the existence of collective action as a political force capable of having an impact on the social landscape of the urban space. A film that very consciously tries to break through this dominant form of portraying marginality in terms of an observational portrayal of its quotidian violence and uncertainty is the Argentine film *El Nexo/The Nexus* (2005) directed by Sebastián Antico. It is a science-fiction film about an alien attack on Earth, one of the targets of which is the Villa 21-24 of Barracas, one of the most populated shantytowns in Buenos Aires. In terms of the premise, it is reminiscent of the cult classic *El Eternauta/The Eternaut*, the science fiction comic series written by Héctor Germán Oesterheld and drawn by Francisco Solano López which had been first published serially in the Buenos Aires newspaper *Hora Cero* between 1957 and 1959. The comic was about a

[22] Trans: “Its films, involving real scenarios, evoke the corrosive ambience of the Latin American urban spaces such as Medellín, Buenos Aires, Quito or México. Whichever space, anonymous, sordid and lugubrious, are the suitable spaces for violence, delinquency and crime.”

sudden state of emergency that descends on Argentina due to an alien attack. As many scholars have pointed out, Oesterheld's comic is a political artwork and was read as a denunciation of the crimes committed by the Argentine military dictatorship. (Geraghty, 2020)

The film *El Nexo* was shot in Villa 21-24 and was based on a short story by Julio Arrieta, the co-writer of the film's script who also acts in the film. At the time the film was conceptualised, Arrieta was working as a cultural agent in the neighbourhood. He would arrange for actors from the shantytown for roles as extras in films and television projects. His experience as a community leader helped him in organising within the shanty town for film shoots. His work which was almost to serve as a bridge between the world of the shantytown and the cultural industry, became a daily reminder of the limitations in terms of the kind of roles that might be on offer for them as well as the kind of narratives about urban spaces such as shantytowns which were proscribed by marginalisation. As Víctor Goldgel-Carballo states, till his death, "Arrieta insistently posed a question that illuminates the main force behind *El Nexo*: Why don't aliens ever land in the slums?" (Goldgel-Carballo, 2014, p. 115)

Arrieta had formerly been a 'puntero', a ward boss or community leader and a Peronist. (Goldgel-Carballo, 2014) In Argentina, working class and the trade union movement became widely influenced by Peronist politics in the 1940s. The working-class movement for a very long time was concentrated in the trade union movement. The Confederación General de Trabajo (CGT) or the General Confederation of Labour was Peronist-controlled and the largest organisation among the different factions of the working class and trade union movement. The influence of the left leaning articulation of Peronism cannot be disregarded despite there not existing links between the workers and the unemployed urban poor as it developed in Chile for instance in the 1960s. However, with the increase in unemployment towards the end of the 1990s and the economic collapse of 2001-2002, the unemployed urban poor emerged as a political actor through the Piquetero movement. (Epstein, 2003) In its very name the

‘Piquetero’ movement refers to the picket or the picketers thereby alluding to workers engaged in strikes. Epstein points out that while the Piquetero movement had no connection with the trade unions, nonetheless some of the strategies adopted by this movement can be seen as being influenced by Argentina’s history of workers’ struggles. One of the strategies that have been adopted by them is the blocking off of roads called “cortes de ruta” in order to make the government pay attention to their demands which had ranged from food to unemployment relief be it through jobs or through financial subsidies in exchange of a labour commitment on the part of the community.

Since the early stage the movement had grown to the point of demanding greater inclusion in decision making processes where the decisions directly affect their lives and living conditions such as being included in the *Programa Trabajar* (Jobs Programme) of 1996 – 2002 or the *Programa Jefes/Jefas de Familia Desocupados* (Program for Unemployed Heads of Family). (Epstein, 2003) The economic crisis in Argentina led to a great fall in public support for the government. This opened up a space for the Piquetero movement in their political mobilisation since the government did not have enough public support in order to repress the movement and the mobilisations. It was a moment of national crisis that opened up a space for the marginal sectors of urban society to push harder for changes in order to exercise their right to the city.

Julio Arrieta described the content of the film in an interview,

> The whole planet is under the control of the aliens, until they get to Slum 21 in Barracas. By accident, one of the characters of the slum discovers the cure for these aliens, who were not harmed by any missile or atomic bomb.... He discovers that the only thing that harms them is the rotten water of the ditch of the slum [the mix of waste water and rain that forms due to the lack of sewage systems], and he attacks them with this water. He organizes the people of the slum and the people of other poor parts of the world, like Harlem in the U.S. and Liverpool in England, and all the poor neighborhoods of the planet adopt the method of Slum 21 in Barracas, they attack the aliens with the rotten water of their slums, and the world is free; covered by shit, but free. [quoted in (Goldgel-Carballo, 2014)]

The film *El Nexo* hinges on that question of Julio Arrieta as to why aliens never descend in slums. This question actually brings into light the way in which hegemonic assumptions of development, both spatial and technological, structure the way we understand as well as imagine social transformation. Joanna Page in her analysis of Federico León and Marcos Martínez's documentary *Estrellas/Stars* (2007) about the making of the film *El Nexo*, says that such a question "exposes the embeddedness of science fiction, futuristic visions, and alien encounters within certain (North American and European) narratives of technological modernity." (Page, 2016, p. 157)

One of the distinct features of the way in which the space of the villa, the shantytown is presented in the film is the way in which deprivation is presented. The film, as Goldgel-Carballo points out, is "marked by deprivation." (Goldgel-Carballo, 2014, p. 115) The genre this film belongs to is generally one that requires large budgets and is driven by technology. However, it is the very use of the materials available within the means of the film crew in *El Nexo* that throw open to question what ultimately is the right kind of costume for aliens or what does alien technology actually look like?

Moments in the film seems to reflect the experience of the socio-political and economic collapse that Argentina experienced only a few years before the film was made. Together with this there is also the very clear and bold assertion of the marginal collective as having agency to effect social transformation. The alien attack is followed by a scene where the inhabitants of the shantytown accost the local ration store which is reminiscent of the food riots that broke out throughout Buenos Aires following the economic crash. (Tobar, 2001) The aliens attack by spreading a toxic gas which spreads like fog. The images of the shantytown covered in that dense fog that induces panic among the inhabitants resembles the streets filled with the tear gas that was used by police forces to control the riots that had broken out through the city. (Tobar, 2001) The film does not draw easy parallels between these two experiences. However, it does

present a marginal collective, the residents in this case of Villa 21-24 of Barracas, as possessing the capability to resist attacks on their community. The Piquetero movement were known to have set up joint kitchens for the community among other community services such as nurseries for children and workshops by pooling together funds received from various aid programs. (Epstein, 2003) In the crisis that follows the attacks carried out by the aliens, the film shows how members of the community come together, run joint kitchens and eventually work together to defeat the aliens after discovering their weakness.

In order to spread the message that will bring liberation for humanity from the repressive society created by the aliens, the representative of the slum residents, their leader, enters the legislative assembly, a seat of power from where historically the marginalised communities have been left out. The scene foregrounds the historical fact of the marginalised existence of the urban poor through the juxtaposition of the speech of their representative which stands out at the discursive level precisely because certain registers of speech appear to not be suited to the space of political power. However, this is because people who speak thus do not have representation politically.

The aliens are finally defeated by being showered with dirty water from the slums. The medium of the cinematic narrative is employed by the filmmakers to produce an image of marginality that as Goldgel-Carballo describes, lies at the heart of the intervention on the part of the shantytown residents which ends the threat posed by the alien force:

> …they are heroes of the abject: their main weapons are their degraded material conditions, of which the rotten water is just a synecdoche. If the slum can be thought of as the social residue globally produced by the failure of political and economic models, its wastewater must be understood as doubly abject: it has been refused, both from a social and a physical point of view. (Goldgel-Carballo, 2014, p. 116)

Yet, this image of marginality makes a claim on agency that viewed in the context of social movements emerging out of the communities of the urban poor and marginalised is an extension of an assertion of what Freire terms as a "historical vocation" (Freire, 1970).

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Chapter 4

The "Public Secret"[1], Surveillance State and Public Memory

4.1 Rupturing the "Public Secret"

If reconciliation is a measure of healing from the trauma and burden of injustices committed by authoritarian regimes, then it is predicated on the enactment of justice and remembrance of that past. Following the restoration of democracy, an effort to document the nature and scale of crimes committed by authoritarian regimes across Latin America has been made by governments as well as international bodies such as the United Nations. One of the most recent cases is that of the 2019 coup in Bolivia. Studies show that the interim government in Bolivia, following the coup, had unleashed a period of massacres and violent attacks targetting the indigenous populations which are traditionally the support base for the M.A.S. (Movimiento Al Socialismo/Movement towards Socialism) government. (Forster, 2021) (Long, 2021)

The Assistant Secretary General of the U.N., Miroslav Jenca, during his official visit to Bolivia following the election that ended the interim government's reign and brought M.A.S. back in power, observed that the return of democracy to the country had provided a new opportunity for reconciliation but he added that "no hay reconciliación sin la justicia[2]". (Gómez, 2020) At the same time, mobilisation of different organisations demanding justice have continued and strengthened over time since the massacres that took place in 2019. (Ramos & Limachi, 2019) (Wadhwa, 2020) However, unlike the situation in Bolivia in 2020 when the interim government had to step down following the electoral victory of the MAS candidate Luis Arce, ending the reign of the unelected government within a year (Gamba, 2020), the authoritarian regimes that

[1] Reference to Michael Taussig's concept of the "public secret" (Taussig, Defacement, 1999).
[2] Trans: "there is no reconciliation without justice"

took over state power across Latin America through the latter half of the twentieth century had a far more lasting impact on society as a whole.

It is significant that the sections of society demanding justice as well as those complicit with the actions of the authoritarian regimes, through their networks of political solidarity, were aware of the nature of what the authoritarian regimes were doing, who were being attacked. That the military was engaged in kidnapping, torture, extrajudicial killings constituted what Michael Taussig describes as "public secret" (Taussig, 1999, p. 2), a form of social knowledge of "knowing what not to know" (Taussig, 1999, p. 2) that is foundational to the perpetuation of state power itself. In a society structured through networks of complicity as well as fear, it is "that which is generally known, but cannot be articulated" (Taussig, 1999, p. 5).

Paz Encina, the Paraguayan filmmaker, has extensively worked with the *Archives of Terror*, the collection of documents maintained by the police in Paraguay during the dictatorship of Alfred Stroessner. According to her, when she went through the files, a lot of the names of those who had been kidnapped, tortured or disappeared were familiar to her. Her father's position as an opposition lawyer brought many people to their home, people who were looking for information or help related to individuals who had been taken away by the authorities. Thus "the files kept showing her people she knew, had seen, or at the very least had heard of, mostly in her family home: a horrific form of homecoming, twenty-three years after the end of the dictatorship." (Brizuela, 2017, p. 49) This non-articulated status is further emphasised through "the spectral radiance of the unsaid" (Taussig, 1999, p. 6). The power of the secret lies in not only the fact that it remains unarticulated but also that it is something that is publicly known.

Taussig refers to "the law of silence" (Taussig, 1999, p. 6), a phrase he encounters for the first time in Colombia in the 1980s, at a time when civil liberties are severely impinged upon in the country through a series of declared "states of emergency" (Taussig, 1999, p. 6) and military

rule. The escalation of quotidian violence on civilians, peasants, was at the same “mysterious” (Taussig, 1999, p. 6) and well understood. The people knew that the very police and military who were setting up checkpoints to search and target civilians to curb drug trafficking and terrorism, were very likely to be involved in the very things they were presumed to be trying to control. Taussig writes,

> We all “knew” this, and they “knew” we “knew”, but there was no way it could be easily articulated, certainly not on the ground, face-to-face…Such is the labor of the negative, as when it is pointed out that something may be obvious, but needs stating in order to be obvious. For example, the public secret. Knowing it is essential to its power, equal to the denial. Not being able to say anything is likewise testimony to its power. So it continues, each negation feeding the other… (Taussig, 1999, p. 6)

Only through official acknowledgment this power can be ruptured. Truth commissions have the potential to break the power that the “public secret” holds over society and bring it under public scrutiny, critique and judgement. Jean Franco relates the case of Adolfo Scilingo, a retired captain of the Argentine Navy who revealed the truth of the nature of the mass disappearances of the Argentine youth during the Dirty War. He had become frustrated with the fact that superior officers remained unaffected by the judicial and social investigation and scrutiny into the events that took place under the dictatorship while the careers of the junior officers who were tasked with the actual torture and disappearances were being affected. Franco states that Scilingo’s interview with Horacio Verbitsky, which was aired on television as well as being published in a book, “revealed what many already suspected but had never been public knowledge—that the disappeared had been ruthlessly slaughtered.” (Franco, 2013, p. 103)

In Bolivia, the organisations that have been working to get justice for those killed, imprisoned and tortured during the coup have reiterated this idea in their demands for justice as essential in order to bring peace and reconciliation to Bolivian society as a whole. The Bolivian case

was one that happened post ending of the Cold War. However, this has been a demand associated with social and political organisations across Latin America seeking justice for the human rights abuses committed by authoritarian regimes since the 1950s. Martín Almada, the Paraguayan lawyer and educator, while receiving the Right Livelihood Award in Sweden, said "Impunity generates more repression and more corruption. Thus we must fight for justice, because life lies on the road to justice." (Almada, 1988) Almada was responsible for bringing to light the archive of documents of the Paraguayan state concerning torture and repression of citizens during the dictatorship—the *Archive of Terror* as it is popularly known. In the same acceptance speech, Almada declares that justice cannot be expected to come from a higher authority or power. He states,

> We believe that the answer will not come from the big powers of the world, but from the active population. The actions of an organised civilian society who will force the governments and the financial international organizations to put an end to what causes the perpetration of poverty in each one of our third world countries. (Almada, 1988)

At the same time of declaring that the power to bring justice lies in the hands of the people, Almada also refers to the complicit silence of civilians that allowed for the torture and extrajudicial murder of "millions" (Almada, 1988) during the Operation Condor.

4.2 Truth Commissions and Official History

Truth Commissions create a rupture in the fear and silence that allows for the perpetuation of a regime of violence. Grandin observes, while raising the hope of an official path to justice, truth or fact-finding commissions rarely translate into actual prosecutions. (Grandin, 2005) The legal interpretation of reconciliation that drives such efforts can be said to be of the manner of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission whose aim is to serve as "a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold

suffering and injustice and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy". (Republic of South Africa, RSA, 1998, p. 3) Thus such reports are considered to be drawing a line between the past and the future. In such cases, with the limitations of official judicial measures to render the justice demanded by large sections of the society, remembering the past, documenting it, and if possible analysing it in order to find the reflections of that past in the present is what serves as ways of healing for the society.

The aim of Truth commissions, irrespective of the eventual form and character they take, is largely how José Zalaquett, a Chilean law professor involved in Chile's Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación (National Commision of Truth and Reconciliation) explains it: "The truth in itself is both reparation and prevention." (Weschler, 1990, pp. 243-45) For Thomas Nagel, philosophy and law professor at New York University, the necessity for the truth to be recorded, documented is "the difference…between knowledge and acknowledgement. It's what happens and can only happen to knowledge when it becomes officially sanctioned, when it is made part of the public cognitive scene." (Weschler, 1990, p. 4)

Julie Taylor in her analysis of the truth commissions of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil (Taylor, 1994) points out that the state-approved documentation of that which was already known by society was to serve as a form of official history of the actions of the dictatorships. The archiving of the testimonies of witnesses and survivors, or families of victims, was a method of framing the historical moment of authoritarian governance. In Latin America, one of the first efforts on the part of the state to document such injustices was undertaken in the formation of Comisión Nacional de Desaparecidos (National Commission for the Disappeared) in Bolivia in 1982. Since then across various countries such commissions have resulted in extensive reports on human rights violations and other crimes committed by authoritarian regimes. Grandin's review of the truth commissions established in Argentina, Chile and Guatemala reveals how the state's attitude towards the political conflict influenced both the treatment of

the past as well as the implications of the commissions' report on present quests for justice and legal reparations.

In Argentina, the CONADEP or Comisión Nacional sobre la Desapareción de Personas (National Commission for the Disappearance of People) was set up in 1983. It was sanctioned by the state and was to investigate the period of political terror during the dictatorship. The aim of the commission was to provide material that would be supplemented with judicial prosecution of the perpetrators. Grandin views such efforts as symptomatic of the state's role at this moment of transition from authoritarian rule to a democracy. According to him, such investigations into the political terror of the past was part of an effort to give rise to an idea of liberal citizenship which saw the state "not as a potential executor of social justice but as an arbiter of legal disputes and protector of legal rights." (Grandin, 2005, p. 47) Grandin sees this as part of the nature of democracy as adopted by these countries that were emerging out of dictatorships. Since the 1920s, the state's role in carrying out measures for social protection had been growing across Latin American nations. (Brearly, 2016) This project was largely dismantled by the authoritarian regimes that came into being since the 1950s. The governments that took over following the end of authoritarian rule, had accepted the neoliberal order. The impact of this was evident in not only the economic role of the state as implemented by the new democratic governments, but also the fact that the focus of democracy was more on the legal and political rights of the citizens, rather than the social rights. (Grandin, 2005)

In Argentina, a Buenos Aires district court judged that Emilio Massera and Armando Lambruschini, both former naval chiefs of staff found guilty of the kidnap and disappearance of five members of the Tarnopolsky family, each pay the sum of one million dollars to the remaining survivor of the family who was also the plaintiff. (Feitlowitz, 1998) When it reached the Supreme Court, the final decision on the case against Massera was the payment of one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to be paid to the plaintiff with the amount being

divided between the guilty individual and the state. This judgement was followed by a presidential decree signed by Carlos Menem whose aim was "to prevent copycat lawsuits…set the amount of damages a survivor could claim on a "disappeared" relative at two hundred and twenty thousand dollars." (Tarnopolsky, 1999, p. 48) This is an example of the early attempts on the part of state governments to provide legal punishment for some of the very extreme cases of the excesses committed by the authoritarian regimes. It also shows how the government at the time tried to influence and restrain the discourse of the judicial enquiry.

As Grandin points out, in the countries that experienced military dictatorships, the military and the interests represented by them had most definitively established their dominance in their counterinsurgent operations against the rising tide of demands for more socially just and democratic systems of governance across Latin America through the 1970s and 80s. This led to attempts on their part to stifle the legal processes aiming for indictments for the crimes committed. In Argentina, this was seen in the ways in which the military tried to obstruct the legal processes of putting on trial those responsible for the worst of the crimes committed during the dictatorship. CONADEP's report on the human rights violations during the Dirty War, *Nunca Más/Never Again*, was published in 1984 following which president Raul Alfonsín declared that the nine ex-commanders of the first three juntas, which included Jorge Videla and Emilio Massera, will be put on trial. Initially, Alfonsín wanted the Supreme Tribunal of the Argentine military to try the officers in question. However, the military refused to do so. (Feitlowitz, 1998) Videla and Massera were eventually tried in the civilian court and the initial sentence was "prisión perpetua" (Feitlowitz, 1998, p. 15) while the other seven "received sentences ranging from four and a half to 17 years" (Feitlowitz, 1998, p. 16). The trial ended with the naming of four other officers for further investigation. This was followed by other trials and convictions. Grandin points out that the object of the truth commission report in Argentina was not to provide a historical analysis and actively refrained from a critical

perspective on the past of not only the dictatorship but the period of social turmoil preceding it. The judicial process with its supposed transparency and objectivity was offered as the solution to both the claims made by a large section of the citizens who were demanding justice as well as offering to placate the military that was still very powerful. (Grandin, 2005)

Grandin states that the decontextualisation of the human rights abuses committed by the military during the period of the 'Dirty War' from the socio-political conditions of the time in effect conflated all forms of political violence and presented it as a threat to democracy which was to signify tolerance and liberalism. (Grandin, 2005) The CONADEP report, *Nunca Más* begins with the statement, "During the 1970s, Argentina was torn by terror from both the extreme right and the far left." (Sabato, 1986, p. 1) (CONADEP, 1984) Yet, as Grandin underlines, the same report's catalogue of the military's crimes are overwhelmingly committed against what Sabato describes as,

> trade union leaders fighting for better wages; youngsters in student unions; journalists who did not support the regime; psychologists and sociologists simply for belonging to suspicious professions; young pacifists, nuns and priests who had taken the teachings of Christ to shanty areas; the friends of these people, too, and the friends of friends… (Sabato, 1986, p. 4) (CONADEP, 1984)

According to Julie Taylor, this process of decontextualisation of the human rights abuse conducted by the military from the existing socio-political dynamics and conflicts, was an extension of the military's aim of breaking down networks that had been forged based on political solidarity. She states,

> All who passed through this process, then, accused and accusers—actors in highly political dramas where they had represented clashing world views and collective strategies for implementing them—were refigured as innocent or transgressing individuals with individual rights and obligations. (Taylor, 1994, p. 197)

As Taylor emphasises, by interpreting the maintenance of law as order and political violence of any form as chaos, the commission's report effectively erases "collective motivation" both on the part of the army, the victimisers, as well as those affected by the human rights violations committed against them, the victims—who "were defended as individuals whose human rights had been violated rather than as political activists." (Taylor, 1994, p. 198) Taylor's assessment of the truth commissions in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay notes the systematic eliding over of political convictions of those whose testimonies were being collected. Regarding the Argentine tribune that was conducted to sentence the most senior officials of the military junta, she states:

> Politico-ideological questions were considered inappropriate. The Tribune sorted the relevant from the irrelevant and demanded that the trial be carried out in universalist ethical and juridical terms. Testimony could only be taken in the form of direct perception in a descriptive mode based on individual senses. Not only was hearsay thus eliminated, but with it all reference to political beliefs and loyalties. (Taylor, 1994, p. 197)

Furthermore, the process of seeking judicial reparations was greatly hampered by the fact that the military itself did not cooperate with the process since as Feitlowitz describes it, the military was "restive and unrepentant". (Feitlowitz, 1998, p. 16) The government prioritised the avoidance of another coup which large scale prosecutions might result in. Thus President Alfonsín placed certain restraints on the time limit as well as the scope of the prosecutions. Two laws were passed that epitomised these limits. The first of them was the Ley de Punto Final (Law 23.492 dated 24th December, 1986, Full Stop Law) which set a time limit on the prosecutions— 23rd February, 1987. (Feitlowitz, 1998) The second law was the Ley de Obediencia Debida (Law 23.049 dated 4th of June, 1987, Law of Due Obedience) which excluded the subordinate personnel from prosecution on the basis that they were "cumpliendo

órdenes[3]" and thus absolved of actions that were done as part of having to follow the orders of their superiors. (D'Alesio, 2017)

Feitlowitz notes, a study conducted in 1988 by the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS, Centre for Legal and Social Studies) discovered that approximately 400 members of the military responsible for human rights violations escaped prosecution owing to the Law of Due Obedience while owing to the deadline imposed by the Full Stop Law, hundreds of cases that had been registered were discarded. (Feitlowitz, 1998) Yet, the prosecutions that were carried led to parts of the military to revolt. Sections of the military rebelled under the identity of the "Carapintadas[4]" with the demand for impunity for actions committed during the dictatorship, increase in the military budget as well as rise in wages. This was called the "Operación Dignidad[5]" (Payne, 2000).

While the Carapintadas did not succeed in mounting another takeover of the government, the government did make concessions in the process of prosecuting military officials. The most significant of them was President Carlos Menem's pardon of all senior military officials facing trial for crimes committed during the dictatorship which was followed by absolving the former commanders of the de facto government who had already been charged and sentenced. (Feitlowitz, 1998) This has been interpreted variously as complicity in the dictatorship's regime of terror (Feitlowitz, 1998) or political opportunism on the part of politicians such as Alfonsín or Menem (Arceneaux, 1999). However, it is also indicative of the state's refusal to recognise or acknowledge the conflict of socio-political visions that lay at the heart of the Dirty war, taking recourse instead in a depoliticised narrative. This created a false understanding of history, avoiding an analysis of the radicalism driving the political movement to expand the

[3] Trans: "following orders"
[4] Trans: "Painted faces"
[5] Trans: "Operation Dignity"

sphere of social justice in the country. It is significant that as popular protests continued that demanded justice and organisations tried to repeal the laws that granted amnesty to army officials responsible for human rights violations, both the laws, the Full Stop Law and the Law of Due Obedience, were ruled to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Argentina in 2005. (Amnesty International UK, 2001) (HRW, 2005)

The Argentine judicial enquiry into the crimes committed by the military is different from the case in Brazil or Chile. In the case of Brazil, the Amnesty Law of 1979 prevented prosecution of any military official accused of torture and other human rights abuses. The extent of legal quest for justice was financial reparations. In 1995 the Brazilian government started a programme of reparations under which around 135 families of those murdered by the regime were given financial compensation. (USIP, 1979) Similar reparations programs are found in Chile as well where families of those qualifying as victims of the military dictatorship were granted financial compensation by a government decision in 2004. (AP, 2004)

In Brazil, while the state did not create a Truth commission until 2011, an independent research team with the support of the World Council of Churches and the archbishop of São Paulo, Cardinal Paulo Evaristo, began an investigation into the reports of torture and other forms of human rights abuses carried out under the military regimes through the two preceding decades. Their report was published as *Brasil:Nunca Mais* (Brazil:Never Again) in 1985. Later when the National Truth Commission was formed in Brazil, this report was one of the largest sources of information. Due to the Amnesty Law of 1979, the 1985 report was not created out of any expectation of judicial procedures against the perpetrators. The Truth commision in Chile, while sanctioned by the state, similarly precluded the possibility of any judicial procedures based on its report. In the Chilean context, a decree issued in 1978 granted amnesty to all offences committed between the period of 11th September 1973 and 10th March 1978. The Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación (National Commission of Truth and

Reconciliation) was aimed at reconciliation without any official attempt at providing justice. It is significant that the report chose not to publicly identity the perpetrators, extending the amnesty to not only prevent judicial prosecution but also general public scrutiny. In this way the "public secret" is preserved in the official history that the report wished to create.

As Grandin says, "the burden of reconciliation, which was now understood as the commission's primary mandate, as reflected in its title, demands a conception of history, that takes national cohesion as its starting premise and posits violence as resulting from the dissolution of that unity." (Grandin, 2005, p. 49) Consequently, Grandin points out that the report in Chile viewed the period preceding the military coup as one where the institutions that bound Chilean society and nation were dismantled and in consequence national unity was endangered. Within such an interpretation, the coup was viewed as a necessary intervention that prevented the dissolution of Chilean society. Thus while the repression following the coup was examined and critiqued, the coup itself was redeemed as a historical moment that prevented Chile from anarchy and collapse. This is very much in keeping with both how Pinochet justified the military intervention following the success of the coup (Toledo-Parada, 2017) as well as how the dictatorship is remembered by sections of Chilean society wishing to create a heroic memory of the military dictatorship (Verdugo, 2020).

Another approach of the state towards authoritarian violence is evidenced in the Guatemalan truth commission which was not carried out by the state itself but the state was involved in its formation. In the case of Guatemala, two reports on the nature of crimes committed by the military dictatorship are to be found. The first is the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico de la Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos y los Hechos de Violencia Que Han Causado Sufrimientos a la Población Guatemalteca (The Commission for Historic Clarification of Violations of Human Rights and Acts of Violence That Have Caused Suffering to the Guatemalan Population). The Commission for Historic Clarification (CEH) had been set up in

accordance with the Oslo Accord[6] by the United Nations. The report produced by this Commission was titled *Guatemala, Memoria del Silencio* (1999). The aim was to "clarify the human rights violations and acts of violence committed during the armed confrontation that affected Guatemala for thirty-five years." (Tomuschat, 2001, p. 233) Another report, *Guatemala: Nunca Más* (1998) was brought out by the Recovery of Historical Memory or REMHI (Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica) Project of the Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado (Office of Human Rights of the Archbishopric of Guatemala, ODHA). This report was commissioned precisely because a significant number of priests and church officials had been murdered by the army during the dictatorship. Bishop Juan José Gerardi Conedera, the main organiser of this project was brutally murdered by army officials two days after the publication of the report. (Franco, 2013) Like in the case of Brazil and Chile, this report also was released without any expectation of the possibility of it leading to juridical enquiry or prosecution. However, this report also precluded the possibility of reconciliation.

Grandin states that unlike in the case of Argentina or Chile, the Guatemalan report was about a society where the social divisions were so great that it "destroyed the conceit that either the past could be healed or future abuses prevented by appeals to national reconciliation." (Grandin, 2005, p. 49) The extent of indifference to the indigenous cultural specificities on the part of the government was manifest in the way the reparations were conceived. Reparations provided by the government did not take into consideration the collective nature of the violence and repression experienced by the indigenous populations under the military dictatorship nor the fact that racial and cultural identity had played a role in the way repression was exercised. Nonetheless, the report itself provided a historical clarification of race relations and class

[6] The Oslo Accord (23 June,1994) was part of the peace process in Guatemala. It was an agreement between the government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to a cease fire. The process included a verification mission that was the Commision for Historic Clarification and was presided over by Christian Tomuschat of Germany.

dynamics in Guatemalan society that provided the context for the interpretation of the crimes committed by the military dictatorships.

The Guatemalan film, Jayro Bustamante's *La Llorona* (2019) in effect underlines the difficulty of finding justice in such a society through the use of the supernatural machinery of the figure of 'La Llorona', the 'Weeping woman' who comes to avenge the murder of her children. The film uses haunting images of courtroom testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the military regime's brutalities. Rigoberta Menchú Tum, an important face of the Guatemalan indigenous movement, plays a significant role in the film where she appears in the courtroom during the trial of a general with strong ties to the dictatorship, a seat that she in reality also would occupy in such trials as that against the dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. (Aguilar, 2020) Just as Ríos Montt never went to prison for his crimes against humanity, the general in the film too escapes the hands of official justice. The film uses a supernatural force to bring a form of justice borrowing from Mayan legends. La Llorona, as Gloria Anzaldua states, was one of the three mothers, "madres", that were part of the Chicana culture deriving from the mixing of Central American and Christian lore. (Anzaldúa, 2009, p. 178) La Llorona is generally believed to be based on a legend of a woman who after being abandoned by her lover, drowned her children and since haunts places near water, weeping as she searches for her children. The film's use of the supernatural in order to break through centuries of class and racial privilege emphasises the actual inpossibility of the quest for justice and reconciliation in such a society.

4.3 Reinterpreting the Official Memory of Authoritarian Violence

According to Darius Rejali, systems of state-sponsored terror as evidenced in the cases of the authoritarian regimes mentioned are part of "a modern political system based on the same rationality that characterises modern, bureaucratic societies." (Rejali, 2007, p. 4) Julie Taylor notes the meticulous detail in the record and documentation of the human rights violations

carried out by the authoritarian regimes. (Taylor, 1994) Taylor refers to accounts such as that of Jacobo Timerman (Timerman, 1981) on the Argentine military dictatorship's methods of and approach towards torture and other human rights violations to point out that the meticulousness was a form of framing the torture as scientific, an approach which according to Timerman was an illusion that enabled them "to present a touch of distinction, and legitimacy to the world" (Timerman, 1981). The documenting of the process of repression as evidenced in archives such as the Archives of Terror, the secret police files recovered from the period of dictatorship in Paraguay under the military dictator Alfredo Stroessner, provide such an example, comprising as it does of over 700,000 documents. This particular archive for instance consists of material that the police had themselves kept record of during the thirty five years of dictatorship. (Brizuela, 2017)

Lawrence Weschler in his assessment of the archives of the testimonies of the victims and witnesses of the actions of the dictatorships sees a parallel attempt to overcome the horrific nature of the subject material of the archives through a meticulously systematic attempt to maintain records: "It was almost as if through the pristine elegance of the way they marshalled their exhaustive data the team members had imagined they might somehow be able to overmaster the horror." (Weschler, 1990, p. 55)

Michael Taussig makes an intervention into Benjamin's treatment of the "beads of a rosary" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 263) order of narrativisation of history by interpreting the rosary not as a narrative order but rather as a "response to events" (Taussig, 2005, p. 185) that through the repetitive and ritualistic structure provides a framework to reflect on a subject that otherwise by nature is "unspeakable" (Taussig, 2005, p. 185) and in terms of the nature of the event itself challenges structures of analysis that try to contextualise or otherwise interpret it. In Taussig's account of a community going through the violence unleashed by paramilitary forces in Colombia, the image of the rosary beads in the hands of the women mourning their dead in the

community is a literal manifestation of this metaphor. The truth commissions' reports may be viewed as another form of mourning that has evolved its own structures of conceptualising and giving expression to the "unspeakable".

Jean Franco, however, does not agree with Rejali's framework of interpretation citing the example of the extremely bureacratic nature of the Spanish Inquisition that took place within a feudal society. (Franco, 2013) Franco extends Taylor's argument and views the authoritarian regimes' use of the discourse of modernity in order to describe as well as justify their actions as symptomatic of Latin American modernity. Drawing upon Enrique Dussell's analysis of the paradigms of modernity, she refers to the project of developmentalism as the most significant among the diverse methods used to homogenise and simplify the international economic relations within the framework of rationalisation. The very emergence of the authoritarian regimes and the gross violation of human rights was justified through this framework of rationalisation. It was, as Franco notes, a "blanket repression" aimed at eradicating any and all opposition to the "world system". (Franco, 2013, p. 6) Argentine Jacobo Timerman writes of the feelings of "omnipotence" that are encouraged among torturers,

> where they felt themselves master of the force required to change reality. And it places them in a world of omnipotence.That omnipotence in turn they feel, assures them of impunity—a sense of immunity to pain, guilt and emotional imbalance. (Timerman, 1981, pp. 39-40)

Even as democratic institutions were being restrained, restructured or dismantled in order to suppress all avenues of democratic social movement, a form of bureacracy associated with governance and the modern democratic state was maintained in order to create a sense of normality.

Grandin and Taylor point out the ambivalence towards historical interpretation that is found in many of the truth commissions. According to Grandin, a political liberalism in these

democracies showed a certain level of distrust towards any attempts to impose a "universal conception of common good" or attempts to justify militancy in terms of historical context. (Grandin, 2005, p. 48) Drawing on Mark Osiel's treatment of past traumas and injustices within the framework of legal reparations, Grandin says the liberal perspective on the past necessitated an acceptance of pluralism in the interpretation of the past. (Grandin, 2005) The imposition of authoritarian rule and the regime of terror and human rights violations was seen as a breakdown of liberal attitudes in society which could be avoided only through "a dramatic affirmation of liberal values" within society. (Grandin, 2005, p. 48) Thus the period preceding the dictatorship would also be viewed in that light without an examination of the different socio-political forces active in that society and the historical projects that they each embodied. There would be no examination of the economic interests that framed the diverse political currents as well as the collective movements that were created due to various socio-political factors.

In the *Brasil:Nunca Mais* (1985) report, the connection between the military repression and economic policy is very clearly made when the report tries to find reasons for the massive scale of torture and abuse carried out by the regime. The military regime's economic plan of denationalisation of the economy coupled with the concentration of profits was in direct opposition to the "nationalist proposals of development" (Dassin & Wright, 1998, p. 49). The economic policy was such that increased "foreign indebtedness" (Dassin & Wright, 1998, p. 49). The implementation of the new economic plan necessitated a complete restructuring of the very institution of governance in the country. As part of the removal of obstacles to the establishment of multinational corporations, the new economic plan also paved the way for removal of judicial restrictions and increased tolerance of tax fraud in order to facilitate the growth of new corporations. The report goes on to state that the new capitalist growth implied an unprecedented reduction of personal income for most Brazilians. During the period 1969 to 1973, due to the increased establishment of multinational coporations, Brazil was said to have

witnessed an "Economic miracle". Yet at the same time living conditions of the vast majority worsened with a noticeable increase in the growth of slums, hunger and other indicators of poverty. The report goes on to claim unequivocally that it was precisely because the economic reforms that the military regime wanted to bring into being were "extremely unpopular among the most numerous sectors of the population, it had to be implemented by force." (Dassin & Wright, 1998, p. 50) According to the report it was this reason for which the regime changed the juridical structure in the country, focused intensely on the national security apparatus aimed at "internal repression and political control" (Dassin & Wright, 1998, p. 50) and restructured all three wings of governance so as to give the executive branch of the government total control. As the report describes the process, the authoritarian takeover was conducted through the guise of legitimacy and democratic normality. It was this stamp of legitimacy that was used by military regimes across Latin America to justify the flagrant repression of all democratic movements. The report itself was not state sanctioned.

The intervention made by the Hijos Por La Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio/Children For Identity and Justice Against Forgetfulness and Silence – HIJOS) within the Argentine judicial and socio-political quests for justice and critical inquiry into the reality of the crimes of the military dictatorship in the mid 1990s generated a reevaluation of the context of the regime's crimes as well as shedding light on the nature of the disappeared. As Michael J. Lazzara (Lazzara, 2009) points out, comprised of the children of disappeared guerilla militants, HIJOS raised an important question regarding the identity of these men and women who had been disappeared as well as the socio-political zeitgeist that their actions had been born out of. Initially, as in accordance with the official state narrative (which held all forms of political violence as threat to democracy and thereby created an equivalence between the guerilla movements seeking social justice and the authoritarian violence exercised by the state), the disappeared parents were identified as victims of the dirty war, the machinery of

state terrorism. However, this slowly changed and Pablo Daniel Bonaldi (Bonaldi, 2006) identifies a shift in the way the significance of the identity of the disappeared parent was reconfigured to be not a vessel of victimhood but "heroes who died in an epic struggle to build a more just society." (Lazzara, 2009, p. 154) The official historical narrative had chosen to elide over the militancy and the armed revolutionary struggle that had existed as part of the socio-political quest for social justice. The shift in historical perspective not only brought to light this silenced reality of the Argentine national past but also enabled the children to identify themselves not as the children of a generation who were victims of state violence and terrorism, but as children of a martyred and heroic generation.

4.4 Memory of Past Violence Transforming the Urban Space

Memory of the past plays a significant role in the consitution of the identity and thus the state too seeks to play a crucial role in this memory formation be it through truth commissions, memorials or public art. The material manifestation of *remembering* that a public art or memorial embodies makes it in essence contentious since memory of the past itself is also contentious. A particular discourse of power is reflected in the historical narrative that is connected to the conceptualisation of the state. An example of this is found in statues of Christopher Columbus built across the Americas celebrating him as a founder figure for the Americas whereas for the indigenous communities, he has become the face of a socio-political and cultural process that signified cycles of genocide and perpetual servitude for the indigenous Americans.

The statues of Christopher Columbus have been targets of defacement, attacks and have often been taken down as a form of resistance to the dominant historical discourse. (Nieto, 2004) (BBC, 2021) (Telesur, 2015) Increasingly the attitude of governments across Latin America

towards the taking down of statues of Columbus has become indicative of a larger socio-political debate surrounding the constitution of "spaces of power and who is visually associated with the public and governmental space". (Lerer, 2018, p. 4) The image of the Misak, Nasa and Pijao protesters in Colombia taking down a statue of the conquistador Sebastián de Belalcázar is a symbolic rejection on the part of the indigenous communities of the colonial narrative of nation building that renders invisible the trauma experienced and inherited by the indigenous communities. In an interview, the human rights activist Maria Violet Medina who belongs to the Nasa indigenous tribe of Colombia, said, "The statue of Belalcázar represents pain, revictimization and causes resentment". (Reuters, 2020) She describes the colonial encounter thus, "The conquerors brought illness, both physical and spiritual, to indigenous people. It was a genocide." (Reuters, 2020) At the same time, the mayor of Popayan where the incident took place as well as the Minister of Culture of Colombia viewed the act as violent and both promised to restore the statue. For the mayor and the minister, the statue was public art that needed to be protected and the trauma experienced by indigenous communities was not sufficient cause for a reviewing of how the past is read and what aspects of it is celebrated by the state. Or it can also suggest that state power in Colombia is in effect a continuation of the colonial legacy and thus it is necessary that the indigenous perspective of the past is repressed and statues of conquistadors protected and celebrated by the state in order to perpetuate that legacy.

Lucrecia Martel, in an interview on her film *Zama* (2017), a period piece set in the eighteenth-century Gran Chaco region of Argentina and based on a novel by Antonio di Benedetto, explained that the language spoken by the Guaycuru people portrayed in her film was actually Qom, a language spoken by the present-day descendants of the Guaycuru people since the Guaycuru language is now extinct. (Martel, Gemünden, & Spitta, 2018) About the use of language in her film, Martel states,

> Nothing of what you hear is real; it is completely anachronistic. No one spoke in that manner at the time. I wanted to capture the beauty of a diverse world…. You can only invent the past; you cannot recreate it.
>
> For the film, it was important to invent a coherent universe and not repeat what the history books tell us. History is the history of those who won. You have to find other ways of representing the past, to introduce a political element— (Martel, Gemünden, & Spitta, 2018, pp. 37-38)

Martel's statement points towards the necessity for innovative use of the cinematic medium in order to portray aspects of Latin American reality whose very memory has been distorted or erased. Martel's comment speaks not solely of the distortion and oblivion that is brought through the passage of time. The colonial encounter between Europe and indigenous peoples of the newly discovered territories proved calamitous for the latter where entire cultures and communities were obliterated through massacres, extreme working conditions of slavery, diseases and deprivation.

The nation-building project of the modern Latin American nation-states found indigenous identity itself to be problematic and the indigenous subject was viewed as an obstacle to the progress and development that was seen as vital for the modern nation. Gastón Gordillo, an anthropologist, describes the importance given by members of the Toba community (Qom) living in the Gran Chaco region of Argentina, to their identity papers that proved their claim as citizens of Argentina. He states,

> While I was having a casual conversation with someone I knew well, for instance, that person would suddenly tell me that he wished to show me something. He would leave and a moment later return with a carefully wrapped nylon bag containing his most valued possessions: old photos, certificates of various sorts, and, most important, his identity (ID) papers: his *documentos*. He would then hand the documents over to me as proof of something that was clearly important to him yet initially elusive to me. (Gordillo, 2006, p. 162)

Gordillo studies this behaviour in the context of the history of the Argentine state's treatment towards the indigenous population living within its territory. This importance given to documents, Gordillo traces to the early part of the twentieth century with the introduction of documents given by regionally influential and powerful individuals such as merchants or landowners to indigenous peoples they considered as friendly as documents that would enable them to be saved from the violence that the state otherwise would inflict on them. These documents, generally handwritten, were accepted by the state as in the army or the police as valid. Gordillo's work specifically studies the development of the complex relationship between the indigenous population and the Argentine state.

In 1924, a massacre was carried out on the descendants of the Guaycuru, the Qom community living in north eastern Argentina in Napalpí where over the course of an hour on 19th July 1924, an entire community of Qom and Moqoit people were massacred in an action carried out approximately by a hundred and thirty members of the Argentine police who were accompanied by European settlers, landowners from the region, and an airplane shooting from the sky. Almost a hundred years after the massacre which had been followed by a silencing of the indigenous voices, a trial called "juicio por la verdad[7]" (Report, Actorazgo Política de las Organizaciones, 2022) ended in 2022 that tried to bring justice for the act of violence that had been carried out by the Argentine state. This was a judicial enquiry that was based on investigations carried out by historians as well as testimonies collected from survivors of the massacre and indigenous historians. The trial culminated in a ruling that found the state of Argentina guilty of "crime against humanity". (Goyeneche, 2022) The trial and the sentence have significant implications in terms of rupturing what was a "public secret" (Taussig, 1999) for a very long time and revising the official historical narrative of the Argentine nation. The Napalpi massacre was an action carried out on the part of the police at the time as a response

[7] Trans: "trial for Truth".

to mobilisations within the indigenous community in Napalpi. The indigenous communities of the region were trying to demand improved working conditions for the Qom and Moqoit workers who were employed on the cotton plantations run by the European settlers at the time. (Salamanca, 2008) A genocide carried out at the behest of the landowners has implications in terms of the nature of power that it seeks to uphold just as the Argentine judicial system attempting to provide justice through the trial points toward a shift in the character of the state power.

The colonial world that Martel's film *Zama* depicts is one where diverse social and political forces are shown to be caught in a struggle. It is a deliberate attempt to reconfigure the historical narrative that dominates the way the colonial past is viewed. In the same interview, Martel says,

> I wanted to create a world without Catholicism, even if that is historically incorrect: to imagine that the power of the church was not that homogeneous, that the world was more diverse—because power is never *that* powerful. History tells us that the submission of the indigenous people was absolute, and that is impossible because submission is never absolute. Not even in the concentration camps was despair absolute—that is, not even in the worst of places. (Martel, Gemünden, & Spitta, 2018, p. 37)

Lucrecia Martel's statements point toward the impossibility of cinema to represent that which is absent. Instead of trying to "recreate" the past, Martel's film underlines the very anachronistic nature of the world that has been created. The sounds and the images from the world depicted is one that does not fit the historical narrative of the colonial encounter. The film, therefore, emphasises the very loss or the absence that makes it impossible to portray certain elements of the past. Such a view draws attention towards the politics that shape the loss which is the consequence of unequal social relations that exist within contemporary Latin American society but have been shaped by a history of genocide and violence.

Following the end of the dictatorship and return of democracy to Argentina in 1983, the state attempted to build public monuments that will remember the trauma and horror of the military regime. However, the very nature of the collective trauma left on Argentine society following a period of authoritarian rule makes a monument that embodies an imposition of a particular narrative of interpreting the past problematic. The Monumento a las Victimas del Terrorismo de Estado (Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism) located in the Parque de la Memoria (Memory Park) is one such example. Approved by the Buenos Aires legislature in 1998, this is a monument conceived in the tradition of counter-monumentalism found in Holocaust memorials. Huyssen describes the monument thus,

> The monument cuts deep like a wound or a scar into the elevated grassy surface of the park that faces the river in the half round. Visitors will enter the monument underground from the city side of the wall, and move through the zig-zag structure until they are released toward the river and the shoreline walkway. The overall design is classically modernist in its geometric configuration and felicitously minimalist in its lack of ornamentation and monumental ambition. (Huyssen, 2001, p. 16)

In its very conception, the monument is imagined as an open wound, a point of rupture in the landscape. Silvia R. Tandeciarz states,

> Instead of projecting a finished accounting that towers over the landscape, the Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism materializes a rift in history, a cavity retreating into negative space that reminds visitors both of its hidden, underground dimension and of the intimate burden of recollection it places on each of them. (Tandeciarz, 2007, p. 155)

In terms of the idea behind the design of such a monument, the spirit of the Holocaust memorials can be seen. As James E. Young notes in reference to the Holocaust memorials,

> the most important 'space of memory'... has not been the space in the ground or above it but the space between the memorial and the viewer, between the viewer and his or her own memory: the place of the memorial in the viewer's mind, heart, and conscience. (Young, 2000, p. 118)

In terms of location, the park is close to three spaces of Buenos Aires that bore a special significance in terms of the experience of state terrorism. The first of these is the river where bodies would be disappeared. The second is the Ciudad Universitaria, the campus of the University of Buenos Aires. The university is significant because of the huge number of students who were tortured and disappeared. The third of these spaces is the Escuela Mecánica de la Armada, ESMA (the Naval School) which was used as a space for internment, torture and murder of citizens during the dictatorship. (Tandeciarz, 2007) Later the space of the park itself was used to host three postmodern sculptures within a space called "Plaza de Acceso" that likewise seek to comment on particular aspects of the experience under the dictatorship which makes the space not only one where an exercise of remembering takes place but also invites those who perhaps are interested in art. Tandeciarz points out an essential characteristic of a monument, despite the intent behind its conception, which is that of it becoming appropriated by a certain logic of globalisation that rests on "the institutionalisation of memory that is conducive to forgetting". (Tandeciarz, 2007, p. 156)

Young emphasises the essence of counter-monumentalism as being one that retains the potential of shifting in meaning and in ways in which it is interpreted. He writes,

> In the cases of disappearing, invisible, and other countermonuments, they have attempted to build into these spaces the capacity for changing memory, places where every new generation will find its own significance in this past. (Young, 2000, p. 119)

A space such as the Parque de la Memoria, despite the intent behind its conception, does not carry this element precisely because it emerges out of an official design. In its essence, it is an imposed narrative separate from the voices of the disappeared or the families and collectives who have been left scarred by the regime. One example of an organised attempt on the part of

a grassroot movement to create a form of monument is the sidewalk tiles that are placed by an organisation called Barrios X (para) la Memoria y Justicia (Neighbourhoods for Memory and Justice) which is an organisation that emerged from the networks forged through neighbourhood collectives. This organisation began a project in 2005, when they started to place tiles commemorating names and lives of people who had been disappeared. The tiles are placed in places in the city where the person disappeared used to live or work thereby breaking the anonymity that lay in the statistical evaluation of the disappeared performed by the state. As described by Luz Marina, a member of the organisation, "The idea is that here is where this person lived, here is where they worked, here is where they studied. We want each neighborhood to learn about the compañeros that were detained, disappeared or assassinated by state terrorism." (Harrison, 2018) Furthermore, the tiles spread across the city furthermore is a way of challenging the very act of 'disappearance" where those who have been disappeared are denied a space for burial thereby in a manner being obliterated in terms of their very existence. These tiles reinscribe these names and these lives onto the city.

Tandeciarz points out another example of monumentalisation of the past as found in the excavated site of the Club Atlético. This was another space that had been turned into a detention centre around 1976-77 and according to the *Nunca Más* report, around eighteen thousand people were detained in this camp before being disappeared. (CONADEP, 1984) (Tandeciarz, 2007) The Club Atlético was taken down during the construction of the freeway called Autopista 25 de Mayo in 1980 thereby covering the chambers used to torture and kill citizens under the construction. It was following protests carried out by organisations and the survivors that the Buenos Aires municipal government began excavations at the site and at present it has become a space for memory. Tandeciarz states,

> It is a place where conflicting memories erupt, where the will of the dictatorship – and subsequently of democratic regimes under neoliberal transition—to bury its violence under a discourse of progress is undone by the will of its victims to

> recall their trauma and to map it onto the city's facades. (Tandeciarz, 2007, p. 160)

To ensure that the site was not forgotten, the history of state terrorism not covered up by the process of urban development, solidarity groups of survivors and families of those disappeared as well as human rights organisations had protested. Unlike in the case of the Parque de la Memoria, the Club Atlético was not turned into a space for memory and remembrance owing to decisions taken by the authorities. On the contrary, it was reappropriated by the survivors through protests and demonstrations that laid their claim on history. Elizabeth Jelin and Susana Kaufman write,

> [I]n July 1996, close to 500 people participated in a gathering that included the construction of a papier mâché structure of a tree and a public reminder with the faces of victims of repression. On that first occasion, a firebomb placed at night destroyed the tree and the memorial. On the second *Jornada de la memoria* [Aug. 1997], a plaque remembering the disappeared was set up, the names of the repressors were engraved, and during the commemoration a monument, a "totem," was collectively constructed on one of the pillars of the highway. During the following night, the plaque was destroyed, the totem was torn down and the engraved names of the repressors were covered with paint. (Jelin & Kaufman, 2000, pp. 97-98)

The very act of laying claim on the historical significance of that site becomes a domain of contestation, an extension of the authoritarian violence of a regime seeking to silence movements for greater social democracy. Tandeciarz points out that the juxtaposition of the Club Atlético site with the *autopista* lays bare the human social price that had to be paid for the project of development and “modernisation”. She writes,

> Underscoring the fragility of the past, their impermanence adds another layer to the Atletico's staging of memory, reminding beholders that justice and democracy are ongoing projects and that this work of recollection will have to be restored or reconfigured by future generations. Literally and metaphorically, the site opens a wound that bears witness to the process of recovery (by the team of forensic anthropologists) and the reconstruction of memory as something inconclusive and imperfect; the space it circumscribes thus sets the scene for bridging past and

> present, for bringing survivors together, and for reinvigorating the kinds of civilian solidarity networks the dictatorship destroyed. (Tandeciarz, 2007, p. 163)

The provocative aspect of art in the public sphere is premised on ideology and Michael Taussig's concept of the "public secret". (Taussig, 1999, p. 2) In the forced imposition of a narrative of reconciliation with past abuses and crimes committed against sections of a nation's population by a dominant group, the "public secret" is crucial to the way in which the past is remembered, an idea particularly forwarded by the Argentine Minister of Defense during the dictatorship, Oscar Camillón, who is quoted to have said, "A nation creates itself not just with what it remembers, but with what it forgets." (Feitlowitz, 1998, p. 17) Erika Doss points out the corelation between public art and dominant socio-political and cultural discourse as she says,

> Public art embodies what Pierre Bourdieu termed 'symbolic capital': the value, utility, and power of both what it represents and the environment it occupies. Public art's presence, and permanence, lend legitimacy to particular social, cultural and political conditions. When its symbolic capital is deemed illegitimate, it may be vandalized, removed, re-sited, or destroyed. (Doss, 2016, p. 1)

4.5 "Empty Space" and the Memory of Loss: Absence in the Present

In the case of the murals on the walls of Chile in the 1960s and till the coup in 1973, the struggle was in effect between two visions of statehood. The coup which forcefully attempted to eliminate a certain political vision also supported and enabled groups to whitewash walls depicting murals supporting the Popular Unity government's vision of statehood. The coup's repressive strategy was reflected in the contestation over whose view of what constituted as "stains" on the wall was carried. This evolved into a continuous battle in areas such as La

Victoria. Yet, it is the very struggle over legitimacy that the murals on the walls in La Victoria are engaged in which break the silence, the complicity over the nexus of "public secret" that protects the social institutions established under the military rule. The whitewashing of walls or the deliberate use of tar to cover murals on the walls in La Victoria are an attempt to obliterate resistance which on the walls would be designated by an empty space, an absence. Yet, even after the "operation limpieza", the whitewashed walls stood out precisely because they signified the repression of a movement. According to Jules Michelet, the true monument to revolution is the space it occurred in, the *empty space* which becomes the monument to the memory of the revolution. In context of the French Revolution, he states,

> The Champ de Mars[8]! This is the only monument that the Revolution has left. The Empire has its Column, and engrosses almost exclusively the arch of Triumph; royalty has its Louvre, its Hospital of Invalids; the feudal church of the twelfth century is still enthroned at Notre Dame : nay the very Romans have their Imperial Ruins, the Thermae of the Caesars!
>
> And the Revolution has for her monument: empty space. (Michelet, 1967, p. 4)

W. J. T. Mitchell explains the powerful significance carried within such an "empty space" "Their emptiness is a register of their historical character…where shared political speech and action occur and can just as quickly vanish into a ghostly memory "with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves." (Mitchell W. J., 2012, p. 18) The whitewashed walls in Chile after the coup became that *empty space*. Their very whitewashed status signified the walls as a site of struggle. Moreover, while murals are transcient, constantly at risk of being removed, painted over, their persistence derives from the fact that new murals appear to replace the ones erased, thereby leading to the "constant reinscription of the present, distinguishing it from the

[8] The Champ de Mars was the site where the first Bastille Day was celebrated on 14th July, 1790. On 17th July, 1791, it was the place where the French National Guard massacred a crowd of citizens who had "gathered to sign a petition demanding the removal of the king." (Mitchell, 2012, p. 17)

aesthetics of deterioration, which chooses not to establish any set patterns." (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 72)

Alexis Cortés sees muralism in settlements such as La Victoria serving a similar function. He turns to Allen Feldman's "trauma-tropism" as a way to understand the function of muralism within such a context. As Feldman explains,

> Single communities and entire societies can reorganize their identities, histories, and projects around the curvature of chosen prior "historical" wounding, and this would be a socially constructed trauma-tropism. Trauma-tropism is a form of collective memory; more specifically, it is a framework and methodology by which a collectivity recalls the past and places it in a dynamic and formative relationship to the interpretation of the present. (Feldman, 2002, p. 236)

In the context of the women of a Colombian community under attack from paramilitary forces as well as the working-class Chilean residents of urban settlements such as La Victoria under attack from a repressive military regime, the purpose of memory is intertwined with the act of mourning and healing. Violent organisations such as the nexus of military and paramilitary forces in Colombia or the military and right wing armed groups in Chile during the dictatorship operate through a culture of fear that forces silence and amnesia or blindness to the violence of the regime. Muralism in this context can cut through that silence and official mechanisms of memory creation. Furthermore, in the context of Chile's shanty towns, as Cortés points out, it creates a narrative of historic continuity in terms of identity based on resistance. A resident of La Victoria in an interview quoted by Cortés describes a mural which states, "Our parents gave us the right to housing, let's give them the right to freedom." (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 69) The identification is transferred from one generation to another through the murals which while not permanent, in their very reinscription and existence, continues to colour the present with the past, creating a memory of heroic resistance through the remembrance of past traumas.

Murals in such areas such as La Victoria similarly emerge out of the history of popular resistance, bearing icons and iconography belonging to past and present struggles which turn it into a site for the "(re)construction of …working-class neighbourhood's collective memory." (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 63) Through its evolution as a grassroots movement that represented the concerns of a collective through the 1950s, the pobladores movement when faced with direct state perpetrated violence during the dictatorship strenghtened in terms of the collective identification. Both the suffering of state violence as well as the resistance to it formed a network of solidarity that was reflected in the murals of the time. As Cortés points out, the murals emerged as "one of the mechanisms of diffusion of the identity narrative mobilised to nurture a heroic memory of resistance to the dictatorship." (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 67) In an interview quoted by Cortés, a resident of La Victoria explains the function of murals as bearing a complex layer of meanings and purpose within the context of a community living through the experience of daily violence and repression. While the specific references may not hold significance to an outsider, within the community the murals would carry both immediate as well as historical references. The resident explains:

> The mural allowed us to communicate when a neighbor was killed, when someone was detained and disappeared, when a neighbor was imprisoned, how to make a Molotov cocktail, how to defend oneself—to tell what was happening at the time through a photo, a graphic image posted there, such as when they killed André Jarlán, its significance for us, such a symbolic thing, sacred for the whole La Victoria community. (Cortés & Olavarria, 2016, p. 67)

The identity formation through the Pobladores movement or the collective resistance against the dictatorship or the neoliberal system of governance following the transition to democracy in Chile, which is manifested through the murals or other forms of public art is also connected spatially to neighbourhoods such as La Victoria. The Chilean state especially has played a significant role in ascribing significance to La Victoria and other such neighbourhoods with a

strong history of resistance as spatial memorials to Chile's resistance to the dictatorship. With the end of the dictatorship and direct political repression, social control returned to the order of surveillance. Raúl Zibechi points out the 2001 Safe Neighbourhoods Program (Programa Barrio Seguro) implemented by the Home Ministry as an example of the way in which police presence and surveillance systems are developed through the discourse of crime control. (Zibechi, 2008) However, even while the government treats the present day residents of such neighbourhoods as potential crime suspects and have extensive surveillance of these zones as part of their social control policy, spaces like the house where André Jarlán was killed is viewed as a memorial space visited by international diplomats (Minguell, 1999).

Official history is a contested terrain with multiple perspectives often in conflict with each other. While the process of identifying and exterminating those viewed as threats to national security might have descended into a paranoid and arbitrary process, it was undertaken precisely because it served the interests of certain sections of national and international powers. One of the main premises of Jennifer Schirmer's research work on the Guatemalan army's regime of violence is the understanding that there is a rational basis to the brutalities committed by such forces in power, that the violence and disruption of the constitutional order is implemented because it serves a purpose in the interests of the perpetrators. Furthermore, she emphasizes that assessment of human rights abuse in Latin America should be understood both in the context of socio-political realities of the countries in question as well as the international geo-political and economic structures with attention given to entities whose interests are served by the said genocidal campaigns carried out by authoritarian governments. She states:

> Until this structured inexorability within a juridical national security order is made explicit within human rights analyses, the cultural and political conceit remains as to the "backwardness" of Latin American legal structures, the "unprofessionalism" of the military institutions, and the congenital affinity of Latin Americans for "authoritarianism"… (Schirmer, 1998, p. 5)

4.8 Impossible Articulation of Collective Experience of Violence

In Argentina following the end of the dictatorship, through the testimonios of the survivors, witnesses and families of the disappeared, a narration of the truth of the nature of the dictatorship began. Testimonies, salvaged official records, confessions such as that of Adolfo Scilingo provide diverse perspectives of understanding the historical context wherein the dictatorship came into power and the nature of the violation of human rights carried out under the regime.

Beatriz Sarlo in her discussion on the testimonial discourse points out the essential inability of any history of being complete since all perspectives and positions cannot be included. In such cases accumulation of cases can produce a "totality". (Sarlo, 2007, p. 340) She states, "A dialogue on history must begin with the recognition that it will be incomplete (which, of course, is not a lack in the representation of details or "cases," but an admission of the multiple nature of the processes)." (Sarlo, 2007, p. 340)

Building upon Primo Levi, Sarlo states that even the victims of the concentration camp despite experiencing the horrors will not be able to "know those horrors better" (Sarlo, 2007, p. 340). Sarlo's argument tries to explore the theoretical contradiction in the acceptance at the same time of "the impossibility of discursive Truth and the truth of experience located in discourse" (Sarlo, 2007, p. 339) It is this position that leads her exploration into the capacity of the testimonial discourse to render meaning to experience. Extending the politics of defamiliarization in narrative discourse, Sarlo examines the creation of memory and testimonial discourse in the light of its relation with the habitual. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's description of the open mind as one where the imagination is trained to go "visiting" (Arendt, 1982, p. 43), Sarlo underlines the role played by externalisation of the imagination in

narrativizing that which can be either banal or beyond comprehension owing to the familiarity of the subjective experience.

To imbue the familiar with meaning, for Sarlo, it is necessary to achieve an externalisation of the imagination that will create distance. Furthermore, distancing aids the understanding of the essential incompleteness of narrativization of history. The testimonial accounts then serve to display "what has been excluded from identity narratives vindicated by a group, a minority, a dominating sector, or a nation." (Sarlo, 2007, p. 340) The externalisation or distancing leads to "reflexively capture difference" (Sarlo, 2007, p. 340). According to Sarlo, the project of creating a holistic historical narrative about the experience of authoritarian rule is essentially utopian in intent:

> …to recover that which has been lost through the violence of power amounts to a desire whose entire moral and psychological legitimacy is insufficient for the founding of an intellectual legitimacy that would be equally indisputable." (Sarlo, 2007, pp. 340-41)

The meticulous detailing of the truth commissions' testimonial archives and documentation that Julie Taylor refers to perhaps is a consequence of this conflict over legitimacy and validation. Moreover, the official turn given to the perspective from which the historical understanding of these regimes is narrativised leads to other forms of lacks in the narrative. Sarlo alludes to the feeling expressed by the children of the disappeared in Argentina who feel that the narrative is always left incomplete and which they must continue construing. Sarlo explains that this has a juridical dimension (the military regime's deliberate attempts to erase all evidence that may hold them guilty of flouting international human rights) which speaks of the thorough destruction of all traces by those responsible for the disappearances. (Sarlo, 2007) In such circumstances, memory, despite the conflicts and contradictions in terms of the

impossibility of completeness, provides an avenue for the condemnation of state perpetrated violence and terrorism.

The utopian quest for narrativizing a past consisting of a struggle between two worldviews concluding in a regime of oppressive violence informs much of post-dictatorship attempts to review the past, render a version of the past in various forms be it testimonial accounts, literature or cinema. This is necessary for the society precisely because through the recognition of the nature of that regime of violence, the framework that regime of violence creates of defining and framing what is considered as violence can be ruptured. This draws on Schinkel's statement that "Blindness to an existing regime of violence means an implicit acceptance of the prevalent ways of defining and recognizing violence." (Schinkel, 2013, p. 316) Until this is achieved, the past regime of violence will continue to frame perspectives on violence in the present. Moreover, the past which is being narrated is framed by the present when the narration takes place as Beatriz Sarlo notes. Drawing on Paul Ricœur, Sarlo states,

> El presente de la enunciación es el "tiempo de base del discurso", porque es presente el momento de ponerse a narrar y ese momento queda inscripto en la narración. Eso implica al narrador en su historia y la inscribe en una retórica de la persuasión (el discurso pertenece al modo persuasivo, dice Ricœur). Los relatos testimoniales son "discurso" en este sentido porque tienen como condición un narrador implicado en los hechos, que no persigue una verdad exterior al momento en que ella se enuncia. Es inevitable la marca del presente sobre el acto de narrar el pasado, precisamente porque, en el discurso, el presente tiene una hegemonía reconocida como inevitable y los tiempos verbales del pasado no quedan libres de una "experiencia fenomenológica" del tiempo presente de a enunciación.[9] (Sarlo, 2007, pp. 64-65)

[9] Trans: "The present of the enunciation is "the base time of the discourse", because the present is the beginning of the narration and this moment is inscribed into the narration. This implicates the narrator in the narration and inscribes in it a rhetoric of persuasion (the discourse pertaining to the persuasive mood, Ricœur says). The testimonial accounts are "discourse" in this sense because they have as a condition a narrator implicated in the actions, that does not follow an external truth at the moment when it is being enunciated. The mark of the present on the act of narrating the past is inevitable, precisely because in the discourse, the present inevitably has recognised hegemony and the verbal time of the past is not left free of a "phenomenological experience" of the present time of the enunciation." (Sarlo, 2007, pp. 64-65)

Sarlo's argument lays out a framework of understanding the construction of historical perspective on the past. Patrick Dove's analysis (Dove, 2008) of the controversy surrounding a letter written by Oscar del Barco, self-confessed former supporter of the leftist armed struggle in Argentina in the 1970s reveals the way in which the present can almost intrude and obstruct the understanding and reception of the past. Del Barco's letter had been written in response to an interview of Héctor Jouvé that had been published in two parts in the monthly journal published in Córdoba called *La intemperie*. The interview was an account of Jouvé's political journey, his experiences as a political activist and member of the *Ejército Guerillero del Pueblo* (EGP) in the 1960s. The publication of the interview was followed by a letter written by Oscar del Barco wherein he makes a case for non-violence and criticises the political use of violence. He adds strength to his argument through a 'confession' (Dove, 2008, p. 279) where he reveals his intellectual and moral support for the leftist armed struggle that took place in Argentina in the 1960s and 70s. His own declared rejection and shame is followed by his urging other leftists sympathetic towards the armed struggle to similarly denounce the violence and acknowledge that the support for the violence was wrong. In this line of argument, the letter was similar to the position taken by the Argentine state post transition to democracy as well as the Truth Commission's report *Nunca Más*. Del Barco's letter created a controversy and generated much debate in the sphere of political and philosophical discussions. As Dove states, this controversy revealed how such a method of transposing the present attitudes of socio-political discourse in the interpretation of the past makes it so that here the past acts "as a kind of screen on which something that is out of joint in the historical present can be projected." (Dove, 2008, p. 280)

Dove refers to another debate on the ethics of political violence within Leftist political participation in Argentina that had taken place in the mid-1990s in the pages of the Buenos Aires daily newspaper *Página 12*. This was a debate that had taken place between Osvaldo Bayer, journalist and historian and Mempo Giardinelli, a writer. The debate was centred on the

"possible justifications for killing a 'tyrant'" (Dove, 2008, p. 281). Bayer had initially published an essay about the assassination of Lieutenant Colonel Héctor Varela by the anarchist Kurt Gustav Wilckens in 1923. Varela had captained the army that led a repressive action on workers on strike in rural Patagonia in 1921 and had authorised execution without trial of around 1500 workers. Bayer explains that Wilckens' act was not motivated by desire for revenge for the murdered workers but rather was a politically symbolic act as Wilckens himself wrote in a letter from jail. Wilckens' motivation behind the assassination was explained thus:

> It was not vengeance… I did not see Varela as just any old officer. No, in Patagonia he was everything: government, judge, executioner and grave digger. In him I was taking aim at the naked idol of a criminal system. Vengeance is unbecoming of an anarchist. (Dove, 2008)

Bayer's understanding of Wilckens' killing of Varela was as a symbolic act aimed to attack the system that Varela represented as well as embodied. Giardinelli's response to Bayer's essay was to point out that this was a premeditated murder, a line of argument similar to del Barco's assessment of the EGP's role in the Argentinean politics in the 1960s and 70s. He points out that a democratic society is founded upon the universal prohibition on killing and thereby Wilckens' act should be seen as a threat to that order. He gives the example of the hypothetical assassination of General Jorge Videla, leader and face of the 1976-83 military dictatorship and the Dirty War and states that such an act would be a criminal act. This reflection of the present onto a discussion about events that took place in the remote past is an example of how traumatic experiences maybe understood and reflected upon. A discussion on the ethical nature of Wilckens' assassination of Varela serves as a hypothetical entry into the possible methods and means of justice that were available for the contemporary Argentine society emerging as it was out of a period of brutal repressive violence carried out by the state. Dove states,

> As the analogy makes clear, the Wilckens case in fact serves as a historical screen and filter that enables intellectual reflection on the recent past while ensuring that

> the wounds that remain fresh a decade after dictatorship will not be reopened. (Dove, 2008, p. 282)

Michael Taussig refers to Benjamin's statement on writing history where the present is conceived of as the "the "time of the now" shot through with chips of Messianic time" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 263) while talking about the way memory functions in his attempt to create a narrative of recollection. He writes,

> The "now time" that Benjamin refers us to is incandescent for me in a continuous present the diarist puts onto the page as events slip away the instant they are recorded, yet in doing so they trigger recollections with other events long past so as to create meaningful constellations…in that they connect the present era with an earlier one through unexpected juxtaposition. (Taussig, 2005, pp. 184-85)

Thus, it can be observed that there are many kinds of difficulties that exist when it comes to attempts to revisit and represent the exact nature of the violence inflicted and experienced under authoritarian regimes. Yet explorations into past national traumas are often conditioned by the very obstacles that prevent the representation of an exact understanding of the nature of the violence.

In the context of representation of the regime of violence that existed in Argentina during the Dirty War, testimonial accounts such as Alicia Partnoy's *The Little School* (Partnoy, 1998) or fictional explorations such as Argentine author Ricardo Piglia's novels *The Absent City* (Piglia, 2000) or *Artificial Respiration* (Piglia, 1994) are literary interventions that embark on this difficult process of representation and identification. Irene Wirshing views the novel *The Absent City* (Piglia, 2000) as an exploration into the "possibilities of narrating the traumatised memories repressed by totalitarian dictatorships." (Wirshing, 2009, p. 108) Wirshing points out that the novel deals with the lasting consequences of authoritarianism on society and the idea that collective trauma could be healed only through a retrieval of national memory and

enable society to confront its past. The memories of a traumatic past if allowed to remain unresolved leads to the perpetuation of what Wirshing describes as “the reenactments of the trauma and the potential for future totalitarian regimes” (Wirshing, 2009, p. 108). The novel at its core has Elena, a gendered machine that is also the source of the retrieval of memories from a past that is “absent/buried” (Wirshing, 2009, p. 109) This gendering of the machine is interpreted by Wirshing as the representation of “an abused nation battered into a machine, a gendered machine historically contextualised within a patriarchal society” (Wirshing, 2009, p. 109) The very device of this machine as a means of retrieval of a past that cannot be otherwise reproduced without distortion draws attention to the difficulty of narrating a “silenced and authentic history” (Wirshing, 2009, p. 110). The memories that Elena resurrects are a reproduction of that past. The Part 1 of the novel, titled ‘The Meeting’, through Elena presents a gamut of fragmented stories which convey the “distorted and repressed memories of thousands of citizens who “disappeared” during Argentina’s military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983.” (Wirshing, 2009, p. 109) Santiago Colás views this fragmentation as “an evasive response to the totalizing, operational logic of the authoritarian regime. The novel fragments formally in that case as a means of survival.” (Colás, 1994, p. 131) Similar to the act of documentation of fragmented details found in Partnoy’s *The Little School*, Piglia’s fragmented narrative too becomes a site of resistance.

The fragmented narrative that weaves through stories from multiple perspectives reflects the role testimonial discourse has played in the process of healing from the trauma of the past in Argentina and other Latin American countries that have undergone brutal authoritarian regimes. As Beatriz Sarlo (Sarlo, 2007) points out, the testimonial discourse broke the silence that had been imposed through the momentous rupture which the dictatorship signified in Argentine society and history. The testimonies played a vital role in the democratic transition

and in the restoration of a notion of public sphere of rights which had been shattered through the brutalities of the regime. Sarlo states:

> El *shock* de la violencia de estado nunca pareció un obstáculo para construir y escuchar la narración de la experiencia padecida. La novedad de esa experiencia, tan fuerte como la novedad de los sucesos de la primera guerra a la que se refería Benjamin, no impidió la proliferación de discursos. Las dictaduras representaron, en el sentido más fuerte, un quiebre epocal (como la gran guerra); sin embargo, las transiciones democráticas no enmudecieron por la enormidad de esa ruptura. Por el contrario, en cuanto despuntaron las condiciones de la transición, los discursos comenzaron a circular y demostraron ser indispensables para la restauración de una esfera pública de derechos.[10] (Sarlo, 2007, pp. 61-62)

4.9 Recollection of the Past as Healing

The past persists despite every attempt made on the part of the forces responsible to destroy physical evidence of the violence committed, the deliberate attempts made to obfuscate a historical understanding of the trauma and the violence. The “Operation Limpieza” in Chile following the coup in 1973, whitewashing the walls in order to erase the murals that were a manifestation of the social movements that the coup wished to put an end to, can be read almost as a metaphor. Michael Taussig’s record of the violence carried out by paramilitary forces in Colombia explores the dimensions of signification carried within the word “limpieza”. Literally the word means “to clean”. In its current usage within Colombia, the word “limpieza” stands to represent the massacres carried out by paramilitary forces in Colombia. The “operation limpieza” in Chile referred to a project of erasing all memory of the democratic social movements of the 1960s leading upto the Popular Unity government both through direct physical repression as well as cultural and structural repression. The Argentine military urged

[10] Trans: “The *shock* of the state violence never appeared as an obstacle in the construction and hearing of the narration of the experiences of suffering. The novelty of this experience, as powerful as the novelty of the successes of the World War I that Benjamin referred to, did not impede the proliferation of discourses. The dictatorships represented, in the strongest sense, an epochal rupture (like the Great War); nevertheless, the democratic transitions fell silent before the enormity of this rupture. On the contrary once the conditions for the transitions emerged, the discourses began to circulate and proved to be indispensable for the restoration of a public sphere of rights.” (Sarlo, 2007, pp. 61-62)

a project of cleansing the family, urging family members to help the state in identifying the individuals who have been infected. Yet, the past refuses to be forgotten. It continues to influence and shape all sectors of public and private life of the country. Like Marta Ugarte's tortured and maimed body that washed up on the beach in Longotoma, Chile (Reuters, 2003) announcing the fact that the military and Chilean state was responsible for disposing off bodies of civilians in the sea in an effort to hide the sheer number of the "disappeared", the past would persist in its potential to resurface in the present.

Yet, as Taussig states, the word "limpieza" has an older cultural meaning, representing "healing a person or home from malignity due to spirit attack or sorcery." (Taussig, 2005, p. xiii) For Taussig, the very documentation of the *limpieza* that his book seeks to record is an act that enacts the older signification that the word carries—"Such healing not only neutralizes deadly force, but enhances a sense of self in place and time." (Taussig, 2005, p. xiii) Thus, it points to the fact that memory and the act of remembering can in effect be part of the process of "healing" for society as a whole. The attempts made to recover the past, narrate it, re-present it, is part of this process of healing. This is a process through which the subjective experience of suffering is contextualised both temporally and spatially which reflects in the identity that is shaped by that trauma. According to David Harvey, identity is intrinsically connected and influenced by what he describes as "our sense of location in space and time." (Harvey, 2001, p. 124)

Beatriz Sarlo in her study of the testimonial rhetoric draws attention to the manner in which narrative is shaped by the nature of the experiences and the sensory perception of the same. The process of kidnapping and the consequent detainment as narrated in Partnoy's *The Little School* (Partnoy, 1998) shapes what can or cannot be perceived. It is in reference to Partnoy's account that Sarlo states, "el detalle está controlado por la idea de una representación restringida de la situación carcelaria y, en consecuencia, bastante más atenida a sus

condiciones[11].” (Sarlo, 2007, p. 71) The narrative describes in great detail what can be perceived through blindfolds or the sensory perception of the surroundings within the detention camp while being kept tied face down and blindfolded. This focus on the sensory perception in effect also highlights the limitations of perception within such circumstances as well as the urgent need to document every single thing that can be salvaged from a memory of a reality that the perpetrators took great care to obliterate or obfuscate, the idea of registering everything. Yet the representation is necessarily fragmented. Sarlo states,

> Por la repetición de lo insignificante, los detalles en *The Little School* se niegan a crear un pleno de representación. Partnoy los ordena sabiendo que son demasiado pocos y demasiado pobres, porque pertenecen a una experiencia mutilada por la inmovilidad permanente y la oclusión de lo visible. El detalle insignificante y repetido se adecua mejor que la proliferación a lo que ella relata.[12] (Sarlo, 2007, p. 72)

Significantly it is this very fragmented, limited perspective on the suffering of those detained in illegal detention camps such as ‘La Escuelita’, also provides the reader a direct confrontation with the experience of those who suffered. There is no relief or comfortable position that the narrative offers. The fragmented narrative shifting from first person to third person and bringing in diverse voices representative of the many who were kept imprisoned, tortured and killed does not provide an easy process of identification for the reader. This can be contrasted with another Argentine intervention into the Dirty War, Luis Puenzo’s film, *La Historia Oficial*/*The Official History* (1985). As Laura Podalsky explains,

> Puenzo’s film allows the spectator a comfortable position from which to (re)view the Dirty War by privileging the perspective of Alicia, an “innocent” woman who discovers that her adopted daughter is the child of one of the disappeared. In focusing attention on the emotional discoveries of an individual “bystander,” the

[11] Trans: “the detail is controlled by the idea of a representation restricted by the situation of imprisonment, and in consequence, quite attentive to their conditions.”

[12] Trans: “Through the repetition of the insignificant, the details in *The Little School* refuse to create a complete representation. Partnoy places them, knowing they are too little and too poor, because they pertain to an experience mutilated by the permanent immobility and occlusion of the visible. The insignificant and repeated detail is better suited to what she narrates than proliferation (of details).” (Sarlo, 2007, p. 72)

> film ignores the traumatic suffering of those who were tortured and killed and, one might add, handily avoids the difficult question of societal complicity. (Podalsky, 2011, p. 6)

Podalsky contrasts the kind of overt attempt to depict the period of the Dirty War in films such as *La Historia Oficial* with a film like Lucrecia Martel's *La Cienaga/The Swamp* (2001). *La Cienaga* does not have any direct reference to the period of the dictatorship. However, what it does reflect is the legacy of that trauma and violence on the present. As Argentine film critic Quintín states, the film explores the "tension between an ominous past and an indecipherable present." (Quintín, 2002, p. 115) In Podalsky's words, the film "reconnects us with the murkier depths upon which today's civil democracy floats." (Podalsky, 2011, p. 111) Podalsky quotes Martel on the subject of the treatment of the traumatic past of authoritarian violence in film:

> What one feels is that the topic has lost its explicit, timely political charge and that what remains is the human, dramatic charge, the historical weight of all that happened, the guilt, the lack of atonement . . .the absence, because everyone is missing someone, whether someone close to them or not. All of that has a strong presence in what is happening today. (Felix- Didier, Luka, & Bobillo, 2003, p. 123) (Podalsky, 2011, p. 111)

Silvana Mandolessi notes that one of the central concerns of Argentine post-dictatorship fiction, is the question of representation of the presence of the "absence"—embodied in the figure of the "disappeared". She states,

> The question posed by much post-dictatorship fiction is how to represent – make visible or present – this absence, in particular the affective aspect of absence that results from disappearance and its principal characteristic: the impossibility of assigning a place (of rest) to the body. (Mandolessi, 2014, p. 157)

Denied the rituals of mourning and burial that accompanies death, the figure of the "disappeared" is left at the cusp of the living and the dead. As Mandolessi states, "in the case

of disappearance, the impossibility of granting a place to the absent body 'extends' this absence to all spaces" (Mandolessi, 2014, p. 156) The fact that there is no possible way to denote any particular space as the location for the absent figure influences the way space itself is perceived and experienced. Moreover, spaces within the familiar domain of the city or urban settlement, for a time, had been transformed into spaces dedicated to detainment of citizens, torture and murder which also changed the way the space of the city itself could be perceived and experienced.

During the Dirty War in Argentina, a time when more than 300 clandestine detention camps were created through the national territory, the camps were often housed within the city and not in a remote uninhabited location. (Calveiro, 2008) According to the witness statement given by a resident of the neighbourhood within which COT 1 Martínez, a concentration camp or detention centre located in Martínez, Buenos Aires,

> se oían gritos desgarradores, lo que *hacía suponer* que eran sometidas a tortura las personas que allí estaban. A menudo sacaban de allí cajones o féretros. Inclusive restos mutilados en bolsas de polietileno. Vivíamos en constante tensión, *como si también nosotros fueramos prisioneros*; sin poder recibir a nadie, tal era el terror que nos embargaba, y sin poder conciliar el sueño durante noches enteras.[13] (CONADEP, 1984, p. 167)

It was a public secret that citizens were being kept in these camps—a fact at the same time known and mysterious. The project of terror that was taking place within the camp was effectively transmitted through the whole of society. Mandolessi states,

> All space becomes contaminated with terror via the spectral presence of this 'secret' right in the middle of public space. Space which was once familiar now becomes haunted by the presence of a secret which threatens its inhabitants. Thus, the insertion of the concentration camp into the middle of the city does not

[13] Trans: "Heartrending cries could also be heard, leading one to assume that the prisoners there were undergoing torture. Large boxes and coffins were often brought out of the building, as well as mutilated remains in polythene bags. We lived under constant stress, as though we ourselves were also prisoners; we couldn't invite anyone over, such was the extent of the terror gripping us, and for nights on end we found it impossible to sleep." (CONADEP, 1986, p. 152)

> effectively transform the entire city into a camp, but rather affectively transforms the relationship of the city to its inhabitants. (Mandolessi, 2014, p. 153)

This was a situation that was replicated in urban centres across Latin America following the descent into brutal authoritarian regimes since the mid-1950s. Paz Encina, the Paraguayan filmmaker, states,

> That house, where I spent my childhood and adolescence, is located three or four blocks from the Third and Twelfth Precincts of the Department of Investigations (now called the Former Department of Investigations). They were known as the worst detention centers because of the way they tortured people. (Encina, 2017, p. 47)

Natalie Brizuela in her article on Paz Encina's artistic work drawing upon the *Archives of Terror*, more than two tons of files, a corpus of documents and materials pertaining to state authorized surveillance, kidnapping, torture and murder of citizens, that the police department had accumulated during the period of dictatorship from 1954 to 1989 in Paraguaya under Alfred Stroessner, writes,

> The center of the repressive and abusive apparatus was right downtown, and *everyone knew* people were detained and tortured there, for it was an open secret that was used by the regime to configure its power and control over the population. (Brizuela, 2017, p. 49)

Paz Encina's film *Ejercicios de Memoria*/*Memory Exercises* (2016) is a direct intervention into the Archives of Terror. The film seeks to explore the multi-faceted nature of the experience of being surveilled by the state, a family trying to cope with the reality of a member being "disappeared" and the exercise of remembering. Specifically the film deals with the "disappearance" of Agustín Goiburú, an important figure in the opposition who was last seen in February, 1977. The film creates a rupture between the visual and the auditory world that it

displays. In terms of the soundscape, the film narrates the fragmented memories of the members of the family of Agustín Goiburú while the predominant visual landscape is one of the home, the forests, almost still images of empty rooms caught in the midst of domestic life, and the figures of children moving through the dense forest. This disjoint in a way reflects the way in which memory is constructed through the personal recollections and the records of state surveillance. The archive of police files that record the process of surveillance, internment, torture or disappearance are not holistic in terms of their recording of the lives of those targetted. Paz Encina mentions that the audio cassettes that were part of the archive had a lot of classical music in them. At first confused at this, Encina soon realised that the classical music was played at the camps during torture of the prisoners.

> Months went by, then years, and I kept going back to the archives. I was always finding new things, and one day I found some audiocassettes. People snitching, being interrogated … Music … lots of music, from Bach to Mozart, and even Roberto Carlos. I asked myself, "Why so much music?" but as soon as I did, I remembered that when they were torturing people, at dawn, they'd have music blaring. (Encina, 2017, p. 48)

Essentially the archival material was that of music. However, it signified the time dedicated to torture. While immense in terms of archival material, the files also hide as much as they reveal. The archive holds facts that gain significance over time, through realisations based on shared memories of the authoritarian rule. The spaces the film shows are all the houses the Goiburú family had lived in while in hiding before and after the disappearance of Agustín Goiburú. The voiceover is that of the children and wife of Agustín Goiburú as they recollect fragments of the man's life. In the film, twice documents from the archive are shown. Once it is a display of the photographs, documents, files of people who were surveilled and possibly killed by the regime. The second time it is specifically the documents on Goiburú, the record of the surveillance by the state. This is juxtaposed with the photographs kept by the family. The film seeks to create

a fragmented vision into the life of an individual while also exploring the way in which memory functions.

The camera shows children playing in the forest while the recollections of the Goiburú family are heard as voiceover. The juxtaposition of political terror with this almost pastoral visual landscape inhabited by children perhaps stems from Encina's own experience of dictatorship in Paraguay. As a child of an opposition lawyer, Encina had been witness to certain aspects of life under dictatorship. As Encina recollects, people would come to their house in search of family members or acquaintances who had been arrested or kidnapped. She writes,

> I experienced what the dictatorship was like up close. There was this fear in my house that nobody talked about, but even though we were kids we understood what was going on: kids understand everything…. adults might stop you from seeing terrible things, but you can still hear everything. (Encina, 2017, pp. 47-48)

Even before her film *Memory Exercises* was made*,* Paz Encina worked on three art exhibits drawing upon the archives The intention behind this was that the memory locked within the archives should be part of public life and the collective consciouness. (Encina, 2017) Encina's film can thus be regarded as a form of cinematic intervention into the archive which explores the possible subjective perspectives from which the archive and what it represents can be experienced.

Argentine filmmaker Jonathan Perel's film *Responsabilidad Empresarial*/*Corporate Accountability* (2020) is a direct intervention into the report commissioned by the state of Argentina to reveal the nexus between the military dictatorship and sections of national and multinational corporations operating in Argentina at the time in suppressing unions, demands from labour organisations and the torture and "disappearance" of labour leaders and union members. Based on a report titled *Responsabilidad empresarial en delitos de lesa humanidad* (*Corporate Accountability for Crimes Against Humanity*) (SAIJ, Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Nación, 2015) commissioned by the state of Argentina and published

on the website of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in 2015, the film can almost be read as a cinematic presentation of the book. The film opens with the title of the report being read out followed by the missing ISBN that emphasises the fact that the report was not officially published in print. This is then followed by the copyright statement from the report that allows for it to be reproduced in any form, be it electronic, mechanical, photocopying or any other method. This statement is made before any visual image appears on screen. This section of the voice over seeks to draw attention to the originary resource, the source material of the film. By reading out the copyright statement, the film wishes to position itself as a reproduction of the report. The film itself is divided into sections for each business company that is shown. Again this format takes from the structure of the report itself which is divided into sections based on the corporations and their locations.

The film comprises of a series of frames that capture the corporations in question from outside their premises, in the present even as the voiceover describes from the report the ways in which the particular company had aided the military regime in their act of repression of workers employed by that company following the coup in 1976. The frames show these companies as fully functioning businesses that continue to operate and thrive in post-dictatorship Argentina. In regards to the intent behind the film, in an interview Jonathan Perel states,

> With the film I want to make the book visible, and to create an image for it. An image that will connect the past with the present. To show these same companies today, in most of the cases still working and fuming smoke out of their chimneys. To try to understand the dictatorship not only in terms of politics, but also as an economic plan. (Perel & Pattison, 2020)

Edward Soja had explained that the spatial turn in cultural studies explored "how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology." (Soja, 2011, p. 6) Jonathan Perel's film frames the present space of the fully functioning corporation with the information,

based on the report, of the acts committed by the company during the dictatorship that has had a significant role in its present dominance in Argentine economic and public life. By doing so that history of repressive violence is "inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life" (Soja E. , 2011).

The film uses long takes where the factory is filmed from within a car with a handheld camera. This was a device that allowed the filmmaker to film all the twenty five companies that are included in the report. Perel has repeatedly stated, the film was structurally as well as in terms of content, guided by the book. While filming, the maker did not want to face the risk of not being able to film any one of the companies due to issues with permission for filming. The view of the factory from outside provided a perfect method of filming all the 25 companies. Doreen Massey had stated in reference to duration in long takes that are in essence an examination of a space, "…these long takes give us, in the midst of the rush and flow of globalisation, a certain stillness. But they are not stills. They are about duration. They tell us of 'becoming', in place." (Massey, 2008)

In Perel's film, the duration of the frames too were determined by the information that is shared through the voiceovers that read out extracts from the report. Regarding the duration of the takes, Perel states,

> my first attempt while editing was to make the shots longer than the voice, to continue after or start before, and to give the image some breathing room, some space to hear the sound from the location…when the reading of the book was over, there was nothing else there to justify that the shot continues. It felt like a detour away from the book. And again, I wanted to stay as attached to it as possible. (Perel & Pattison, 2020)

The fact that the factories are observed from outside also draws attention to the impossibility of the cinematic gaze. That which the film wishes to depict is absent—the "disappeared" workers, the torture and the kidnapping. Even if the camera were to explore the interior of the

factories, this would not have been achieved. The shots of the factories from outside emphasises the absence and the walls further underline the fact that the companies were hiding something behind their logos, their walls, their identity as simply an economic enterprise.

The filming was done at dawn— a time Perel chose because of the fact that this was the time workers would arrive to work. He states,

> I shot only at dawn. It's a very short moment of the day that lasts only seven or eight minutes. Before that is too dark, after that is too bright. The artificial lights of the streets and cars are still on, like during the night. But the sky is already visible….I wanted to be there at this moment of the day not because it's nice for the image, or at least not only because of that, but because I associate this time with the moment the workers arrive. In many of the cases it's described how the workers were abducted when entering the factory. I wanted this film to be on the ground level, close to the workers. (Perel & Pattison, 2020)

Critics have interpreted the shots of the factories from within a car as a possible form of investigative gaze, like a detective. However, Perel's film rejects the gaze of control or surveillance. There is no drone footage or camera capturing the site from above. The film does not seek to imitate the gaze of surveillance or control that the authorities had adopted during the dictatorship. At no point are workers observed to enter or leave the premises of the factories even as the voiceover narrates the methods used by companies to hand over to the military those workers considered troublesome by the management. Perel states, "In my film you might be waiting to see workers coming out, but they won't. These bodies are disappeared." (Perel & Pattison, 2020)

The film narrows down the report to certain keypoints such as names of workers who were kidnapped, how the management handed lists of names of union leaders and members they considered should be "disappeared" to the military, how the companies in question provided transportation that was owned by the corporation for the sequestering and detainment of workers as well as the factory premises as spaces for torture and killing. Each section is

preceded by the logo of the company in question. Perel's use of the logo is a deliberate reference to how companies provided lists of workers to be "disappeared" to the army on files and paper with the letterhead of the company. The vehicles provided to the army by the companies would bear the logo of the company. Thereby the very logo itself becomes an extension of the crime committed. Furthermore, another aspect of the report that is covered in the film is the economic benefit incurred by the company during the dictatorship years, the drastic changes made in working conditions permitted by the repression of the dictatorship such as reduction in workforce and salaries and implementation of prisonlike working conditions, the resources that the companies provided to the dictatorship and the absorption of corporate debt into public debt owned by the state.

The use of handheld camera or the filming of the factories from outside, where the filmmaker is ready to escape in case approached by a security personnel from the factory, might echo the nature of urgent political filmmaking aesthetics that were the norm in the kind of political cinema emerging in Argentina in the 1950s and 60s. However Perel very consciously situates his filmmaking as not belonging to that tradition of urgent political cinema. He states,

> The truth is, it took me a lot of time to make these images, and I have repeated all of them many times, over a few days, and with different kinds of lighting. There is nothing urgent going on in front of the camera, that needs to be captured before it is over never to happen again. (Perel & Pattison, 2020)

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Conclusion

In conclusion to this research, I would like to put forth certain observations drawn from this study. In contrast to the "cinema of marginality" (León, 2007) and its depiction of an alienated subject caught in a corrosive dystopia, an urban space where s/he is denied the very possibility of exerting any form of control over a seemingly senseless world of violence and criminality, the films studied in this dissertation reflect a very different cinematic gaze. In light of this study, it is observed that around the mid-2000s, a turning point is seen in the development of the New New Latin American Cinema. Lucrecia Martel's short film *La ciudad que huye*/*The City That Fled* (2006, Argentina) (Martel, 2006) and Rodrigo Plá's *La Zona/The Zone* (2007, Mexico) (Plá, 2007) can be seen pointing towards a shift as they turn the gaze on the capacity for violence that the upper and middle classes hold. It was shortly followed by films such as Lucrecia Martel's *La Mujer Sin Cabeza*/*The Headless Woman* (2008, Argentina) (Martel, La Mujer Sin Cabeza, 2008) and Juan Carlos Valdivia's *Zona Sur*/*Southern District* (2009, Bolivia) (Valdivia, 2009) where the cinematic gaze appears to study a different kind of vulnerability from that in the "dirty realist" (León, 2007) films about urban violence. While the "cinema of marginality" (León, 2007) portrayed the vulnerability of the marginal subject to forces beyond his/her comprehension, these films explore the potential vulnerability of the elite, the socio-economically as well as politically powerful privileged classes at the hands of a form of violence beyond their comprehension.

The focus on the fear of the privileged that is seen in these films act as a catalyst in the disruption of the impenetrable and invulnerable aura that is created by privilege through the ways in which the powerful and dominant classes of society influence the structuring of urban space. It is observed that these films through their focus on the glitches and breaches in the edifice of protective security and the possibility of the limitations of even the highly

sophisticated technologies of surveillance in anticipating potential attacks, reveal a crack in the absolute power that is assumed through the "architecture of fear" (Gardenberg, 2008) and the structuring of the urban space into fragmented controlled zones that provide security through surveillance.

While the "cinema of marginality" (León, 2007) showed the marginal subject as an alienated individual caught in a cycle of violence that appears to him as senseless and therefore lacking in meaning, it is observed that the films discussed in this study show the urban elite viewing fearfully any and all actions that they cannot ascribe meaning to. Encounters in an urban space that is structured through the "architecture of fear" (Gardenberg, 2008) are framed by inequality and are guided by specific patterns of social interactions. It is observed that the the cinematic gaze that these films reflect imbues scenarios of behaviour or action that do not conform to those patterns with an element of the 'unexpected' and these moments result in anxiety, fear, and retaliatory violence, thereby disrupting the assumed complacency of privilege.

The threat posed by the urban poor, the marginalized in these films, in terms of the potential encounters with violence are framed so that the marginalized appear in the imagination of the characters, the urban elite or upper middle class as a "faceless" unknowable entity. However, when such encounters actually materialize in these films, the marginalized appear as isolated individuals with no connection with a larger community—such as the naked, homeless and possibly deranged man at the traffic signal in Benjamín Naishtat's *Historia del miedo* (2014) (Naishtat, 2014) who attacks the car driven by the characters Edith and Camilo on their way to the Christmas barbeque at the home of their relatives who reside in a gated community or the brothers seeking retribution for the murder of their father at the hands of Francisco, the plantation owner who has now become a real estate tycoon in the urban centre of Recife in Kleber Mendonça Filho's *O Som ao Redor* (2012) (Filho, 2012). However, it should be

observed that the very isolated and fragmented nature of the marginalised who are viewed as a source of threat is also what makes them capable of evading the barriers put up by the structures of surveillance.

The privileged, on the other hand, appear to have a collective presence, fractured but part of a class that holds social and economic power. This is seen in the construction of the homogenous society of the gated community which is predicated on a mutual recognition of belonging to privilege. This is very clearly observed in the films about the gated community where the relationship among the members of the community is repeatedly shown as not based on human companionship but rather the security in the knowledge of them belonging to a similar socio-economic background. In *Historia del miedo*, at the moment of crisis, the privileged characters identify themselves as part of a class who are facing an attack from the unidentified "They" (Scene referred to in Ch 2 pg. 93). The class allegiance is very clear as revealed in moments such as when while sharing the story of the mayor facing the anger of evicted families, the story is shared by the storyteller Marcelo as a horror story where the source of terror is the mob of angry evicted families while the listener Carlos' query is related to the well-being of the mayor rather than curiosity related to the eventual fate of people possibly faced with the prospect of losing their homes. (Scene referred to in Ch 2 pg. 94) In Lucrecia Martel's *La Mujer Sin Cabeza*, Veronica, the protagonist of the film, goes through a brief period of guilt following the accident caused by her carelessness when she kills another human being. However, that brief period of alienation from her social circle, the world of privilege, is just that. The film ends with Veronica embracing and being taken back into this fold where relationships are forged through networks of complicity and silencing of past crimes committed. *O Som ao Redor* depicts the dual nature of the community who at the same time are completely alienated from each other as human beings, having deeper relationships with their washing machines and vacuum cleaners than their neighbours. The visual portrayal of the character Bia smoking into

the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner for instance is framed as a sensual moment that highlights the extreme alienation of urban life. Yet, the community thinks of themselves as facing the same threat in terms of the potential forms of violence that the urban space holds for them. In the scene of the apartment council meeting, for instance, the fractured nature of the community of residents is juxtaposed with the potential for them to unite when faced with a common threat which in this case is a security guard who does not do his duty properly and hence is accused of putting into danger the safety of the residents.

The "cinema of marginality" and New New Latin American cinema as it developed in the 1990s denied the relevance of identity in terms of the collective. It is observed that the shift in cinematic representation studied in this work while showing the marginalised as individuals lacking a sense of collective coherence or allegiance, view the privileged, the elite, the dominant classes in society as a collective actor. Sebastián Antico's *El Nexo*/*The Nexus* (2005, Argentina) (Antico, 2005) takes this to the realm of the metaphorical where the new masters of society, the invading aliens are literally a faceless collective who act in their own interests while the human society as explored through the community in the barrio are driven by their individual desires. The final act of heroism from the central protagonist Julio of flying the spaceship constructed using materials from the slum towards the alien mother ship to fire wastewater at it is actually, for the character, a fulfilment of his lifelong dream of flying a spaceship. The film brings out the dreams and aspirations of the people of the barrio which are treated in a way as if they were the star protagonists of a mainstream film—as Victor Goldgel-Carballo states,

> Arrieta and his fellow slum-dwellers aim at playing the role of conventional "stars." The ostensive difficulty of having someone with missing teeth occupying this position, however, foregrounds their true "faces"—the pain and precarity into which they have been forced and that have been indelibly inscribed in their bodies (Goldgel-Carballo, 2014, p. 119)

In the case of Jonathan Perel's *Responsabilidad Empresarial/Corporate Accountability* (2020, Argentina) (Perel, 2020) , the film identifies the business enterprises as a collective actor. In this film one sees the juxtaposition of two collective identities—the workers marked by their absence and the companies marked by their presence. The frames emphasise the atomization of the workers as a collective force with the narration pointing out the similarity of treatment received by the trade union leaders and members at the hands of the company and the dictatorship. The similarities in the process of identification, kidnapping, detainment, torture, murder and "disappearing" that was carried out on the workers relate a collective experience which was done to eliminate a collective force and the networks that it depended on. The fact that the "disappearance" was then used as an excuse by the companies to dismiss from employment, the worker on grounds of prolonged absence is part of the economic benefit the companies drew out of this criminal action. (Perel & Pattison, 2020) While the workers are absent, at the same time the physical presence of the companies as fully functioning economic enterprises in Argentina today is similarly framed within a collective identity. This is done through the reiteration of the similarities in terms of the role played by the twenty-five enterprises in the kidnap and eventual disappearance of sections of the workforce they had deemed as a threat. It is further emphasised through the benefits the companies received from the dictatorship through the state's absorption of their debts.

In terms of representation of urban space, the "cinema of marginality" depicts an urban dystopia with a portrayal of the reality of the street in a way that while set in a specific city could uses markers of life on the streets that make it appear as a urban reality that can be encountered anywhere across Latin America. (León, 2007) A decontextualized and ahistorical spatial representation marks these films. The shift in cinematic gaze that has been studied in this work carries a similar approach to the spatial indexicality of the gated community and other spaces marked by privilege. However, while the decontextualised representation in the "dirty

realist" films render the marginal as "seres de la calle" ("beings of the street) as if possessing no identity beyond that of living on the streets of an urban metropolis, in the case of the gated communities the impact points in a different direction. It is observed that such a portrayal emphasises the desire for homogeneity based on a collective fear that lies at the heart of such spatial constructs. Yet unlike in the "cinema of marginality", the films offer markers that enable the viewer to understand the socio-political context within which such a space marked by anonymity is created. In the case of *Historia del miedo*, the opening scene of the announcement of the eviction notice being delivered to the illegally occupied lots that border the gated community situates the creation of such a space of privilege within the context of the eviction of the urban marginalised from the spaces they had occupied as part of their claim on the city. In *O Som ao Redor*, the film opens with photographs of life on the sugar plantation that had been the source of wealth in the region where the city of Recife is located, where the film is set. While the space itself is marked by anonymity and a homogenous vision of urban modernity, by situating it within a larger socio-political history, these films are able to ascribe meaning to the socio-cultural interactions depicted that draw upon that discourse.

Based on the turn in cinematic approach that has been explored in this work, it can be observed that the films frame the behaviour of the upper classes, the privileged within a discourse of criminality. The discourse of reading marginality as criminal is a long-established part of Latin American socio-political discourse and finds reflection in the "dirty realist" (León, 2007) films. While the "cinema of marginality" (León, 2007) depicts life on the streets as one framed by crime and the violence it engenders, the films emerging in the mid-2000s not only situate the privileged lives of the upper classes within histories of exploitation but also allude to the capacity for violence that the upper and middle classes hold in order to maintain their privilege. In the case of Rodrigo Plá's film *La Zona*, the potential for violence actually manifests itself in the residents of the gated community hunting down the street children who had broken into the

community and killing them. (Lehnen, 2012) While the residents of the gated community in *La Zona* (2007) go unpunished for their crimes and in Lucrecia Martel's *La Mujer sin Cabeza* (2008), the protagonist Veronica also escapes both the eye of the law as well as her own sense of guilt in films such as *O Som ao Redor* (2012) and *Historia del miedo* (2014) point towards the possibility of retribution coming in a form that is not anticipated.

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