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Transitional Justice in Post-Dictatorship South American Film

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

Kristal Robin Bivona

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Transitional Justice in

Post-Dictatorship South American Film

by

Kristal Robin Bivona

Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic

Language and Literatures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Adriana J. Bergero, Co-Chair

Professor John Randal Johnson, Co-Chair

This dissertation considers theory from the field of Memory Studies to compare the relationships between transitional justice, cultural production, and discourses on state terror and human rights. The most recent civic-military dictatorships in Brazil (1964-1985), Uruguay (1973-1985), and Argentina (1976-1983) remain unresolved histories in the collective imaginaries of each country. The fields of literary and media studies often point to the cultural production that represents this period as contributing to the construction of memory, and, therefore, against impending oblivion. My dissertation moves beyond the binary logic of remembrance and oblivion to analyze the ways in which cultural production shapes our

understanding of the dictatorships and their aftermath. Chapter 1, "The Survivor on Screen: Film in Post-dictatorship Brazil," focuses on the films *Que bom te ver viva* (Lúcia Murat, 1989), *Ação entre amigos* (Beto Brant, 1998), and *Hoje* (Tata Amaral, 2011) to understand the extent to which they reinforce or reject the notion that the only people affected by the dictatorship were the militants who took up arms against the regime. Chapter 2, "Unfinished Stories: Film in Post-Dictatorship Uruguay," analyzes the films *Zanahoria* (Enrique Buchichio, 2014), *Matar a todos* (Esteban Schroeder, 2007), and *Secretos de lucha* (Maiana Bidegain, 2007), which all depict the past as unresolved. Each of these films has an inconclusive ending, implying that Uruguayan transitional justice is yet to come. Chapter 3, "Towards Inclusive Victimhood and Memory: Post-dictatorship Film in Argentina," analyzes *Cautiva* (Gastón Biraben, 2003), *Los Rubios* (Albertina Carri, 2003), and *Buenos Aires Viceversa* (Alejandro Agresti, 1996) as examples of works that challenge the canonized memories of the dictatorship as well as the widely accepted notions of victimhood, pushing for the consideration of traditionally excluded subjectivities. This chapter addresses the intergenerational struggle over memory and the victims of economic crises in the post-dictatorship. This dissertation investigates the impact that political and legal frameworks have on filmmaking, on storytelling, and on how the past is remembered, contributing to research on the intersection between memory studies, transitional justice, and the cultural field.

The dissertation of Kristal Robin Bivona is approved.

Jorge Marturano

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William R. Summerhill

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For my dad.

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INTRODUCTION

"La discusión sobre la memoria raras veces puede ser hecha desde afuera, sin comprometer a quien lo hace, sin incorporar la subjetividad del/a investigador/a, su propia experiencia, sus creencias y emociones. Incorpora también sus compromisos políticos y cívicos" (Jelin 3). In this spirit, I am broaching the subject of memory in post-dictatorship South America with the story of my first encounter with the post-dictatorship generation and their memories of the most recent military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983). It was the first day of school in March 2008 at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP) where I was a Fulbright Teaching Assistant. When I asked them about student life at UNLP, the students in the English 3 section told me that there had been a dictatorship, that the university was a focal point of resistance organized by students and, therefore, subjected to intense repression, and that hundreds of students were forcefully disappeared.[1] As a *yanqui* and especially as a Fulbrighter supported by the State Department, I needed to know that my government was responsible for financing and training the military, for orchestrating Operation Condor, and for supporting the murderous regime having full knowledge of the human rights abuses that were carried out in the name of eradicating communism and so-called subversion. Over the course of the school year, it became clear that the past had a profound impact on the present. The students shared their memories of the dictatorship and the rumors about the humanities building: that it had been built as a panopticon to control the humanities and social sciences students, "the thinking students" as one

[1] Pilar Calveiro reminds us that "La *desaparición* no es un eufemismo sino una alusión literal: una persona que a partir de determinado momento *desaparece*, se esfuma, sin que quede constancia de su vida o su muerte. *No hay cuerpo de la víctima ni del delito*. Puede haber testigos del secuestro y presuposición del posterior asesinato pero no hay un cuerpo material que dé testimonio al hecho." (Calveiro 26; emphasis hers)

student explained it; police checked and searched all students, and the narrow stairwells were particularly useful for these checkpoints; that the building had blind spots where students could be executed with no witnesses. In sum, my students, most of whom were not yet born at the time of the military dictatorship, had what Marianne Hirsch calls postmemories of the last dictatorship. Furthermore, they were unanimously critical of the military government, sympathetic towards the disappeared and their families, and outraged over the most recent disappearance in 2006 of La Plata resident, Jorge Julio López, who was allegedly abducted and disappeared right before he was to testify against former Director of Investigations, Miguel Etchecolatz. Every Friday, a vigil marched through La Plata demanding López's whereabouts, and his image was stenciled on the walls of La Plata with the accompanying graffiti: "¡Sin López no hay nunca más!"

The community in La Plata exemplified the sort of *milieu de mémoire* that Pierre Nora lamented had vanished in France.[2] The imperative to remember and to discuss the dictatorship impacted how I experienced the year in Argentina, and 2008 was indeed an important year for Argentine memory as it also saw the inauguration of Espacio Cultural Nuestros Hijos on the campus of the former Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (Navy School of Mechanics) after the Madres de Plaza de Mayo transformed the infrastructure of the infamous clandestine detention center into a culture and arts center. However, with my limited experience I could only identify how remarkable Argentina's post-dictatorship memory movement was when I moved to Rio de Janeiro the following year. I knew that Brazil had also experienced a dictatorship, in fact a much longer dictatorship spanning from 1964-1985, and yet most of my peers who were either very

[2] See Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* N.26, Spring 1989, pp. 7-24.

young or not yet born at the time knew very little, and people from older generations often remarked on the economic prosperity of the dictatorship years, how street crime was at an all-time low, or made anti-Communist remarks.

These experiences in Argentina and Brazil piqued my curiosity regarding the way that societies process and remember traumatic pasts. This dissertation project stems from this curiosity. One of my hypotheses is that transitional justice processes are significant in determining what kinds of discourses circulate about the dictatorships, and this is evident in cultural production. Some of the questions that I address include: What are the cultural implications of diverse approaches to transitional justice? How does cultural production from the post-dictatorship construct the concepts of victimhood and advocate for memory and human rights?

Information about Operation Condor and Authoritarian Rule

The most recent authoritarian governments in Brazil (1964-1985), Uruguay (1973-1985), and Argentina (1976-1983) are characterized by a centralizing of power in the executive branches of government and their use of censorship, clandestine detention of prisoners, torture, extra-judicial killings, and enforced disappearances. These governments, technically under military rule but with the support of the elite classes, declared war on their own civilians and equated political dissidents with enemies of the state. Scholarship on these regimes has described a number of international factors that contributed to the establishment of the covert and multilaterally coordinated Operation Condor.[3] For example, the deliberate destabilization of

[3] A covert operation of repression and terror from 1968-1989, Operation Condor was at its heaviest in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, but also affected Colombia, Peru and Venezuela.

democracy contributed to the military leaders' justifications for carrying out the coups.[4] Historians of Operation Condor and the military regimes observe that the U.S.'s involvement in the region amidst the Cold War also fostered an intense attack on socialist, communist, and even communitarian social and political movements.[5] Other scholars posit that U.S. involvement in coups and subsequent repression in Latin America is part of an imperialist strategy to dominate the world. In *Empire's Workshop*, Greg Grandin refers to Latin America as a "workshop" for orchestrating military coups and laboratory for the kinds of torture that were later used in the Iraq

[4] See Dos Passos, John. *Brazil on the Move*. New York: Paragon House, 1963; Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998; Ferreira, Jorge. "O trabalhismo radical e o colapso da democracia no Brasil." *Seminário 40 anos do golpe: Ditadura military e resistência no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: FAPERJ, 2004; Galeano, Eduardo. *Las venas abiertas de américa latina.* Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2008; Page, Joseph A. *The Revolution That Never Was: Northeast Brazil 1955-1964.* New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972; Ridenti, Marcelo. *Em busca do povo brasileiro: artistas da evolução. Do CPC à era TV*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2014; and Rock, David. *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History and Its Impact.* Berkeley: UC Press, 1993.

[5] See Aldrighi, Clara. "La injerencia de Estados Unidos en el proceso hacia el golpe de estado. Informes de la misión de Seguridad Pública y la embajada en Uruguay (1968-1973)." *El presente de la dictadura: Estudios y reflexiones a 30 años del golpe de Estado en Uruguay*. Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2004; Fico, Carlos. *Além do golpe: Versões e controversias sobre 1964 e a ditadura military.* Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2004; and Galeano, Eduardo. *Las venas abiertas de américa latina*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2008.

wars; the liberalization of markets and capitalist economic projects that are inseparable from state-imposed repression and the impact of censorship on cultural production from the time.[6] [7]

As previously mentioned, each regime working within the framework of Operation Condor perpetrated gross abuses of human rights. Enforced disappearances, torture, clandestine detention, and forced exile were all used as weapons against what was called "subversion," which could mean anything from sympathizing with leftist politics to participating in the armed struggle for revolution. These human rights violations, which were systematized and widespread in varying degrees across the military regimes of the region, functioned beyond punishing the bodies of those individuals accused of subversion; rather, they transformed the fabric of society to create a climate that would enable these authoritarian governments to pursue their political, economic, and social agendas with little resistance.

Take the use of torture, for example: at its most basic function, torture is an alleged interrogation technique. "Torture consists of a primary physical act, the infliction of pain, and a primary verbal act, the interrogation. The first rarely occurs without the second" (Scarry 28) is how Elaine Scarry defines it, pointing out that "The connection between the physical act and the

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[6] For more on the relationship between economic transformation and repression during the dictatorships, see: Corradi, Juan E., Patricia Weiss Fagen, and Manuel Antonio Garretón, editors *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America.* Berkeley: University of California, 1992. Online; Ridenti, Marcelo. *Em busca do povo brasileiro: artistas da evolução. Do CPC à era TV*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2014; and Roniger, Luis. "US Hemispheric Hegemony and the Descent into Genocidal Practices in Latin America." *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Cold War Years.* Esparza, Marcia, Henry R. Huttenback and Daniel Feierstein, Ed. New York: Routledge. 2010.

[7] For more on censorship, see: Buarque de Hollanda, Heloísa. *Impressões da Viagem: CPC, vanguarda e desbunde: 1960/70*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1980; Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998; Green, James N. *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2010; and Taylor, Diana. *Disappearing Acts: Specters of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's Dirty War.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

verbal act, between body and voice, is often misstated or misunderstood. Although the information sought in an interrogation is almost never credited with being a *just* motive for torture, it is repeatedly credited with being a motive for torture" (28). In Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, the pretext for torture was the pressing need for gathering time-sensitive information from recently captured prisoners (CONADEP 63, Heinz 81, SERPAJ 146). However, torture's efficacy as an interrogation technique is questionable, as testimony from both torture survivors and legal scholars shows.[8] Indeed, torture serves other functions, for example it is a spectacular display of power and an instrument for inciting fear in, not only prisoners, but in the population at large. Scarry, Ronald D. Crelinsten and Eduardo Galeano have examined these other functions of torture. Scarry's theory of the structure of torture is that it involves three simultaneous phenomena:

> (1) the infliction of pain
> (2) the objectification of the subjective attributes of pain
> (3) the translation of the objectified attributes of pain into the insignia of power (Scarry 51)

Torture is more than physically inflicting pain upon prisoner's body, although pain is inflicted with increasing intensity: the pain "is also amplified in the sense that it is objectified, made visible to those outside the person's body" (Scarry 28), and this objectified pain is misread as power, the power of the torturer and of the regime. Crelinsten also argues that torture's purpose is to assert the regime's power, positing that "'Making them talk' is also about power, about imposing one's will on another. One party is absolutely powerful, the other, coerced party, is

[8] Torture survivors, Fernando Gabeira and Alicia Partnoy, for example, write extensively about torture's inefficacy in their memoirs *O que é isso, companheiro?* and *The Little School*, respectively. For a legal scholar's argument against torture as an effective interrogation tactic, see Langbein, John H. "The Legal History of Torture." *Torture: A Collection.* Ed. Levinson, Sanford. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.

totally powerless and defenseless" (37). Using torture, the act of interrogating is also a way of making the prisoner recognize their utter powerlessness in the face of torturers and the state. Historian and former political prisoner Eduardo Galeano said of torture that "[it] was quite efficient, not in the sense that it's told by some friends of torture. No, not in this sense. […] it's almost never useful to get information. And the purpose of torture is not getting information. It's spreading fear" (Goodman). Torture spreads fear, and that fear ripples through the whole of the society in which it is practiced and lingers in future decades.

Regimes that torture and use torture to control their populations with fear do so because their power is illegitimate. Torture is a desperate act. Paradoxically, torture is an abuse of power, and the use of torture further contributes to the illegitimacy of the regime, as its practice is condemned almost universally. In the cases of Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, these dictatorial military governments intervened in democratically-elected governments with the support of national elites and the capitalist west. These contestable regimes, authoritarian in nature, used repressive tactics to halt the momentum of leftist movements, which had worked towards achieving workers' protections, nationalizing industries, and agrarian reform. Seemingly arbitrary arrests, torture and enforced disappearances spread fear among civilians, as censorship and excessive policing exerted control over social behavior and the discourses that could freely circulate. Nonetheless, student activists, workers, and artists engaged in acts of resistance, ending for many in exile, torture, or death.

The fear continued into transitions to democracy and has certainly impacted the way each country remembers the dictatorship, conceptualizes victimhood, and identifies perpetrators. Furthermore, in the early years of the transitions, fear enabled military governments to put forth their versions of the past as official. For example, all three militaries have attempted to justify

their uses of deadly force and repression by employing what has been called "the theory of the two demons." Carlos Demasi's definition of the theory of the two demons is quite thorough:

> La 'teoría de los dos demonios' es una explicación ya clásica del quiebre de las instituciones. Según se señala, la sociedad fue víctima del embate de dos fuerzas antagónicas, la guerrilla y el poder militar; y en el contexto de esa lucha, el golpe de Estado fue un resultado inevitable. La explicación ha adquirido formas diferentes y tiene circulación tanto entre la academia como entre la opinión pública, se la encuentra en discursos presidenciales, reportajes a ex guerrilleros y análisis de cientistas políticos, y también se la puede escuchar en la feria o en charlas de café. Tanta unanimidad puede resultar sospechosa, habida cuenta de que sólo en muy escasas oportunidades aparecen acuerdos entre emisores tan diversos. (67)

The theory of the two demons is among the dominant discourses about the Operation Condor and the dictatorships, it is used in every county and still is employed today. As such, this discourse is a force that those who suffered at the hands of these authoritarian regimes and their loved ones must fight against in order to be recognized as victims and so that those who violated human rights with the support the State can be recognized as perpetrators. This struggle is a recurrent theme in the chapters that follow.

Theoretical Framework: Transitional Justice

According to the International Center for Transitional Justice, "transitional justice refers to the ways countries emerging from periods of conflict and repression address large-scale or systematic human rights violations so numerous and so serious that the normal justice system will not be able to provide an adequate response."[9] Transitional justice as a term "was invented as a device to signal a new sort of human rights activity and as a response to concrete political dilemmas human rights activists faced in what they understood to be 'transitional' contexts"

[9] https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice

(Arthur 326). Not all historical examples of holding governments accountable for past atrocities are examples of transitional justice. In her 2009 article, "How Transitions Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice," Paige Arthur considers the emergence of transitional justice as a concept that occurred in the 1980s as former authoritarian regimes transitioned to democratic forms of governance in South America.

Beyond the definitions here, transitional justice is an entire interdisciplinary field of inquiry that has traditionally encompassed various social sciences, including history, comparative politics, sociology, and law. Arthur defines the field of transitional justice as, "an international web of individuals and institutions whose internal coherence is held together by common concepts, practical aims, and distinctive claims for legitimacy" (324) and observes that it "came directly out of a set of interactions among human rights activists, lawyers and legal scholars, policymakers, journalists, donors, and comparative politics experts concerned with human rights and the dynamics of 'transitions to democracy,' beginning in the late 1980s" (324). Arthur traces the foundational texts and conferences that began using transitional justice as a term, and identifies two normative aims that the scholars, politicians and activists concerned with transitional justice posit would lead a society in transition towards a healthy democracy, namely "achieving justice for victims, and achieving a more just, democratic, order" (357). Transitional societies find themselves grappling with how to strike a balance between these two aims: certain approaches to dealing with the past, such as truth commissions, punishment for perpetrators, and reparations for victims would clearly address justice for victims, but some resist these efforts claiming that they could cause instability instead of fostering a peaceful democracy.

Arthur identifies as one of the most groundbreaking ideas out the field of transitional justice the conclusion that "the origins of democracies are to be found in political choices rather

than structural conditions—and these choices are made by elites" (346). She attributes this notion to a 1978 initiative out of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars dubbed the Transitions Project. This idea shifted the focus of scholars concerned with democracy from already flourishing democracies to what were at the time emerging democracies in order to understand the process of democratization. As such, transitional justice presupposes that the end goal is a democracy in which the past has been dealt with, and it presupposes that such a shift is possible through decision-making and pacts among elites. As I will show in my chapters about Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, such negotiations among elites— that is the political class, the land-owning oligarchy, the military, and financial and industrial leaders— determined each country's approach to transitioning from dictatorship to democracy.

Transitional justice as a concept and field raises numerous questions about the nature of transitions and to what extent processes of truth-telling, reparations, prosecution, and reforming the repressive institutions of government are relevant in other transitional contexts, such as peace processes and transitions to a redistributive socialist political framework. As Arthur shows in her research, "part of the distinctive character of the field [of transitional justice] is that its knowledge-base has always been comparative" (326), and yet considering that "the initial impetus for the field of transitional justice was historically located in Latin American transitions from authoritarian rule," (Arthur 362) there is a risk in applying theories of transitional justice to situations that call for other approaches. For example, when the democratization of the Southern Cone is compared to post-Apartheid South Africa or the transitions of former Soviet states, it becomes clear that each situation poses distinct challenges and different possibilities for overcoming the past. Arthur also raises questions about the relevance of transitional justice for societies dealing with past and present atrocities without a present-day transition, such as the

United States' grappling with legacies of slavery, racist segregation and indigenous genocide (362).

Beyond the potential for applying principles of transitional justice in contexts where it does not fit, another interesting critique of transitional justice is that it focuses too much on democratization as *the* political goal and relies too heavily on institutions that promote U.S-democracy and capitalist interests (Arthur 363). As such, the international field of transitional justice engages in a neocolonial relationship with countries in transition by attempting to exert influence over *how* they should transition and to what sort of system they should transition. This critique is compelling if we consider the acceleration of neoliberalism in South America that coincided with the transitions to democracy.[10] Other critics of transitional justice point out that it takes on a depoliticizing force, erasing revolutionary politics and avoiding any discussion of radical change in the name of democracy and stability.[11]

Recognizing that a transitional justice framework is imperfect, I find the term useful for describing the extraordinary legal, juridical, and political processes that contributed to the

[10] Fernando J. Rosenberg takes the connection between neoliberalism and human rights as the starting point of his book. See: Rosenberg, Fernando J. *After Human Rights; Literature, Visual Arts, and Film in Latin America.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2016.

[11] For example, in Trouillot's critique of historical apologies (one possible feature of transitional justice efforts), he posits that by their very nature, collective apologies for past wrongs cannot transform society; rather they are abortive rituals that simulate a collective overcoming of past injustices. He writes: "Apologies can be read as rituals in the strictly anthropological sense of a regulated, stylized, routinized, and repetitive performance that tends to have both demonstrative and transformative aspects. Their transformative aspect depends fundamentally on a dual identity relation across temporal planes, easily met on pragmatic grounds in individual apologies. Yet in collective apologies, identity is always questionable. It is hard to establish on formal grounds, hard to assume on pragmatic ones" (Trouillot 184-185). Because of a temporal gap and the disconnect between the identities of the perpetrators and victims of the past with the apologizers and interlocutors of the apology of the present, collective apologies are a performance devoid of any possibility for systemic transformation.

transitions to democracy in the countries of focus in this dissertation: Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. The common features of transitional justice, such as truth commissions, reparations, punishing the officials who carried out human rights violations, and fortifying institutions under new democracies are all relevant issues that these countries had to confront as they decided how to go forward.

Theoretical Framework: Memory Studies

The field of memory studies offers numerous perspectives on what memory is and how it functions in societies dealing with traumatic pasts. In this section, I will discuss some key contributions to the field that can help us make sense of how memory is operating in post-dictatorship South American film. I align myself with the following theorists who posit that memory is a socially constructed and dynamic process; that the construction of memory entails a struggle as various memories compete for dominance in the collective imaginary, but that this struggle can be productive and multidirectional.

First, Ann Rigney's important distinction between what she called the plenitude and loss model of memory and a social-constructivist model posits that "a shared past can be collectively constructed and reconstructed in the present rather than resurrected from the past" (14). She defines the plenitude and loss model as the idea that memory is "something that is fully formed in the past (it was 'all there' in the plenitude of experience, as it were) and as something that is subsequently a matter of preserving and keeping alive" (Rigney 12) and credits it with important work on marginalized traditions and alternative histories. However, Rigney argues that when we talk about cultural memory, we are really talking about "mediation, textualization, and acts of

communication" (14).[12] Therefore, cultural memory is "the result of ongoing cultural processes" (Rigney 25). The different memories and versions of the past circulating through a variety of media construct cultural memory.

Aleida Assmann describes the processes that determine which memories become the actively remembered, dominant memories; which are passively remembered through their conservation in storage outside of mainstream circulation; and which are either neglected or pushed into oblivion (99). She explains that "The active dimension of cultural memory supports a collective identity and is defined by a notorious shortage of space. It is built on a small number of normative and formative texts, places, persons, artefacts, and myths which are meant to be highly circulated and communicated in ever-new presentations and performances" (A. Assmann 101). These canonized memories are recycled and continuously reassert their dominance over how the past is to be remembered. An example of this from the Argentine context would be the widely circulated and repeated stories of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo as victims of the dictatorship, as heroes of the resistance, and as keepers of memory. The headscarves they wear (*pañuelos* that represent the cloth diapers of their babies and are embroidered with names of the disappeared children) are a powerful symbol of their struggle.

One important point to highlight in Assmann's concept of canonized memory is that memories that have undergone canonization withstand the test of time. They transcend generation. Assmann clarifies that "A canon is not a hit-list; it is instead independent of historical change and immune to the ups and downs of social taste. The canon is not built anew by every

[12] Rigney approaches cultural memory via Jan Assmann's categories of collective memory: communicative memory (autobiographical history in the form of informal traditions and everyday communication that is transmitted through social interactions with people; an embodied memory that operates on the time scale of 3-4 generations), and cultural memory is mediated in cultural production, formalized language, and rituals (J. Assmann 117).

generation. On the contrary, it outlives generations who have to encounter it and reinterpret it anew according to their time" (100). Therefore, the canonized memories of the dictatorships continue to dominate even today as the post-dictatorship generation is grown to adulthood and also producing knowledge and cultural works about the past.

Elizabeth Jelin also takes memory as a socially constructed phenomenon, but focuses on memory in the context of Southern Cone military dictatorship, arguing that traumatic events make memory laborious for those who seek to create meaning out of the past. "En el plano colectivo, entonces," she writes, "el desafío es superar las repeticiones, superar los olvidos y los abusos políticos, tomar distancia y al mismo tiempo promover el debate y la reflexión activa sobre ese pasado y su sentido para el presente/futuro" (Jelin 16). This process takes work and time, but extracting meaning from the past is an important step towards ensuring the atrocities never happen again, which is the fundamental premise behind *Nunca más*.[13] Memory is used to teach lessons, a process that Jelin calls "memoria ejemplar" (51). Again, the imperative is to learn from the past so that it is never repeated.

The imperative to transmit memory so that the atrocities of the past are never repeated is an important motivation for teaching younger generations about traumatic pasts. Postmemory, a term popularized by Marianne Hirsch, is a word to describe the vicarious traumatic memories transmitted inter- and intra-generationally. Postmemories are those which have been passed on from those who experience trauma to their children. Postmemory is often a referent for scholarship dealing with the post-dictatorship generation in Argentina. Most notably, Susana

[13] *Nunca más* is a publication on the disappearances and human rights violations during the dictatorship. Carried out by Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared (CONADEP), it compiled testimony in this comprehensive report. Following the Argentine publication, the Archdiocese of São Paulo published *Brasil:Nunca mais* in 1985 and in 1989 the Uruguayan branch of Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ) published *Uruguay Nunca más.*

Kaiser's *Postmemories of Terror* is an excellent sociological study based on her interviews with what she called "'grey zoners' meaning that they were not 'direct victims' of the repression" (13), focusing on people coming of age in Buenos Aires in the nineties with no direct connection either to the military or to activism. Kaiser's participants had access to transgenerational and intergenerational transmission of memories of a traumatic past of living under a repressive regime and her interviews delve into Hirsch's two distinctive structures of transmission at play in postmemory: familial postmemory and affiliative postmemory. Familial postmemories are those that are transmitted between family members across generations (a vertical transmission), and affiliative postmemory is horizontal and outside of the family, or rather how these memories circulate intra-generationally.

The status of the children of the disappeared raises questions about the limits of postmemory as an appropriate framework through which to interpret memories of their parents and of state terror because of the nature of enforced disappearance. The void left by their parents' disappearance and the lack of details that they have about what happened to them makes direct familial transmission of their trauma impossible. The sorts of memories transmitted to the children of the disappeared include memories that their friends and loved ones have about who their parents were and what they did. The trauma of their kidnapping, torture, and disappearance is usually left to the imagination for the simple fact that their parents did not survive and details from other sources are mostly unavailable. The children of the disappeared suffer the trauma of being orphaned by state terror and the dearth information about what happened to their parents. Uncertainty is a feature of enforced disappearance that makes it an especially effective repressive practice for spreading fear and an exceptionally cruel weapon. Direct familial transmission is thwarted by a missing generation.

In her critique of postmemory in the context of the Argentine dictatorship, Beatriz Sarlo argues that some of the attributes commonly associated with postmemory— "lo lacunar, lo mediado, lo resistente a la totalización y su misma imposibilidad" (Sarlo 142)—are not unique to postmemory, but also characterize the work of historians. Sarlo rejects the notion that the fragmentary nature of postmemory sets it apart from memory. She posits that postmemory only sets itself apart from any other investigation into the past by way of the affective connection. Speaking to the example of the children of the disappeared, she writes:

> […] si el discurso que provoca en el hijo quiere ser llamado posmemoria, lo será por la trama biográfica y moral de la transmisión, por la dimensión subjetiva y moral. No es en principio necesariamente más ni menos fragmentaria, ni más ni menos vicaria, ni más ni menos mediada que la reconstrucción realizada por un tercero; pero se diferencia de ella porque está atravesada por el interés subjetivo vivido en términos personales. (Sarlo 131)

Therefore, for Sarlo, what defines postmemory is not the traumatic nature of the memories, nor the specific ways through which these memories are transmitted from one generation to another, but rather the personal and affective connection between the post-dictatorship subject and the past that they reconstruct.

Thus far, the theories of memory that I have described account for the notions of a socially-constructed collective memory (always threatened by socially-constructed collective oblivion), of the struggle for dominance in the collective memory, of the intergenerational transmission of traumatic memory, and of the importance of affective connection to the memories that one receives that set such a transmission apart from amateur historiography. To an extent, the aforementioned theories presuppose what Michael Rothberg points to as competitive memory. He observes, "[…] many people assume that the public sphere in which collective memories are articulated is a scarce resource and that the interaction of different collective memories within that sphere takes the form of a zero-sum struggle for preeminence" (Rothberg,

Multidirectional Memory 3). Instead of subscribing to the competitive framework, which ultimately renders some groups winners and other losers, Rothberg argues that memory should be multidirectional "as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative" (*Multidirectional Memory* 3). He cites examples of moments in which different memory traditions that seem to compete for attention in the collective imaginary actually result in a productive dynamic through which memory is articulated. Rothberg's work on multidirectional memory is an important reference for this dissertation, as it contributes to my understanding of how the struggle over memory has played out in post-dictatorship South American film. Whether trying to make sense of the intergenerational struggle over how the dictatorship should be remembered, or of how the policies implemented during the dictatorship created both political and economic victims, multidirectional memory reinforces the idea that these seemingly divergent perspectives of memory and victimhood need not be competitive struggles for recognition; rather, they all contribute to a rich totality that is oftentimes reduced, homogenized, and simplified when we engage with competitive modes of remembrance. Understanding memory as multidirectional is a step towards employing remembrance in order to foster empathy and solidarity, two sentiments that are necessary in any movement towards *nunca más.*

Recent scholarship has explored the intersection between memory studies and transitional justice studies in the Southern Cone and Brazil. This research is grounded in the premises that the way that society has dealt with this traumatic past legally and politically shapes dominant discourses in cultural production about the dictatorship, while narratives about the past in film, television, art, music, and literature inform the public, impact public opinion, and even affect political discourse. Ana Ros's 2012 book, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile,*

and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production was among the first to investigate how the post-dictatorship generation dealt with the past through cultural production, and "the ways in which transitional justice, generational change, and cultural production mutually enable and constrain each other" (201). Her work has been foundational for other scholars working on post-dictatorship memory.

Andrew Racja's 2018 book, *Dissensual Subjects: Memory, Human Rights, and Postdictatorship in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay* investigated the exclusionary nature of memory and human rights in South America through an analysis of dominant discourses, such as *nunca más* and of centers for memory, such as the ex-ESMA in Buenos Aires. In his comparative analysis of sites of memory in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, Rajca explains, "It is important to note the differences in the juridical realm with regards to the amnesty and impunity laws in each country, as this has influenced both the form and the content of cultural production related to memory and human rights" (11). Rajca points out that as a result, Argentine cultural production displays "a more critical engagement with the dictatorship" (12) than neighboring countries where the initial amnesty and impunity laws remain in place in the name of peace and reconciliation. Nonetheless, as I will show in this dissertation, filmmakers from Brazil and Uruguay also engage critically with the dictatorship and challenge the official memories and narratives put forth by the military during and after their authoritarian governments.

These acts of critical engagement with memory are what Ana Forcinito calls intermittences of memory in her 2018 book, *Intermittences: Memory, Justice, & the Poetics of the Visible in Uruguay*. She explains, "What I call intermittences of memory are precisely those attempts to make visible (and audible) the battles over oblivion and silence, and thus to construct an alternative narrative about the past and to expose the blind spots of the model of peace and

reconciliation" (4). By describing these pushes for memory as intermittences, Forcinito "points precisely to the repetitive and inconstant but ever-present haunting of memory and, in that sense [. . .] implies an interruption or a series of interruptions of the model of peace and reconciliation as well as an obstinate exercise against such a model" (*Intermittences* 4-5). As such, Forcinito's work engages critically with memory and transitional justice in the Uruguayan context, but her intermittences are also apt for considering the work of cultural producers from Brazil and other places where the paradigm of transitional justice is one that fosters peace and reconciliation rather than truth and justice.

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation builds upon these theories of memory and its relation to transitional justice. Over the course of three chapters, I investigate how a limited number of filmmakers from Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina engage with the processes of transition to democracy, cultural memory of the traumatic past, personal memories that are either one's own or vicarious (and transmitted inter- or intra-generationally), and ultimately put forth their own versions of the past while raising questions about human rights, victimhood, and impunity. Each chapter begins with historical information about each county's approach to transitional justice and how cultural memory has developed. The order of chapters, beginning with Brazil, then Uruguay, and finally Argentina, is for two reasons: first, this is the chronological order of the coups that established military regimes in each country and, second, this is their order when we consider accountability to the crimes of the dictatorships, with Brazil being least accountable and Argentina being the most.

"The Survivor on Screen: Film in Post-Dictatorship Brazil" focuses on the figure of the torture survivor in Brazilian cinema. Films such as *Que bom te ver viva* (1989) by Lúcia Murat, *Ação entre amigos* (1998) by Beto Brant, and *Hoje* (2011) by Tatá Amaral all feature torture survivors as protagonists, making a case for their victimhood. Amidst an approach to transition that fostered impunity and oblivion, these films challenge the memories of the dictatorship put forth by the Brazilian right wing that claims to be nostalgic for the dictatorship when law and order allegedly prevailed. To what extent does this dynamic allow for the Brazilian ultra-right wing to appropriate the stories of torture survivors to bolster the pro-dictatorship version of the past?

"Unfinished Stories: Film in Post-Dictatorship Uruguay," examines how Uruguayan filmmakers represent the unfinished business of Uruguayan transitional justice, a process that has admittedly accomplished more than the Brazilian government has, yet still falls short of the truth and justice for which Argentina is known. In *Zanahoria* (2014) by Enrique Buchichio, *Matar a todos* (2007) by Esteban Schroeder, and *Secretos de lucha* (2007) by Maiana Bidegain, the military is depicted as still holding significant power in Uruguay, while journalists, politicians, and survivors are stifled by pacts of silence, reconciliation, lies, and those who will not relinquish power. Each film deals with a different aspect of transitional justice, sometimes blurring the line between fiction and non-fiction. As such, filmmakers in Uruguay critique the government's lackluster approach to transitional justice, even under the government of the progressive Frente Amplio.

"Orphans of State Terror: Film in Post-Dictatorship Argentina" analyzes films about the children of the disappeared in Argentina, that is the children of political prisoners that were forcefully disappeared after being abducted and held in clandestine detention. The films, *Cautiva*

(2003) by Gastón Biraben, *Los Rubios* (2003) by Albertina Carri, and *Buenos Aires Viceversa* (1996) by Alejandro Agresti depict the challenges, tragedies, and triumphs of young women whose parents were presumably murdered by the State. I posit that because of Argentina's persistent and strong memory movement, Argentine filmmakers are authorized to tell stories that question or challenge the commonly accepted definitions of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. As such, post-dictatorship Argentine film moves towards more inclusive conceptualizations of victimhood and memory.

CHAPTER ONE

The Survivor on Screen: Film in Post-Dictatorship Brazil

Introduction

The Brazilian government transitioned from military regime to democracy over 30 years ago, and yet some information regarding what occurred during the repressive, authoritarian regime is still kept a secret. Today, relatives of victims of state violence need to fight for their right to information about what happened to their loved ones. For example, in a 2017 decision regarding public access to the secret archives that document the military regime of 1964-1985, Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF) president Cármen Lúcia wrote: "Quanto ao requisito de interesse público, este milita em favor da publicidade e não da manutenção de segredos e silêncio. [...] O Supremo Tribunal Militar (STM), ao autorizar o acesso apenas à parte pública, violou a decisão do Supremo Tribunal Federal" (Costa 2017). The STF consequently ordered the STM to grant access to information that remains secret. Cármen Lúcia's decision from March 2017 reveals the extent to which the history of the military regime remains, 55 years after the coup, a controversial topic. In many ways the politics of investigating the period replicates the ideological battlefield of the dictatorial period: on one side politicians associated with the left,[14] who may or may not have personally experienced state-sponsored repression and violence, seek justice for past atrocities and push for a memory movement; meanwhile, on the other side conservative politicians and the military justify the regime's violence in the name of national

[14] In using the term "left," I borrow Marcelo Ridenti's definition of the left as "political forces critical of the established capitalist order, which identify with the labor struggle for social transformation," (17) which he relates to Jacob Gorender's and Marco Aurélio Garcia's concepts of the left.

security and, in the cases of individuals who served the regime and carried out repressive acts, enjoy protections of the Amnesty Law from 1979 (A lei da anistia, nº 6.683). The Amnesty Law, ratified while the military government was still in power, allowed for political exiles to return to Brazil and protected anyone accused of state-sanctioned human rights violations or acts of terror against the state from legal repercussions. While the Amnesty Law justifies a pact of silence regarding the dictatorship and hinders any exhaustive and consequential investigation of that time, the cultural field offers many well-known films, visual art, and literary works that depict life under the military regime, and Brazilian cultural production is no longer subjected to the institutionalized censorship that the authoritarian regime once imposed. For these reasons, the study of Brazilian cultural production that deals with the military dictatorship years can foster understanding of Brazil from 1964-1985, and also sheds light on Brazil's current political conjuncture.

In this chapter, I analyze three films that have torture survivors as their main characters and torture survival as a dominant theme: Lucía Murat's *Que bom te ver viva* (1989); Beto Brant's *Ação entre amigos* (1998); and Tata Amaral's *Hoje* (2011). My analysis takes as a premise that films, as works of art, contribute to the formation of cultural memory and impact the way that spectators understand the past. I posit that post-dictatorship Brazilian films that deal with torture survival also reveal information about transitional justice and, in the case of these three examples, critique the Brazilian approach to transitional justice as insufficient for their healing. Some of the questions that I address here are: How do Brazilian films approach the topics of torture and survival? What version of the past is the filmmaker imparting upon his or her audience? How does transitional justice appear in the films? What do these films propose

about torture's effect on Brazilian society? What are the implications of representing torture survivors on screen?

Before delving into the analysis of the films, it is important to understand how Brazil transitioned to democracy and how memory of the dictatorship has developed over the years. Contemplating these contexts will prepare us to consider the content of the films in question and how they intervene in the cultural field.

Brazilian Amnesty and Transition to Democracy

Brazil's transition to democracy was a slow process that favored reconciliation over truth and justice. Amnesty and reparations for victims and their families are prominent features of Brazilian transitional justice. In this section, I will describe how Brazil implemented amnesty and eventually reparations as remedies to the state terror present in the country from 1964-1988, with the most intense period of human rights violations occurring between 1968 after the enactment of the Ato Institucional 5 (AI-5) and 1974, which marks the beginning of the gradual opening towards democracy referred to as the *abertura*. Despite some efforts over time to gather information about the dictatorship and to compensate those affected, Brazil has largely failed to address human rights violations in any meaningful, systematic way.

The three films analyzed in this chapter were released in the three different moments of Brazilian post-dictatorship memory. In subsections that focus on the cultural response to the Brazilian transition, I will describe the contexts out of which these films emerge. The first period begins with *abertura*, or slow opening towards democracy, through the first democratic governments, occurring from the late-1970's to the mid-1990's, and during which time cultural producers denounced the state repression and violence. The second moment begins in the mid-

1990's and continues to the early 2000's, coinciding with the so-called "memory boom" that is more remarkable in Argentina where it is linked to transitional justice policies in that country. In Brazil, the "boom" in production of films that deal with the dictatorship is more likely a consequence of the revitalization of the film industry, referred to as the *retomada*, than of the stagnant transitional justice movement of that period. The third period begins in the early 2000's and continues until today (Rajca 15). This period coincides with the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2002-2010) of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). Under the PT administrations of Lula and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), Brazil's government supported truth and justice efforts more than previous governments, with the founding of the Comissão Nacional da Verdade and its subsequent hearings and report, thus creating a new forum for learning about the dictatorship.

Gradual and Slow Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy

Brazil's transition to democracy began in 1974 under the rule of General Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979). The military, the financial sector, and the industrial sector all sought to avoid a return to the socialist-leaning milieu and policies of the early 1960's that the 1964 coup had interrupted (Gaspari 30; Mezarroba 106). International calls to end repressive practices, including the human rights agenda of U.S. President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), nudged Brazil towards political opening, especially after reports of thousands of disappearances in Argentina and footage of Chilean military oppression shocked the international community (Gaspari 37; Green 339). Geisel's predecessor and the last military president, General João Figueiredo (1979-1985), implemented the "lenta, segura e gradual" transition to democracy set in motion under

Geisel (Gaspari 74).[15] This transition, known as the *abertura*, included a gradual and controlled freeing of the press, a constitutional amendment repealing AI-5 in 1978, and reciprocal amnesty implemented in 1979.

Amnesty plays a recurrent role in Brazilian legal and political history. In fact, following the 1964 coup d'état that installed the civic-military regime, public figures and intellectuals in Brazil immediately called for amnesty of those who had been arrested as political prisoners, and this call for amnesty was perennial throughout the two decades of military repression (Mezarobba 106). The Brazilian Amnesty Law (Lei da anistia 6.683), passed in August 1979, came about after years of pressure from those who advocated for the political prisoners and exiles who suffered harsh forms of repression during the dictatorship. While those organizing for the amnesty movement in the late 1970's, such as the Comitê Brasileiro pela Anistia (CBA), envisioned pardons for political prisoners and the return of exiles, they took for granted that amnesty would also mean justice on behalf of victims of state terror in the form of investigations, trials, and political changes to transition to the country to democracy (Mezarobba 106). However, the military government coopted the movement for amnesty and appropriated the term to include the impunity of all state officials who ordered, oversaw, or carried out human rights violations during the period, such as torture, rape, and enforced disappearance. The amnesty law reflects this interpretation of reciprocal amnesty that pardoned all political crimes. Joan Dassin posits that amnesty's "major effect was to take the human rights question off the public agenda

[15] Although military rule officially ended in 1985, it is worth mentioning that the end of military rule did not mean direct democratic presidential elections. The first civil president-elect, Tancredo Neves, was elected through parliamentary elections. Neves unexpectedly died before he could take office, and José Sarney (1985-1989) assumed the presidency in his place. Only in 1989 did the Brazilian people vote for the first democratically-elected president, Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1993).

as the country slowly returned to civilian rule" (x). Further, Brazil's reciprocal amnesty law remains the law of the land and its interpretation over the last four decades has largely thwarted efforts towards truth and justice with some exceptions. For example, the law has prevented any successful criminal proceedings and any form of punishment for those individuals who violated human rights during the dictatorship, although through civil proceedings the state has been found responsible for particular instances of torture and enforced disappearance resulting in compensation for victims and victims' families in the form of financial reparations. Nonetheless, at the time it became law, amnesty was seen as a way to "overcome an impasse" (Mezarobba 107) and to foster peaceful relations between the state and the people.

The state avoided any official investigation into human rights violations that military governments perpetrated. Indeed, the first large-scale investigation into the dictatorship and human rights violations was the report *Brasil: Nunca Mais* (*BNM*), prepared by the Archdiocese of São Paulo and published in 1985. Unlike the projects that investigated torture and disappearance from neighboring countries, *BNM* stands out for two reasons: first, while Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay's investigations and reports came about through government initiative, *BNM* researchers worked secretly without State support in conjunction with the Archdiocese; second, while other reports, such as Argentina's *Nunca Más* and *Uruguay: Nunca Más*, relied heavily on survivor testimony to understand the systemic human rights violations under their dictatorships, the *BNM* team secretly photocopied "virtually all the cases tried in Brazilian military courts between April 1964 and March 1979" (Dassin xii). In her introduction to the 1998 edition of the English translation of *BNM*, *Torture in Brazil*, Dassin describes the daring five-year process of "copying documents under the military's nose at the Brasília archives of the Supreme Military Court" (xiii). She points out that, "[. . .] the Brazilian Nunca Mais

project was able to achieve something that the neighboring groups did not—to establish official responsibility for politically motivated human rights abuses *on the basis of military records themselves*" (xvi; emphasis hers). Despite the rigor of the *BNM* research and the book's 91 consecutive weeks as a best seller, the amnesty law managed to curtail any government-led investigation into human rights violations.

The amnesty law set the tone for all future deals between the state and victims of the dictatorship, understood to be the political prisoners, exiles, and public functionaries who lost their livelihoods during the military regime. Mezarobba posits that because amnesty is still widely considered to be valid, ". . . the main obstacle to accountability has been the specific manner in which the amnesty law has been interpreted since it came into force: as a guarantee of impunity for state agents who committed grave human rights violations" (107). Guaranteed impunity has far-reaching consequences, from the common discourse that the military was justified in their use of torture and extra-judicial killings, to the continued impunity of state security forces who mistreat prisoners and unlawfully assassinate Brazilians today.[16]

The Cultural Response: Denouncing Human Rights Violations through Literature and Film

In 1979, as the amnesty law called for oblivion and silence for the sake of peace and harmony, cultural producers, more or less unfettered by previous government censorship, began pushing for memory through literature and film. The genre of testimonial literature emerged as political exiles were allowed to return to Brazil, which coincided with the resurgence of

[16] See the January 2018 Human Rights Watch report: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/brazil_3.pdf and the 2018 Amnesty International report on Brazil: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/6700/2018/en/ .

Brazilian publishing. Flamarion Maués writes that along with the publishers who were traditionally aligned with the left and opposition to the dictatorship came new publishing houses:

> Editoras já estabelecidas, como a Civilização Brasileira, a Brasiliense, a Vozes e a Paz e Terra, retomaram uma atuação política mais acentuada, editando livros que tratavam de temas que colocavam em questão a ideologia, os objetivos e os procedimentos do regime de 1964, ou, ainda, cujos autores faziam oposição ao governo. Ao mesmo tempo, novas editoras surgiram com o projeto de publicar livros com claro caráter político. Alguns exemplos são as editoras Alfa-Ômega, Global, Edições Populares, Brasil Debates, Ciências Humanas, Kairós, Hucitec, L&PM, Graal, Codecri, Vega e Livramento, entre outras. (Maués 92)

Maués asserts that this wave of what he calls "edição política" (92) coincided with piqued public interest in texts that explored political ideas and stories from the recent past. With the *abertura* came a flood of testimonial texts that dealt with the dictatorship. A paradigmatic example of testimonial literature during the *abertura* is Fernando Gabeira's *O que é isso, companheiro?* Maués writes, "Assim, por exemplo, livros de memórias de ex-presos políticos ou ex-exilados tiveram a partir de 1979 grande êxito, sendo o maior destaque *O que é isso, companheiro?*, de Fernando Gabeira (Codecri, 1979), que esteve entre os mais vendidos por três anos, de 1979 a 1981" (Maués 93). In her analysis of the importance of Gabeira's memoir, Nancy T. Baden writes, "Reader interest was so keen that by 1982 the book was already in its thirty-first edition, an unusual phenomenon in Brazil" (156). Maués and Baden associate Gabeira with other "overnight successes" (Baden 155) who published their memoirs during the *abertura*, such as Alfredo Syrkis, (*Os carbonários: Memórias da guerrilha perdida*, 1980), Marcelo Rubens Paiva (*Feliz ano velho*, 1982), Álvaro Caldas (*Tirando o capuz*, 1981), Flávia Schilling (*Querida família*, 1979) and Frei Betto (*Cartas da prisão*, 1977 and *Batismo de sangue*, 1982).

Filmmakers from the first period of post-dictatorship continued the Brazilian tradition of socially-engaged films initiated during the period of Cinema Novo. Inspired by Italian neorealism, Cinema Novo begins to develop in the 1950's and Randal Johnson identifies the first

phase as 1960 to 1964 ("Brazilian Cinema Novo" 97). "Cinema novo represented a new start for Brazilian cinema, with a new definition of the social role of cinema, no longer conceived as a mere form of entertainment, but rather as a mode of artistic and cultural intervention in the country's socio-historical conjuncture," explains Johnson. "As such, it became an important site of resistance against the military regime imposed on the country in 1964" ("Brazil" 264). With its roots in social critique, Cinema Novo initiated a tradition of committed films with the potential to provoke the spectator into imagining the radical other in Brazil. Classic examples, such as *Vidas secas* (Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1963) and *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (Glauber Rocha, 1964) depict the Brazilian northeast and raise questions about relations of power, poverty and Brazilian identity.

Prior to Murat's *Que bom te ver viva* in 1989, other films released in the 1980's blazed the trail for works that portrayed the *anos de chumbo* critically or documented the fight for democratic transition. Among them are Roberto Farias's *Pra frente, Brasil* (1982), *Patriamada* (Tizuka Yamasaki, 1984), and *Dedé Mamata* (1988, Rodolfo Brandão and Tereza Gonzalez; based on Vinícius Vianna's book). Notable documentaries of the *abertura* include *Cabra marcado para morrer* (Eduardo Coutinho, 1964-1984), *Em nome da segurança nacional* (Renato Tapajós, 1984), *Nada será como antes, nada?* (Renato Tapajós, 1984), and *O evangelho segundo Teotônio* (Vladimir Carvalho, 1984).

In addition to memories of repression and torture circulating through literature and film, the city of Recife held a public concourse for the design of a monument of torture in 1988. The Monumento Tortura Nunca Mais was erected in 1993 as a memorial to those killed and disappeared at the hands of the dictatorship. The human figure suspended in the air is in the same

position of a victim of the so-called parrot's perch (*pau de arara*), a stress position that has become emblematic of Brazilian torture (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Monumento Torture Nunca Mais by Demétrio Albuquerque in Recife, Brazil (Photo by Isaac Giménez).

Figure 2: Monumento Tortura Nunca Mais by Demétrio Albuquerque (photo by Isaac Giménez)

The Nineties: Reparations without Criminal Accountability

Reparation payment has been the most prominent feature of Brazilian transitional justice. Reparations in Brazil were first paid to the families of those who were disappeared or murdered by the state through the 1995 Law of the Disappeared (Lei dos Desaparecidos Políticos do Brasil, Lei 9.140), and later in 2002 for survivors through Lei 10.559. In 2004 rights to reparations were extended to the families of those killed in clashes with police through the Lei 10.875. Reparations were intended to compensate the families of those killed during the dictatorship for lost potential earnings as a result of death. At the time, the amount came out to US$3,000

multiplied by the number of years the victim might have lived based on average life expectancy. For survivors, including those who lost their jobs as a result of repression, the amount is calculated based on the number of years persecuted for their lost earnings (Mezarobba 113-114).

As such, the state has compensated victims without individual perpetrators being made accountable for their crimes. To be sure, not a single person has been held criminally responsible for human rights violations against political prisoners carried out during the dictatorship (Mezarobba 109).[17] Even the state's accountability is limited to civil, not criminal, liability. Reparations function as an attempt to appease those whose lives were forever altered as a result of the dictatorship, but built into the legal processes of claiming and receiving reparations are caveats that limit victims' ability to pursue further justice, thereby contributing to the protection of those responsible for human rights violations. For example, victims seeking financial reparations must "retract any lawsuits he or she has filed against the state and agree to refrain from bringing any later legal challenge over the amount received" (Mezarobba 114). In a sense, the Brazilian approach to transitional justice through reparations is an attempt to have it both ways: victims receive compensation for their losses and can tell their stories, and the personnel responsible for repression and state violence enjoy protection and impunity.

While reparations limit future action on the part of the victims and families of victims who receive them, the Comissão de Anistia, which deals with reparations cases, has functioned as a forum for truth-telling. Victims and victims' families must collect documentation to prove their case, as the burden of proof rests with them (Mezarobba 112). Therefore, through the process of applying for and activating reparations, victims and their families are permitted to

[17] The only individuals punished for torture and extra-judicial killings were a handful of military and police officers who were found criminally responsible in military court for torturing and murdering their own soldiers in 1973 (Mezarobba 109).

express their version of the past that challenges the official story told by the military. Indeed, the victims tell a version of the past that circulates as a result of reparations cases. Nonetheless, truth and justice are quite limited, and society at large is cast as an uninvolved bystander with no stakes in the process. Ultimately, it appears that reparations, as a deal made directly between victims and their families and the state, perpetuate impunity and put forth a very narrow definition of victimhood in regard to state repression during the dictatorship.

The Cultural Response: The Memory Boom and the *retomada*

Scholars recognize the mid-1990's in South America as the "memory boom" (Racja 12, Ros 21), but in Brazil a different sort of boom was enabling filmmakers to engage with the dictatorship as a theme. After the film industry was virtually killed by austerity measures under Fernando Collor de Mello's presidency (1990-1992), the *retomada* was the direct result of a 1993 law that provided a new funding structure for audiovisual products, the Lei do Audiovisual 8.685/93. Randal Johnson describes the changes enacted by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003) as:

> […] a new film policy that studiously avoids the Embrafilme model. The idea is to use government policy to attempt to make films profitable in the marketplace, with a combination of direct private (and indirect public) investments, by allowing corporations and individuals to invest a percentage of their income tax in cultural endeavors. The policy has resulted in a dramatic increase in the amount of production financing available, primarily because the investors' funds are not at risk; they are owed to the government anyway. ("Brazil" 270)

The new funding structure was intended as a "plano de urgência" (Ikeda 29) and led to a boost in film production and films with a higher standard of technical quality. While in 1992, there were only three Brazilian films released, which captured less than 1% of the national market, with the new funding structure film production increased (Ikeda 13). In 1998, the release year of *Ação*

entre amigos, there were 22 Brazilian films on the market. That number jumped to 33 releases in 1999.

Scholars classify the retomada films of the 1990's and early 2000's as synthesizing history and cinema, taking up the very themes and social issues of the Cinema Novo films of the 1960's (Nagib 158). This glance towards the past occurs in the context of the South American memory boom, during which Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay also confronted their dictatorial pasts through cultural production (Ros 21). By the mid-nineties, the human rights narrative in Latin America had gained significant momentum, and as Fernando J. Rosenberg points out in *After Human Rights*, this narrative "facilitated profound changes in the very constitution of the political, at the intersection of subjective formations and notions of the common good" (1). Globally human rights were in the spotlight as the Cold War ended and countries of the former Soviet Union transitioned to other forms of governance. With Latin America and the world discussing human rights and the Cold War-era authoritarian regimes which violated them, filmmakers also explored these themes.

Works from this second period, such as Brant's *Ação entre amigos* (1998), "move beyond the purely testimonial tenor of the previous period" (Rajca 12), and the thriller genre emerges as a vehicle for fostering memory of the dictatorship. The *retomada* resulted in some films that indeed tackled the dictatorship as a setting or a theme, including some that took inspiration from literature from the *abertura* period and became thrillers on screen. Bruno Barreto's *O que é isso, companheiro?* (1997), loosely based on Fernando Gabeira's memoir, is a particularly successful example as it received an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film.[18]

[18] Two other *retomada* films secured Oscar nominations for Best Foreign Language Film in the 1990's: Fábio Barreto's *O quatrilho* in 1995 and Walter Salles's *Central do Brasil* in 1998.

Other notable *retomada* films that deal with the dictatorship and came out before Brant's *Ação entre amigos* include the short documentary *15 filhos* (Maria de Oliveira Soares and Marta Nehring, 1993); *Lamarca* (Sérgio Rezende, 1994) based on the book *Lamarca, o capitão da guerrilha* by Emiliano José and Oldack Miranda; and *As meninas* (Emiliano Ribeiro, 1995) based on the novel by Lygia Fagundes Telles.

The PT Years and the Comissão Nacional da Verdade

Until the 21st century, Brazil's approach to transitional justice gave victims the right to reparations but did not grant society a right to the truth. It took nearly 30 years for an official truth commission to be established. In 2011, the Comissão Nacional da Verdade (CNV), created by the federal law 12.528/2011 and instituted in 2012 under the administration of Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), made headlines and exposed Brazilians to the testimonies of survivors of the regime's human rights violations and the stories of the family members of those who were murdered. The CNV sparked conversations about the unresolved past and coincided with a number of films and books that focused on stories of the dictatorship.

As we have seen, the social construction of dictatorship memory in Brazil is a tense process that involves relatives of the disappeared, survivors, and activists pursuing truth and justice, and the military and conservative agents of the state upholding a pact of silence and insisting upon the narrative established by the military regime. This tension affected the very language that lawmakers used in the laws that set up the CNV. For example, in her analysis of the limits and disputes over the CNV, Lívia de Barros Salgado describes the drafts of the Programa Nacional dos Direitos Humanos (PNDH), upon which the law that created the CNV was based. She shows how the PNDH was edited to soften the language denouncing the

dictatorship and crimes against humanity in order to appease the Ministry of Defense and other groups within the government. Salgado points out the glaring contradiction at the heart of the CNV, that of the state carrying out an investigation to denounce past actions of itself. The resistance to the CNV on the part of military officials, the Ministry of Defense, some senators, and others working for the state poignantly illustrates this conflict of interest and resulting complications. Salgado observes that "[. . .] mesmo após mais de duas décadas de civis na presidência da República setores próximos à ditadura foram capazes de vetar e exercer pressão suficiente para ditar os limites das políticas no campo dos direitos humanos" (Salgado 60). Despite decades of democratic rule, the amnesty law continues to empower those who have a vested interest in oblivion.

Considering the mission and objectives of the CNV, it is worth mentioning that reconciliation here is not the act of victims pardoning perpetrators, but rather, "[. . .] a ideia de reconciliação proposta pela CNV pode ser entendida como um processo de refundação dos laços de confiança entre o Estado e os cidadãos, no qual o Estado reconhece e esclarece as graves violações ocorridas durante a ditadura" (Salgado 66). Ultimately, the CNV's function was to foster trust between the people and the State, to show the State's commitment to protecting the rights of the people, and to reveal the truth so that such human rights violations never happen again. However, with internal disagreement over the CNV's methods, uncooperative military personnel, and no consequences for those who refused to participate, the CNV was criticized for being revanchist by one side, and for not having any teeth by the other side.

Despite this, the CNV established in a national forum that those who suffered the violence of the dictatorship are indeed the "victims." Salgado points out that the definition of victimhood as implied by the CNV's final report excludes those who were exiled or went

underground, effectively silencing these other experiences (72). Critics of the report also posit that it trivialized the murders of an estimated 8,350 indigenous people, who are mentioned briefly but not given significant space in the report (Salgado 72). While it created a forum for survivors and the families of the dead and disappeared to share their stories with the nation, the CNV espoused a limited definition of victimhood and kept its work relatively discrete until publishing the final report. The CNV fell short of depicting the dictatorship as a repressive government that victimized all of Brazil through the systematic implementation of censorship, suspension of political and civil rights, and suffocating national security policies. In sum, the Brazilian transition to democracy, as a deal brokered among elites, has promoted reconciliation and impunity over the pursuit of truth and justice. While those who directly suffered specific forms of abuse under the dictatorship have received reparations, no perpetrators have been punished for human rights violations.

The Cultural Response: Memory in the 21st Century

The 21st century marks the beginning of the third moment of post-dictatorship memory, characterized by narratives that put forth a more nuanced analysis of the dictatorship and of the left. With the wisdom of age and, perhaps, a desire for mainstream acceptance as serious career politicians, high profile figures who made names for themselves in the resistance to the dictatorship, such as Fernando Gabeira and Dilma Rousseff, self-critiqued themselves in interviews and spoke candidly about their personal reckonings with their behavior in the past.[19]

[19] One point of contention that surges in debates about the armed struggle is the goal of the armed struggle. While some credit the armed resistance with fighting against authoritarianism, one version of the past insists that the goal of the guerrilha was to defeat the military dictatorship only to replace it with a communist authoritarian regime. This version is corroborated by some veterans of the armed struggle themselves. For example, Gabeira told UOL in 2010 that he did

In the cultural field, novels such as Beatriz Bracher's *Não falei* (2011) and Marcelo Ferroni's *Método prático da guerrilha* (2011), and films such as *Hoje* and Lúcia Murat's *A memória que me contam* (2012) look at the tactics of the Brazilian left with critical hindsight and raise questions about the ethical implications of violent resistance.

Analysis of *Que bom te ver viva*[20]

Murat's first feature-length film, *Que bom te ver viva,* focuses on the female experience of surviving torture.[21] In the process of producing her film, Murat benefitted from Embrafilme both as a funding agency and as one of the mechanisms that consecrated Brazilian filmmakers before it was shut down in 1990.[22] First, Murat won a contest that Embrafilme sponsored, and

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not join the armed struggle to fight for democracy and posited that no armed group fought for democracy, but rather in pursuit of a revolution that would bring about a socialist state. See Savarese, Maurício. "Gabeira diz que nem ele nem Dilma queriam a democracia pela luta armada." *UOL Eleições.* UOL. 25 Aug. 2010. Web. https://eleicoes.uol.com.br/2010/rio-de-janeiro/ultimas-noticias/2010/08/25/gabeira-diz-que-nem-ele-nem-dilma-queriam-a-democracia-pela-luta-armada.jhtm.

[20] *Que bom te ver viva* won numerous awards in film festivals: Best Film, Best Actress, and Best Editing in the 1989 Festival de Brasília do Cinema Brasileiro; Coral Prize for Best OCIC Film at the La Habana Film Festival; Special Jury Prize and the Samburá Award at the 1989 Festival Internacional do Rio; Best Film and Best Actress at the 1990 Rio-Cine Festival; Best Actress at the 1990 Associação Paulista de Críticos de Arte awards; and Honorable Mention for the 1989 Prêmio Margarida de Prata.

[21] Murat's first film, a 50-minute documentary about fall of Somoza in the context of a history of U.S. military intervention and the Sandinista struggle in Nicaragua, "O pequeno exército louco" (1984), put her on the map as a politically-committed filmmaker.

[22] Empresa Brasileira de Filmes (Embrafilme) was established in 1969 and over the course of its existence proved to be an important institution in giving emerging filmmakers access to opportunities and funding for making their first films. Furthermore, Through Embrafilme, funding and distribution of films in Brazil led to an increased number of spectators and theaters between 1974-1978, and filmmaking in Brazil became a more viable industry. Despite this, before his 1992 impeachment, Fernando Collor de Mello dismantled the Ministry of Culture and liquidated Embrafilme, the Conselho Nacional de Cinema (Concine) and the Fundação do

then she was able to secure 70 percent of the production funds for *Que bom te ver viva* from the agency (Marsh 23). Therefore, Embrafilme played a key role in granting Murat access to the necessary resources to produce a widely-distributed film and in her consecration as a filmmaker. The film has been described as a "docudrama" as Murat's cinematic approach blends testimonial interviews of torture survivors with a dramatic performance by Irene Revache, who plays a torture survivor and addresses the spectator—implicating the spectator in the violence of the dictatorship, in the prejudice she suffers, and in revictimizing her (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Irene Revache in Que bom te ver viva.

Cinema Brasileira (FCB) as part of a larger liberal project that promoted minimum government (Ikeda 19). The national film industry, like other industries that were denied the state support to which they were accustomed, imploded.

Blending fictional representation with the actual survivors on screen enables Murat to provide spectators with both the experiences of survivors and the affective response (Marsh 35). The film illustrates how the women have survived, how they understand the past and how they live their lives in the post-dictatorship. Murat does not appear in the film as one of the survivors, but the subject of surviving torture is deeply personal for the filmmaker. In an interview on TV Brasil's *3a1*, Murat explained, "É um filme que, por exemplo, trabalha com ficção e documentário. A Irene Revache faz uma espécie de superego de todas as ex-presas e tal. . . A decisão de trabalhar com documentário e ficção foi justamente porque considerei que nem um nem o outro seria capaz de trabalhar com a verdade. . . então são duas maneiras diferentes de se aproximar com a verdade" (3a1). Each genre brings a distinct approach to understanding the experiences of torture survivors in order to offer a more nuanced perspective.

What is at stake for a filmmaker who takes on the subject of torture? Considering that *Que bom te ver viva* was released the same year that the first president was elected by popular vote, the film coincides with the time when Brazilian democracy was fresh and society wrestled with how to make sense of the past. A successful representation of the pain of torture survival, that is a representation that fosters empathy between the survivors on screen and the spectators, could potentially influence public opinion about the dictatorship, about the use of torture, and about Brazilian history. Conversely, an unsuccessful representation also has consequences. In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry writes, "The failure to express pain— whether the failure to objectify its attributes or instead of failure, once those attributes are objectified, to refer them to their original site on the human body— will always work to allow its appropriation and conflation with debased forms of power; conversely, the successful expression of pain will always work to expose and make impossible that appropriation and conflation" (14). Considering

Scarry's claim in the Brazilian context, a film that functions to unequivocally denounce the use of torture would be a successful representation. The risk is to inadvertently support the claim that torture was a necessary evil during the dictatorship, a common argument by the right that supports its use during states of exception. A film that could be interpreted as saying that torture prevented a communist revolution would conflate torture with the dictatorship's power and legitimize it.[23] Therefore, the stakes are high for a film like *Que bom te ver viva* to foster empathy among the subjects in the film and spectators.

The objective of the documentary seems to be precisely the successful representation of the pain of torture survivors, but not the physical pain of the torture session. Instead, Murat focuses on the pain of survival. While the experiences and traumas of the women profiled in the film are diverse, *Que bom te ver viva* highlights some commonalities. All of the women profiled in the film were militants who participated in the armed struggle against the dictatorship. They attribute their choice to take up arms to a desire for a better world. Some served longer sentences than others in prison, but all of the women in the film survived torture, and the experience of torture changed their lives forever. Some describe feeling totally destroyed by torture, echoing Elaine Scarry's argument that torture unmakes the world of the victim. By dedicating the film to showing what torture survival looks like, in its devastation and its triumphs, Murat shows spectators her subjects' humanity and implores the spectator to recognize the women as victims of state terror.

A common thread between the survivor testimony and the monologues of the actress is the difficulty that being a survivor of torture poses for personal relationships. One of the

[23] An example of a work that operates to conflate torture with power during the dictatorship would be *Rompendo o silêncio*, the memoir by accused torturer, Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra published in 1987.

survivors profiled in the film, Estrela, describes this difficulty quite poignantly in the following quote:

> Acho que existe um grande silêncio em relação à tortura. Não exatamente o relato de como se faz uma tortura. Nisso me parece que foi muito explorado— o que que é o pau de arara, o que que é o choque. Em fim, essas atrocidades que acontecem no âmbito mesmo da tortura. Agora, eu acho que há um silencio de como é que as pessoas que foram torturadas vivem em si internamente isso. Então eu acho que as pessoas até suportam saber que você foi torturada, e acho que as pessoas sabem o que que é uma tortura. O que eles não suportam ouvir é como é que você se sente diante da tortura, qual foi sua experiência emocional interna diante da tortura. (*Que bom te ver viva*)

Estrela mentions that her children do not want to know about her torture any more than she wanted to know about the traumatic pasts of her Jewish parents (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Estrela giving her testimony in Que bom te ver viva.

The theme of the difficulty of relationships for torture survivors is also shown from the other side in testimony from the friends and colleagues of the survivors. For example, Rosa's student describes not asking Rosa about her past in order to not upset her. While many narratives on torture survival focus on the trauma of being tortured and the immediate aftermath, *Que bom te ver viva* shows the long-term impact and how it bleeds into all aspects of life.

The actress not only portrays the emotions and affective consequences of surviving torture, but she also addresses the spectators, at times confiding in them, complaining to them, and even implicating them. One of the principal issues that the actress takes on is how torture survivors are pushed to talk when it serves the interests of others, and then are subsequently portrayed in a way that is convenient for someone else, such as a journalist or an academic. The actress explains, "Eu tenho que me lembrar na hora em que ele determinar" (*Que bom te ver viva).* She describes feeling continuously demonized by being called a "terrorista" while the torturer is described as a professional, even as a "médico." When she describes going to lunch with coworkers, where the dictatorship becomes a casual topic of conversation, she decides to tell them about her time in DOI-CODI. "Desta vez quem dirigiu o espetáculo fui eu. Fui eu que jogou o amendoim" (*Que bom te ver viva*). Part of the torture survivor's struggle is having the power to control her own narrative, speak when she wants to, and to not become an abject figure that makes people uncomfortable. Rather, it is important for survivors to talk on their terms. The actress finds her own voice over the course of the film and speaks her truth, even if it makes for awkward lunches and alienates her lovers.

The importance of circulating the stories of torture survivors emerges as a central preoccupation in the film. The actress and the survivors comment on pressure they have felt to stay silent, and the fear that their stories are old news and irrelevant. "Hoje a gente corre outro

risco," describes Rosa. "Quer dizer, quando a gente fala destas coisas a gente parece estar falando de uma coisa velha, coisa do passado." She describes the social pressure to forget and to move on. Rosa and the actress both posit that remembering what happened is important, not only for survivors to remember but also for humanity. Therefore, the film seeks to challenge the discourse that the torture is only a problem for the ones who were tortured. Rather, the survivors remind the spectators that torture is a human rights violation and a crime against humanity.

The women's healing process is also an important aspect of their testimony. Furthermore, the other parts of their identity emerge, in some cases, as what saves them from letting torture survival define their being. Some of the women who are mothers describe maternity as a catalyst in their healing and in coming to terms with their experiences. For Regina, motherhood represented life, and her children symbolize her answer to those that tried to take away her life. Other survivors describe how their work, be it in education or in social work, is part of that same effort to make the world a better place. They cite their healing is a form of victory for them. These victories are important in the film, as they show the women as complex individuals that live full lives despite their traumas.

Murat's film does not just educate the spectator on torture in Brazil, but it functions as a venue for survivors to tell their stories on their own terms. It gives a medium for survivors to discuss precisely what they are discouraged from discussing: their pain and their healing. The film works towards breaking a number of taboos that the survivors confront, from being a woman who survived sexual torture to being involved in the armed struggle and a so-called terrorist. While each survivor describes her particular challenges and victories, the actress goes a step further and implicates the spectator. She calls upon spectators to consider their positions during the dictatorship and their possible complicity through inaction. *Que bom te ver viva*

challenges the notion that the violence of the dictatorship was a struggle between two extremes while those uninvolved in politics were unaffected. Murat's actress suggests that society played a role in the repression. Furthermore, society continues to revictimize survivors by exploiting their stories on one hand, and on the other denying them the chance to express their pain on their own terms by promoting a culture of oblivion. *Que bom te ver viva* presents spectators with a film by a torture survivor about torture survivors, both real life women who share their testimony on their own terms and are the owners of their own stories and the actress who talks to spectators candidly about her desires, fears, and feelings. It offers a nuanced version of post-dictatorship life for female torture survivors in the time before they were officially recognized as victims through the reparations process.

Analysis of *Ação entre amigos*[24]

Ação entre amigos is Beto Brant's (b. 1964) second feature-length film, which he co-wrote with Marçal Aquino and Renato Ciasca. The film tells the story of four middle-aged men who go on a fishing trip. On the way, the protagonist, Miguel (Zé Carlos Machado), reveals that he has organized the trip for ulterior motives: he intends to verify that the man who tortured him and his friends when they were young activists in the armed struggle had faked his own death and was living in the countryside. After proving to his friends that the torturer, Correia (Leonardo Villar), is indeed alive, Miguel convinces two of his friends to kidnap and kill him while the third friend decides not to join them in their vengeful plan. This thriller culminates in

[24] *Ação entre amigos* won a number of awards on the international film festival circuit: Best Director at the 1999 Miami Brazilian Film Festival; Best Actor at the Chicago International Film Festival; and Best Director, Best Cinematography and Best Score (Special Jury Award) at the Festival Audiovisual Cine-PE.

revelations of deception and murder. A product of the retomada, *Ação entre amigos* was financed through the Lei do Audiovisual, received production support from TV Cultura and distribution support from RioFilme. In my analysis of Brant's film, I will examine how the film deals with Brazilian transitional justice and its shortcomings.

First, the opening credits position the spectator to consider the dictatorship as a repressive state of emergency. The credits appear embedded in collages of archival material, composed of documents written by the dictatorship, such as prisoners' profiles and memoranda, illustrations of torture techniques, and photos of military personnel, protests and police brutality. The text of the credits appears in each shot as a part of the collage, using the appropriate typeset so that it appears as a stamp next to a signature, or as underlined text in an official document. The soundtrack playing over, by multi-instrumentalist and composer André Abujamra, begins with the sound of muffled voices, perhaps from a police radio or tapped phone line, the sound of a radio tuning its frequency, and the clicks of a projector as the "slides" change from one collage to the next (Figures 5 and 6). Gradually a beat emerges, but instead of identifiable musical instruments, the sounds that compose the beat are reminiscent of cell doors closing, metal clanging, static, and a heart monitor.

Figure 5: Opening credits of Ação entre amigos *depicting torture and repression.*

Figure 6: Opening credits of Ação entre amigos *with credits embedded into the collage.*

The credits serve as a reminder of the historical context of the film and reveal the surveillance and violence employed by the regime, which is a central theme. Combining bureaucracy and violence in the visual and aural presentation of the credits gives the film a disturbing tone from the beginning.

Indeed, *Ação entre amigos* is an unsettling film, with plot twists, torture scenes, disorienting flashback sequences, and psychological manipulation that ends in tragic friendly fire. The camera sometimes trembles and cuts off body parts, giving the film a chaotic feel and suggesting that the frame cannot adequately contain the characters. Foregrounding the plot is the unresolved nature of the military dictatorship, the shortcomings of Brazilian transitional policy, and the glaring dearth of justice in the wake of human rights violations. In a scene where the four torture survivors argue about whether they should enact revenge on Correia they explicitly mention amnesty:

Paulo:	O que você pretende fazer?
Miguel:	Matar ele.
Osvaldo:	De que loucura é essa, Miguel? Por que essa coisa toda depois de tanto tempo, porra?
Miguel:	O que está acontecendo? Está com medo? É isso? Estou estranhando
Osvaldo:	Para mim acabou, Miguel! Acabou, está me entendendo. Acabou! E por Correia, também. Este cara foi anistiado.
Miguel:	Anistiado o caralho!
Osvaldo:	E nós também fomos.
Miguel:	Eu não anistiei a Correia. E vou mostrar isso para ele, tá bom?

In this scene the two men are overcome with anger and frustration, yelling at one another (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Miguel (Zé Carlos Machado) and Osvaldo (Genésio de Barros) argue over amnesty, revenge and murder.

On the one hand, Miguel proposes that they kill Correia, the man directly responsible for the murder of his partner, Lúcia (Melina Anthís), who was pregnant at the time she was captured. For Miguel, amnesty is irrelevant, as he describes killing Correia as a personal vengeance. On the other hand, Osvaldo (Genésio de Barros) believes that because of the 1979 Lei da Anistia, from which they benefitted as political prisoners, killing him in vengeance is not justified. Osvaldo is dropped off at the bus stop to go home as the other three men plan to kill Correia. This scene shows two divergent discourses that have emerged in post-dictatorship Brazil. While some believe that justice is yet to come, conversely others accept transitional justice and its implications for the Brazilians who were victims or perpetrators of state violence.

The discourse of the perpetrator is revealed once the three torture survivors capture Correia and Miguel shoots him in the leg. Correia attempts to justify murdering Lúcia as a casualty of war, expressing what is known as the theory of the two demons, which posits that the dictatorship was not a repressive attack on Brazilian society, but rather a struggle between the military and an insurgent guerrilla that sought a communist revolution. Following this logic, the military was merely protecting the State from an existential communist threat. The theory of the two demons was coined to account for a common discourse in Argentina, but its presence is notable in all South American post-dictatorship and post-conflict cultures. In this scene, the camera has Correia in a high-angle close-up, as he grabs his wounded leg (Figure 8). Miguel is in a low-angle close-up, suggesting his advantage and power in the situation (Figure 9).

Figure 8: A wounded Correia (Leonardo Villar) explains his version of the past, "Aquilo foi uma guerra e vocês perderam."

Figure 9: Miguel looks down at Correia after shooting him in the leg.

Correia: Aquilo foi uma guerra e vocês perderam.

Miguel: Você perdeu, seu torturador de merda.

Correia, as an officer, remembers the dictatorship as a war with two sides. This point is further emphasized when Correia calls Miguel a "terrorista." As such, *Ação entre amigos* shows how the shortcomings of Brazilian transitional justice permit the categories of victims and perpetrators to be contested and ambiguous. Such ambiguity affects how the dictatorship is remembered in the collective imaginary.

At the time the film takes place, the 1990's, those who suffered state terror were only beginning to be officially recognized as victims and granted reparations with simultaneous impunity for those who violated human rights. *Ação entre amigos* highlights where transitional justice has fallen short, the complicity of the democratic Brazilian state in protecting those who carried out crimes against humanity, and the trauma of torture survivors. The film shows the nightmares and flashbacks that haunt the survivors and the world-destroying nature of torture

and the disappearance of loved ones. Unlike most films from the first moment of post-dictatorship memory that focused on denouncing human rights violations, Brant's film suspensefully explores the aftermath of dictatorship and critiques Brazil's approach to transitional justice.

Despite the film's thought-provoking contribution to dictatorship memory, the role of Brazilian society in the film is almost non-existent. The only exception occurs in a flashback during a conversation between young Miguel (Rodrigo Brassoloto) and Lúcia (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Lúcia (Melina Anthís) and Young Miguel (Rodrigo Brassoloto) debate leaving the armed struggle.

Lúcia has just told Miguel that she is pregnant, and she tells him that she wants them to have the baby and leave the armed struggle. When Miguel, who does not want to leave the movement, questions her commitment, she responds, "Compromisso com quem? Com a história? Com o povo? Ah Miguel, o povo nem sabe o que a gente está fazendo. Só sai no jornal e na tevê o que interessa para a ditadura. Para o povo a gente não passa de uma banda de terroristas." Because

of censorship and the regime's stronghold on the media, Lúcia sees that the dictatorship controls the narrative about the resistance movement and paints them as terrorists. The Brazilian people passively consume the news, which is censored and biased to portray the repressive forces favorably and the armed resistance as terrorism.

As the title, especially its English rendering of *Friendly Fire*, implies, one prominent theme in *Ação entre amigos* is the ultimately self-destructive internal fighting that culminates in the film's tragic ending when Miguel shoots and kills Osvaldo. Osvaldo's death is the consequence of a misunderstanding stoked by Correia, who tells Miguel that one of his comrades had informed the police of their bank robbery plans and Miguel wrongly assumes that it is Osvaldo. Correia's manipulative ploy to pit Miguel against his friends is suggested in the scene when the men first recognize Correia at a clandestine cockfight. The cockfight itself foreshadows the friendly fire that will end the film.

When the men recognize Correia at the cockfight, the camera simulates Osvaldo's ensuing panic attack: the fisheye lens creates a disorienting tunnel vision, the distorted guitar and off-tempo percussion add to the dizziness as Osvaldo has flashbacks. Shots from his own torture sessions and his nightmares appear as images superimposed upon each other and dispersed between an extreme close-up Osvaldo in fisheye walking in slow motion through the barn and a shot from Osvaldo's perspective of the blurry crowd through which he walks. Once Miguel's three friends, previously incredulous that Correia had faked his own death, establish verbally that he is indeed alive, the volume of the distorted guitar turns up as does the crowd's volume, and quickly edited shots switch between a close up of the two roosters fighting, of Correia and his audible cheers, and a close-up of Miguel. Miguel has a flashback of the torture session in which Correia tells him that Lúcia is dead. The cockfight, which shows two roosters attacking one

another with moments of them facing off (see Figure 11) is a sort of friendly fire in which two birds fight to the death in a game. Likewise, Miguel kills Osvaldo, his friend who had fought alongside him. The friendly fire in *Ação entre amigos* adds to the tragedy of the story of these men's torture survival. Correia, though he dies, wins the struggle with his four victims as he manipulates them.

Figure 11: The clandestine cockfight in Ação entre amigos *foreshadows the fight between friends that will end in death.*

In *Ação entre amigos*, torture survivors are not depicted as heroes or as morally superior people pursuing a better world, but as flawed human beings capable of violence and dealing with their trauma in different ways. Brant shows the nightmares, the flashbacks, the panic attacks, and the rage of survival. Even though survivors appear to lead "normal" lives in certain aspects, like through successful careers and marriages, surviving torture has marked their identities and

caused irreversible damage. Brant's version of the past posits that transitional justice has failed to resolve the past and that torture survivors are alone in their struggle for justice.

Analysis of *Hoje*[25]

Hoje is Tata Amaral's fourth feature film and her second major work to deal with the unresolved traumas of the Brazilian dictatorship. Her miniseries, *Trago comigo* (2009), deals with memory, trauma and artistic production in its portrayal of a playwright who writes his experience as a torture survivor into a play. *Trago comigo* received four Prêmio Qualidade nominations, including Best Miniseries and Best Director. Amaral reedited *Trago comigo* into a feature-length film, which won Best Film at the Festival de Cinema Latino-Americano de São Paulo and was nominated for Best Film at the Havana Film Festival. Amaral is an acclaimed director whose work that portrays the struggles of torture survivors in Brazil has earned her national and international recognition.

Based on the novel *Prova contrária* (2003) by Fernando Bonassi, *Hoje* is the story of Vera, a woman moving into her recently purchased São Paulo apartment in March 1998. Suddenly Luís (César Troncoso) appears in her apartment, and as the story unfolds it is revealed that Luís and Vera were a couple when they fought in the guerrilha against the dictatorship. It becomes clear that Vera bought the new apartment with the reparations she received when the

[25] *Hoje* nearly swept the Brasília Festival of Brazilian Cinema in 2011, winning Best Film, Best Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Art Direction, and the Critic's Choice Best Film. Jacob Solitrenick won for Best Cinematography in an International Feature Film at the Unasur Cine International Film Festival, Argentina. Denise Fraga, the actress who performs the leading role of Vera, also won Best Actress at the São Paulo Association of Art Critics Awards and both the audience and critics' choice awards for Best Actress at the SESC Film Festival. The film was nominated for Best Film at the Festival de Cinema Latino-Americano de São Paulo, the Havana Film Festival, and the Tiradentes Film Festival.

State officially recognized Luís as disappeared. The film is an intimate portrait of the trauma, loss and guilt that torture survivors experience, as well as the problem of reparations money that has been examined less the Brazilian context than it has in the context of Holocaust survivors.[26] Therefore, *Hoje* deals with aspects of post-dictatorship Brazil that had not previously been the subject of film. The film employs a variety of techniques to transmit memory of human right violations an information about the reparations paid to survivors of disappeared loved ones, including characters giving testimony and reading aloud the Lei dos Desaparecidos Políticos do Brasil embedded in the film's dialogue. The film mostly takes place within the confines of Vera's new apartment on moving day and an analysis of the mise-en-scène is necessary for understanding how the film deals with themes of transitional justice, survival, and enforced disappearance. In the scenes analyzed here, light, shadows and images projected over the wall create tension and convey information beyond the dialogue.

Despite being a narrative film, *Hoje* borrows techniques from documentary filmmaking, such as shots of characters as "talking heads" giving testimony, characters speaking to the camera, and the inclusion of archival material, to convey information about the repression of the dictatorship, the armed resistance, and reparations to the spectator. The documentary techniques bring the film closer to history and to what we think of as "real life" while the ghost of Luís points towards haunting and metaphysics. Therefore, *Hoje* deals with the physical archive and the political processes of transitional justice, the embodied experience of survival, and the metaphysical and existential crisis that enforced disappearance provokes.

[26] Susan Slyomovics explores the problem of reparations as blood money in the eyes of her survivor mother in *How to Accept German Reparations* (U of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

A poignant example of how Amaral includes a variety of media within the mise-en-scène to deal with transitional justice, survival and disappearance occurs in the scene where Luís finds out that Vera paid for her new apartment with reparations money she had received for his disappearance. Among her moving boxes and belongings, Luís finds the newspaper advertisement for her new apartment and reads the description. The ad begins with the street: "Avenida São Luiz," already connecting the apartment to Luís in its location on the street with whom he shares a namesake. As he reads the ad, he chuckles as Vera looks uncomfortable. The next newspaper that he finds is the *Diário Oficial* from December 5, 1995, which is shown in a close up on the front page as he unfolds it. When Luiz begins to read the Lei dos Desaparecidos 9.140 off-screen with Vera's startled face in a close up, a projection of text gradually appears on her and the background of walls and stacked moving boxes. When the shot changes to a close up of Luís reading from the paper, we see the projections are also on his body and the background. There are numerous and different sizes of projections of the same page from the *Diário Oficial*, some moving and some still. Their projection onto moving boxes and corners of the room distorts their straight lines. At one point, Vera asks him to stop reading and moves to take the newspaper from him. This medium shot shows the extent of the projections on the actors and background (see Figure 12).

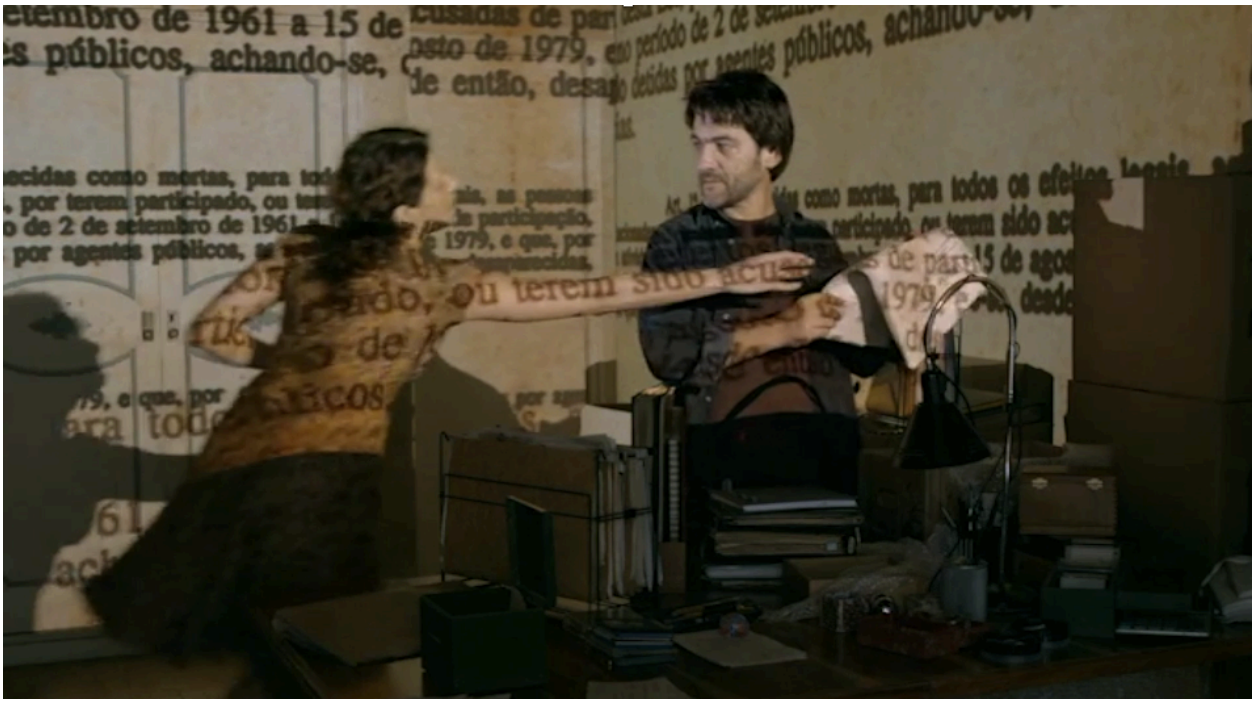

Figure 12: The projections of the Lei dos Desaparecidos touches the characters and the background.

When he pauses to calculate his life expectancy and the total amount of indemnity that Vera received, the projections fade out. They fade in once again when he begins reading the names of the 136 disappeared searching for his own name. The names of the disappeared and their descriptions appear on the walls of the apartment and her belongings as he reminds Vera that she is the beneficiary of the enforced disappearances, not only Luís's, but the whole group of murdered people who were recognized officially as a class of people. The law and the names of the disappeared are written on the walls of Vera's apartment, making it a part of her home. Home ownership was only possible for her, a freelance journalist, because of the reparations money. As her past has come back to haunt her, symbolized by Luís, so her new home is inscribed with trauma and loss.

It is worth mentioning that the law and the reparations payments are not commonly discussed in the mainstream, and I would venture to say that most Brazilians are not aware of

them either. Therefore, Amaral's film takes on a function of transmitting information to the audience about the existence of the law and of reparations. By projecting the moving text of the law onto the set layered over other lines of text scrolling across the walls and moving boxes, the spectator receives the law both aurally and visually and sees the affective ramifications of the reparations on the characters.

Time in *Hoje* is chronological and over the course of a single day. As such, there are no flashbacks that depict the past, but instead Vera and Luís give testimony about their experiences with torture. Through the utterance of his testimony, Vera's apartment becomes imprinted with the horrors of Luís's experience. For example, after Vera tells him about the time she was arrested and her first torture session, Luís shares his story with her. When Luís describes his first electric shocks in torture, the shot moves to a projection of an extreme close-up of him on Vera's wall and her belongings (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: A close-up of Luís (César Troncoso) is projected onto the walls and moving boxes in the apartment has he tells his story of torture and disappearance.

He narrates his death and how he was disappeared. He describes the bureaucratic process involved in his disappearance, including the different state agents who handled his body and his clandestine burial. Like the Lei dos Desaparecidos, Luís's torture, death and disappearance are also a part of Vera's apartment. Once again, the projection reminds us that she is a beneficiary of this violence and that her social ascension to home ownership was only made possible by Luís's disappearance and the State's official recognition of the disappeared as victims.

In the next scene, Vera appears alone and addresses the camera in the second person, telling an alternative version of Luís's disappearance based on hearsay. By including both versions: one in which Luís is murdered in torture and the other in which he snitches on his comrades and leaves town, Amaral shows the impossibility for survivors to truly know what happened to their disappeared loved ones. The walls become covered in official reports describing interactions with militants and the camera focuses on these moving layers of projections on the wall and the moving boxes (Figure 14).

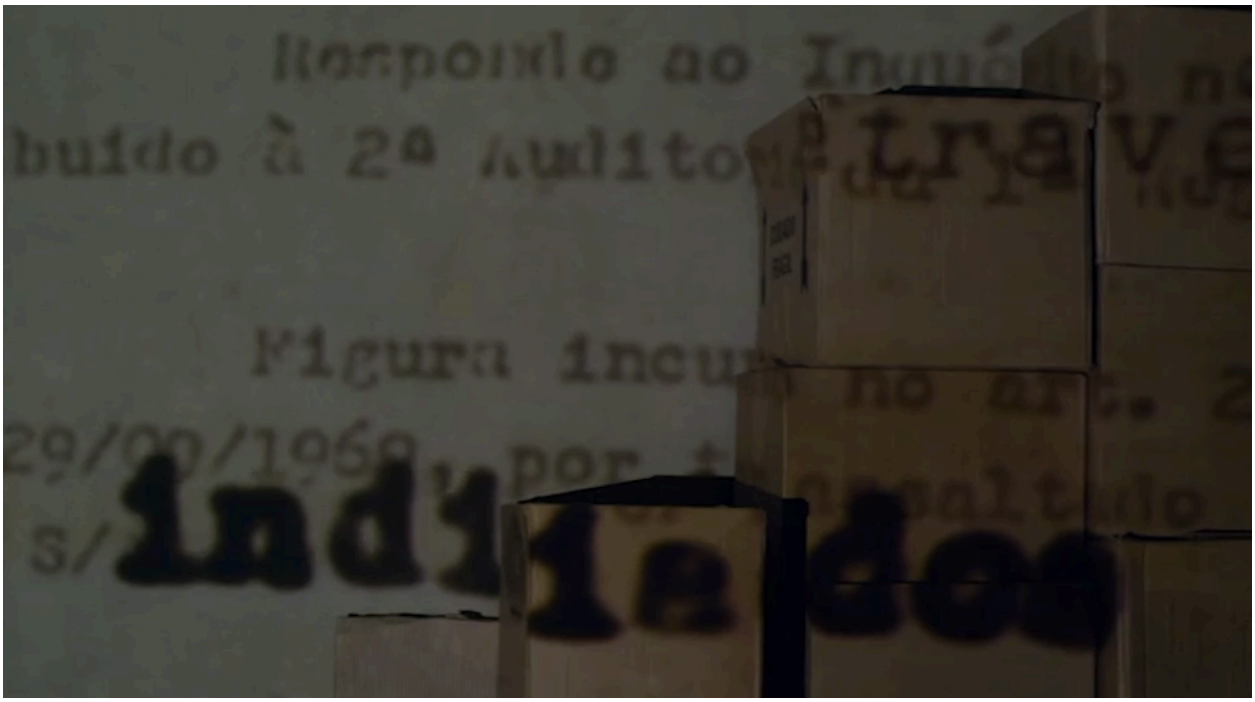

Figure 14: Projections from unidentified reports and military documents describe interactions with militants.

We know that documents such as these, which contain clues as to what happened to Brazil's disappeared, remain classified. The uncertainty and the secrecy upon which the perpetrators of human rights violations depend are also conditions for Vera's home ownership and as such they also become a part of her apartment.

Amaral shows us that reparations assuage the material problems for those who receive them, but they do not offer information that may lead to feelings of closure and peace that can only come about when death is confirmed. The disappeared person remains an enigma as loved ones imagine multiple possible scenarios, some in which disappearance means death, and others in which disappearance means fleeing, but surviving. *Hoje* is the story of a survivor haunted by her past; a past that the spectator never fully gathers as different narratives of Luís and Vera's lives are presented in the film with no definitive version specified. For us, too, a clarification remains pending.

Conclusion

The three films analyzed in this chapter emerge from different moments in the film industry, in dictatorship memory, and in the process of transitional justice. Nonetheless, they share a common preoccupation with torture survivors and they depict the impact of enforced disappearance, human rights violations and transitional justice on Brazilian characters. While *Que bom te ver viva* explicitly denounces the dictatorship and its violence in the pivotal first year of popular presidential elections, each film has an implicit quality of denunciation and each film shows the insufficiencies of Brazilian transitional justice.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, the State dealt with enforced disappearance, torture, and lost earnings due to political repression through reparations payment made directly between the those entitled to payment and the government. Again, not a single Brazilian official was held personally responsible or punished for human rights violations. This conciliatory approach to transitional justice has contributed to the construction of the narrative that the human rights violations perpetrated by the dictatorship are a problem for the immediate victims and their families, rather than an assault on society. Despite the state's assumption of civil responsibility, one prevailing discourse about torture in Brazil is that those who were tortured deserved it because they were terrorists. The films in this chapter show the lasting impact of torture and position torture survivors as victims of human rights violations, not terrorists. Therefore, this version of the past goes counter to over two decades of censored media that portrayed activists as terrorists. As such, cultural production that portrays those who survived torture or died in torture as victims contribute to the formation of cultural memory about the time.

While torture survivors and those killed in torture appear in the films as complex individuals, not as martyrs or heroes, they contribute to the notion that the state terror of the dictatorship is a personal issue for the victims and their families and not a social problem affecting Brazilian society as a whole. As previously outlined in my analysis, *Que bom te ver viva* implicates society in the revictimization of torture survivors, while *Ação entre amigos* describes the Brazilian people as complacent in their consumption of censored information. The narratives focus on the particular experiences of torture survivors, usually white, middle class, urban, and educated, who had also taken up arms against the government. Just as transitional justice in Brazil has focused on reparations for a specific class of victim, cultural production has largely offered representations of the same profile of victim across time.

This profile of the subject recognized as victim of the dictatorship appears in the *BNM* chapter "Perfil dos atingidos." Through data analysis, the *BNM* researchers report that out of the people tried in military court during the dictatorship: 88% were men and 12% were women; 38.9% were under the age of 25; most of them resided in urban centers; over half were college educated compared to 1% of the general population reaching a university-level of schooling (*BNM* 85-87). The data extracted from military court cases reveals information about the individuals charged with political crimes who had a day in court. There is little data about the thousands of indigenous people murdered, nor of the thousands of Afro-Brazilians who were killed or disappeared by military and police during the dictatorship. These deaths are also incidents of state violence; furthermore, these deaths have continued into democracy and continue to this day. Human rights violations against indigenous, black, and poor Brazilians are not documented and do not appear in the military court archives. They are largely absent from the cultural production as well.

What we see in the cultural production that deals with the human rights violations of the dictatorship is the white, educated, middle class militant who takes up arms against the government, is eventually captured and suffers horrific forms of torture. Indeed, this experience is important in circulation for the formation of cultural memory and as a counter-narrative to the State's official story that the dictatorship was a fight against an existential communist threat and that all forms of repression and state violence are justified in such a state of emergency. However, this story focuses on a narrow definition of victimhood that has inadvertently supported the claims of pro-dictatorship narratives that torture and repression were only a problem for a small group of rebellious young militants. The narrative of the torture survivor, intended to foster the empathy of the spectator, has been appropriated by military dictatorship sympathizers as proof that the dictatorship was justified in its violence. This appropriation has consequences today, as we saw in the role that dictatorship memory played in the election of Jair Bolsonaro, himself nostalgic for the repressive years of military rule.

CHAPTER TWO

Unfinished Stories: Film in Post-Dictatorship Uruguay

Introduction

Uruguay presents an important point of comparison as we consider transitional justice and the formation of cultural memory through post-dictatorship South America. While Argentina is the most advanced nation in the world in its use of international human rights law to punish perpetrators for crimes against humanity while continuing its impressive and constant struggle to identify people who were "niños apropriados," and Brazil doubles down on impunity and oblivion, Uruguay falls somewhere in between. Unlike its neighbors who ended military rule with amnesty laws, Uruguay's transition to democracy was negotiated between the military regime (1973-1985) and three political parties. Once civilian rule was reestablished, judicial cases that accused the state of human rights violations were suppressed until an impunity law, the Ley de Caducidad de la Pretensión Punitiva del Estado, called the Expiry Law in English, passed in 1986. Rather than political and judicial insistence on impunity as in the Brazilian situation, in Uruguay two popular referendums upheld the Ley de Caducidad, which prevented criminal accusations against military personnel for crimes such as torture and sexual assault. The late surge in political and judicial actions towards transitional justice in Uruguay at the turn of the 21st century coincided with what many scholars consider the beginning of the resuscitation of the Uruguayan film industry.

This chapter examines three Uruguayan films that depict processes of transitional justice and the fight for truth in post-dictatorship Uruguay: *Zanahoria* (2014) by Enrique Buchichio, *Matar a todos* (2007) by Esteban Schroeder, and *Secretos de lucha* (2007) by Maiana Bidegain.

The films that I analyze here offer distinct perspectives about Uruguay's transition to democracy and the lasting effects of the repression. While *Zanahoria* depicts the challenges that Uruguayans face in the pursuit of truth and a robust democracy in Uruguay, *Matar a todos* and *Secretos de lucha* show how such challenges ripple across generations and geographical space. Furthermore, these films focus on three different sectors of society that fight for justice: the press, the judiciary, and the victims of state terror themselves. Each film suggests the unfinished nature of Uruguayan transitional justice with their seemingly unfinished stories.[27] Spectators are left to wonder what will happen next in the lives of the characters just as we wonder about the future of Uruguayan transitional justice. Uruguay has transformed from being the nation with most prisoners per capita in 1976 to boasting the highest rates of civilian satisfaction with democracy, prosperity, lack of corruption and peace in South America in 2013.[28] This transformation has occurred despite policies of impunity and silence, raising questions about the role of truth and justice in democratic transitions.

Transitional Justice and Memory in Uruguay

[27] These are not the only Uruguayan films that end with what feels like unfinished business. *Migas de pan* (2016) by Manane Rodríguez also shows the continuation of military power and intimidation in democratic Uruguay, and ends with a beginning of sorts as the protagonist and her fellow survivors organize to share testimony and pursue truth and justice decades after the transition to democracy. Mateo Gutiérrez's 2008 documentary, *DF: Destino Final* about his father, Toba Héctor Gutiérrez Ruiz, also ends without offering a conclusion to one of Uruguay's most notorious cases of political assassination undertaken within the framework of Operation Condor.

[28] See the U.S. State Department's analysis of how Uruguay compares to other South American countries here: https://photos.state.gov/libraries/uruguay/19452/pdfs/UruguaysRankingsJune2013.pdf.

The 1973 coup in Uruguay was unlike the others in South America in part because the armed forces included the democratically-elected president, Juan María Bordaberry,[29] in the coup process and in the subsequent junta, the Consejo de Seguridad Nacional (COSENA). Bordaberry dissolved the national legislature on June 27, 1973, thus transforming himself from legitimately elected President to dictator (Martínez 13; Orpi 175). The so-called "auto-golpe" fostered "the politicization of the military and the militarization of politics" (Rico, qtd. in Ros 161), and this cooperation between the military and civilian politics also characterizes Uruguay's re-democratization, rendering it quite unlike the Argentine and Brazilian transitions to democracy. Furthermore, in Uruguay impunity for the military has been upheld by plebiscites, the most recent occurring in 2009. In this section, I will outline the major events of the Uruguayan transition to democracy to show that the cooperation between the military and the Uruguayan left has hindered any robust transitional justice agenda.

Between intensifying resistance to the dictatorship and a plebiscite in 1980 that resulted in a 57.9% majority "no" vote for a new constitution written by the military, the armed forces began negotiating a transition to democracy with political parties, including groups and individuals who were considered subversive and, therefore, criminal during the dictatorship (Ros 162). The military even invited the leftist coalition, Frente Amplio (FA), and some political prisoners who had fought in the Tupamaros guerrilla to contribute to brokering a deal between the dictatorship and the Uruguayan people. Transitional politics prioritized peace and reconciliation over all, diminishing the role of human rights activism and the pursuit of truth and justice. Presented with the chance for political opening, the Uruguayan left split between those

[29] Bordaberry served as President from 1972-1973 and then led the civilian-military dictatorship until 1976.

who wanted to pursue truth and justice by holding the regime accountable for human rights violations, and those who were willing to entertain the idea of amnesty in order to secure basic political and civil rights (Markarian 268). Ultimately, the terms of the transition were debated during a meeting at the Naval Club in 1984 (Ros 162). Like the auto-golpe that came about through a partnership between the military and civilian politicians, so the terms of Uruguay's re-democratization would consist of a pact between the armed forces and politicians, including leftist politicians (Ros 163). According to the pact, COSENA would continue to play a role in advising the President and the armed forces would keep their jurisdiction over matters of national security threats, so-called subversion, and both military and civilian crimes carried out during the dictatorship (Ros 162). The Pacto del Club Naval did not result in any explicit guarantees of impunity, in stark contrast to the amnesty laws that preceded Argentina and Brazil's re-democratizations (Lessa and Skaar 79). However, by negotiating with political parties that had opposed the regime in the process of re-democratization, the military ensured its own protection.

Another factor that protected the military from being made accountable for human rights violations was the way in which political prisoners, specifically Tupamaros guerrilla members, understood their role during the dictatorship and their experiences of torture and prolonged imprisonment. While survivors of torture and clandestine detention in Brazil and Argentina wield their victimhood and reject the theory of the two demons, Tupamaros members accepted torture and imprisonment as part and parcel of fighting a war. By conceptualizing their experiences as legitimate warfare, they deny their victimhood. According to Eugenia Allier-Montaño's interviews with former Tupamaros guerrillas and research in her book, *Batallas por la memoria: Los usos políticos del pasado reciente en Uruguay*, Tupamaros militants also understood their fight as a war, "Nosotros no nos sentíamos victimizados, nos sentíamos en una

fase de la guerra: si caíste…" (qtd. in Allier Montaño 59). Ros posits that because the Tupamaros leadership discouraged public denunciation of torture and victim's groups:

> This not only hindered prosecution but also helped establish the war logic that pervaded both right- and left-wing presidents' interpretation of the military's human rights violations. Closely linked to this logic, the theory of the "two demons" also became a recurring theme in the official narratives. The political parties included themselves in the group of perplexed bystanders caught up in the violent conflict between two groups alien to society: the army and the guerrilla. (163)

Thus, the case for pursuing justice for human rights abuses in Uruguay was undermined by the idea that the dictatorship was indeed a war between two sides. As we will see, the theory of the two demons persists today, and the Uruguayan government still avoids confronting the crimes of the dictatorship even under the rule of the FA. Political organizing and the pursuit of leftist gains in the elections eclipsed the human rights movement.

When the Partido Colorado's Julio María Sanguinetti was sworn in as the first democratically-elected President in 1985, political prisoners from the dictatorship era were still imprisoned. Maximum security prisons and clandestine detention centers held thousands of Uruguayan political prisoners. Indeed, scholars note that Uruguay had the largest percentage of political prisoners per capita in the world, totaling about 60,000, with 5,000 to 6,000 who served excessively long sentences (Lessa and Skaar 78; Rajca 111; Ros 157). Allier-Montaño and Ovalle point out that Sanguinetti took office and immediately had to address two urgent matters: "the country's economic reconstruction and the trampling of human rights by the civilian-military regime" (36). The newly elected government sought to address the latter through the Ley de Pacificación Nacional (Ley 15.737), which drew a distinction between political crimes and "delitos de sangre." Those convicted of political crimes were released within two weeks of the Sanguinetti's inauguration into office. The roughly 60 prisoners who were convicted of

"delitos de sangre" were released to await new trials, and their time in prison would count towards their punishments. Most were considered to have already served their sentences by the time they were retried (Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 37). Article 5 of the Ley de Pacificación Nacional explicitly excludes military personnel and anyone else acting under the authority of the state. Allier-Montaño and Ovalle point to this article as a way to deal with what they call the military problem, "[. . .] because in order to be included they would have had to receive the same treatment as political prisoners charged with violent crimes, that is, they would have had to be prosecuted and sentenced, and only then could it be determined if the same legal device applied to them. Their exclusion from the law could, in fact, be interpreted as a de facto amnesty" (37). In addition to giving the military de facto amnesty for political crimes, the Ley de Pacificación Nacional also eschewed the estimated 167 disappeared Uruguayans and their surviving family members (Ros 164). As such, the Ley de Pacificación Nacional was effective in fostering the release of political prisoners and reintegrating them into society. Even though it included the guaranteed ratification of international human rights conventions for the future, it did little to address the most egregious human rights violations of the past.

The activist group, Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos, known as Familiares, raised public awareness about Uruguayans who were disappeared and about the babies of political prisoners known as "niños apropiados." Ros posits that although Familiares did not attract international attention in the way that the Argentina-based Madres de Plaza de Mayo did, they were able to run a successful national campaign with the support of the FA and human rights organizations (164). Under Sanguinetti's administration, the Uruguayan parliament launched two commissions to support the demands of Familiares: (1) the Commission for the Investigation into the Kidnapping and Assassination of Former Legislators Héctor Guitiérrez

Ruiz and Zelmar Michelini, and (2) the Commission for the Investigation into the Situation of Disappeared Persons and the Events that Led to their Disappearance.[30] Nonetheless, these commissions failed to appease Familiares who complained that the commissions lacked judicial power to issue subpoenas; that they did not offer any final conclusions; that although they name some perpetrators, they did not identify any systematic or structural use of enforced disappearance; and that their final reports were never made available to the public (Ros 164-165). In response, relatives of the disappeared pressed charges against the military and police personnel who were identified as being involved in enforced disappearance, with the courts investigating about 700 cases by December 1986 (Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 38; Ros 165). Nonetheless, these cases were met with a lack of political will to prosecute the military.

In response to the flood of court cases against military and police officers, congress together with Sanguinetti passed an impunity law, the Ley de Caducidad de la Pretensión Punitiva del Estado. By waiving the State's right to prosecute military and police and terminating all existent proceedings, "this law can be considered a reflection of the position adopted by the government with respect to the past, namely, forgetting" (Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 39). Lessa and Skaar, in their assessment of Uruguayan transitional justice, point to Article 3 as particularly significant, as it "[. . .] obliged the courts to transmit all allegations of past violence to the

[30] Ruiz and Michelini went into exile after Bordaberry dissolved parliament in 1973. They moved to Argentina with their families. After the Argentine coup in 1976, they were abducted from their homes and their bodies were found soon thereafter in a car along with former Tupamaros, William Whitelaw and Rosario del Carmen Barredo. The investigation into Ruiz and Michelini's kidnapping and assassinations showed a coordinated effort between Argentine and Uruguayan military officials typical of the covert Operation Condor. Ruiz's son, Mateo Gutiérrez, made a documentary about his father's assassination, *DF: Destino Final* (2008), for which he interviewed numerous family members, politicians from Argentina and Uruguay, as well as diplomats and journalists. *DF: Destino Final* is a powerful glimpse into a family tragedy, which was also an international scandal that eventually leads to Bordaberry's conviction.

executive, which had the exclusive responsibility to decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not the Ley de Caducidad was applicable" (80). As such, Article 3 "[. . .] undermined the separation of powers and judicial independence, as it divested the judiciary of its functions and transferred them to the executive, thus ensuring governmental control over any progress in criminal accountability" (Lessa and Skaar 80). The Ley de Caducidad has since been challenged, but it has always been upheld as constitutional (Ros 165). As such, the Ley de Caducidad is considered legitimate, and its proponents would argue is necessary to protect political stability in Uruguay.

What sets Uruguay apart from other post-dictatorship South American countries is that the Uruguayan people have voted twice, once in a 1989 referendum and again in a 2009 plebiscite, to uphold the Ley de Caducidad, essentially choosing impunity and oblivion over justice and truth. In the 1980's, Familiares organized and promoted the 1989 referendum with support from the Tupamaros, Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios, the FA, and various human rights organizations (Ros 165). One month before the referendum the Uruguayan chapter of the Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ), an international NGO, published *Uruguay Nunca Más*. Lessa and Skaar remark that *Uruguay Nunca Más* was "the only publicly available document to provide a comprehensive overview of the repression" (88) for twenty years. The report detailed the human rights violations and their impact on society. Despite these efforts, 55% of voters chose to retain the Ley de Caducidad (Lessa and Skaar 81). Ros attributes the outcome in part to fear-mongering, even by Sanguinetti, who framed the choice as one between peace and war (165-166). The 1989 referendum had broad-reaching implications for the human rights movement and for transitional justice. Lessa and Skaar point out, "This democratic seal of approval seemingly rendered the government immune to international criticism of the amnesty.

Critical reports by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 1992 and by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee in 1993, 1994, and 1998, as well as several reports by Amnesty International, were pointedly ignored by the government" (81). In other words, the referendum empowered the Uruguayan State to promote forgetting the recent past under the pretext of building strong institutions and establishing a functioning democracy. Furthermore, it enabled the military to maintain its influence over politics and promote its version of the past.

Under democratic governments in the late 1980's and the 1990's, military officials continued to advance in their careers and maintained the narrative that repression and force during the dictatorship was justified. Hugo Medina's professional trajectory, as "a retired lieutenant general who had served as the last commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the dictatorship and, once retired, as defense minister of the Sanguinetti Administration" (Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 40), illustrates this poignantly as he moved from a position of power during the dictatorship into a position of power and influence in the first democratic government without any accountability for what had occurred under his command. Allier-Montaño and Ovalle point out that, without once uttering the words "human rights violations," he broke his silence in a 1991 interview to publicly put forth the theory of the two demons, saying:

> I believe that defining a fact after it has occurred is easier to do than defining it while it is actually happening. None of us thought we were fighting a dirty war then. We needed to obtain information quickly; it was vital that we did so. There were certain principles that we adhered to at all times, even if people may put that in doubt now because they're somewhat prejudiced. I stated this in a television interview [. . .]: there were five thousand prisoners here. If we had acted according to different criteria, there could have been four thousand dead, but that didn't happen. There were very few deaths. We arrested them, we interrogated them, we obtained information from them, and we put them in jail. (qtd. in Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 41)

This extensive quote reveals a great deal about the dictatorship and about the version of the past that the military put forth. Rather than silence and denial of any excesses, Medina doubles down

on justifying the military's mass incarceration of political prisoners and torture during interrogations by positing that it could have been worse had the military chosen to systematically murder prisoners. Allier-Montaño and Ovalle refer to this as "memory of praise of the recent past" (41), characterized by framing state-sanctioned violence as a necessary evil to combat guerrilla groups.

Despite the government and the military's monopoly on memory during this time, victims and victims' families succeeded in their pursuit of reparations for the hardships they endured because of the dictatorship. Courts tended to award reparations in individual suits, and via the 1991 Ley No. 16.194 awarded reparations to public employees who had lost their jobs during the dictatorship for political reasons. These victories seemed to be eclipsed by the push for oblivion on one hand and the "praise of the recent past" on the other. However, the court cases provided a venue for the circulation of memories of the victims and their loved ones. Familiares and other human rights groups focused their efforts on denouncing the Ley de Caducidad outside the country, even though denunciations from abroad by the United Nations and Amnesty International provoked no reaction from the State (Ros 166).

Meanwhile, a memory boom swept South America. Uruguay looked to Argentina not just because of their strong truth and justice movements, but also because officials from the Operation Condor countries coordinated to repress dissidence across the region and some of Uruguay's disappeared were abducted in Argentina. Following former officer Adolfo Francisco Scilingo's confession of death flights in Argentina in 1995, the retired Uruguayan Navy Captain Jorge Tróccoli published an open letter in *El País* admitting to violence and repression (Allier Montaño 159). While Tróccoli denied killing or participating in enforced disappearance, he confessed that the armed forces of which he was a part indeed murdered and disappeared

political prisoners (Tróccoli). These breaks in the military's pact of silence along with the founding of the Uruguayan branch of the HIJOS contributed to the memory boom in Uruguay (Allier Montaño 161; Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 43).

Another high-profile landmark case that fostered the memory boom in Uruguay was the Argentine poet Juan Gelman's very public search for his granddaughter. Gelman, a former Montoneros militant, was not at home when Argentine agents invaded his home to arrest him in July 1976. In his place, they abducted his daughter Nora Eva, his son Marcelo, and his pregnant daughter-in-law María Claudia. Nora Eva was released mere days after, but Marcelo and María Claudia were never seen alive again. While Marcelo died under torture, María Claudia was transferred to Uruguay as part of the collaboration between nations under Operation Condor. There she eventually gave birth to a daughter, Macarena, who was given away to a Uruguayan police chief's family. Juan Gelman searched for his granddaughter for 23 years. Among his efforts was a high-profile exchange of open letters with then-President Sanguinetti. Macarena was located in 1999 and she was united with Juan Gelman in 2000. The Gelmans would go on to play prominent roles in the struggle for a second plebiscite on the Ley de Caducidad and in the Inter-American Court's condemnation of Uruguay's approach to dealing with its authoritarian past (Guianze 194). By the end of the 1990's public debate about the dictatorship, memory, and justice was bubbling once again.

When President Jorge Batlle (2000-2005) took office in 2000, he had to respond somehow to the demands of victims and their families, and he therefore launched the Comisión para la Paz that same year (Allier-Montaño and Ovalle 43; Ros 169). The goal of the Comisión was truth and reconciliation: "La creación de la Comisión intentaba dar cumplimento a 'una obligación ética del Estado', encarando 'una tarea imprescindible para preservar la memoria

histórica' de la Nación, así como para 'consolidar la pacificación nacional y sellar para siempre la paz entre los uruguayos'" (*Comisión para la Paz,* "Antecedentes"). After two years, the commission composed of political and religious leaders issued a report, concluding that 26 Uruguayans were disappeared in Uruguayan territory and over 130 disappeared in other Operation Condor countries (Lessa and Skaar 89). Following the final report, the Comisión para la Paz was criticized for only focusing on the victims of enforced disappearance while ignoring other human rights violations, such as torture and prolonged imprisonment. Those who received information about their disappeared loved ones also complained: "Los familiares y las víctimas 'se quedaron con un sabor amargo': solo recibieron un certificado acreditando que su ser querido había 'desaparecido efectivamente en un cierto tiempo y lugar, pero ninguna otra información" (Lessa 100). The Comisión para la Paz is significant because it was the first official investigation that resulted in the State's acknowledgement of repression and crimes and that the government had a responsibility to address the past (Lessa and Skaar 89; Ros 170). Nonetheless, as Lessa argues, Batlle's struggle for peace and truth ended with the Comisión's final report (101). Transitional justice remained stagnant for the remainder of his presidency.

With the presidential victory of the FA's Tabaré Vázquez (2005-2010; 2015-present) in 2004 came renewed hope for transitional justice in Uruguay. Vázquez made some headway in the struggle for truth— he sought to prosecute perpetrators using what was allowed under the Ley de Caducidad, authorized excavations on military property that resulted in the discovery of human remains, and extradited the Uruguayan military officials responsible for the murder of Eugenio Berríos to Chile— but he also perpetuated the theory of the two demons and ultimately

kept the Ley de Caducidad intact (Ros 172).[31] On one hand, Vázquez enabled human rights groups to establish a memorial space, the Centro Cultural y Museo de la Memoria (MUME) and on the other he perpetuated the narrative that *nunca más* was about a war and not about state terror (Ros 173).[32] Since the FA has held the presidency, Uruguayan transitional justice can be can be characterized as half-hearted, with Presidents Vázquez and José "Pepe" Mujica (2010-2015) at times making strides towards justice and at other times resisting the recommendations of international human rights organization.

What progress has been made under the FA's watch? The Uruguayan congress passed a law in 2005 that made absence due to enforced disappearance a legal category, which had several consequences including the trial of dictator, Gregorio Álvarez (1981-1985) (Lessa and Skaar 92; Ros 172). Reparations laws were passed in 2006 for the pension rights of workers who couldn't work for political reasons during the dictatorship and in 2009 for victims of torture, exiles, political prisoners, children born into detention, and surviving families (Lessa and Skaar 92). Juan María Bordaberry became the first Latin American dictator to be convicted of crimes against the constitution; he was also convicted for his participation in cases of enforced

[31] The case of Eugenio Berríos, a biochemist who allegedly made biochemical weapons for the Pinochet regime, is an important theme of *Matar a todos* and will be explained in detail my analysis of the film.

[32] Ros also points out that MUME was inaugurated on the outskirts of Montevideo with little fanfare. Unlike the Memorial da Resistência in São Paulo and the Espacio Cultural Nuestros Hijos in Buenos Aires, both of which are cultural centers today that were once detention centers where political prisoners were tortured, the MUME's building is not an inherent site of dictatorship memory, but was rather arbitrarily chosen to house the museum. Meanwhile, the notorious Uruguayan detention center, Punta Carretas, was redesigned to become a luxury shopping center. Ros writes: "Paradoxically, members of the younger generations now learned about the building's past through their parents' surprised comments. In this sense, the shopping center was a more effective vehicle for memory than the memorial for the *desaparecidos* inaugurated a decade later, in 2001" (171).

disappearance and political assassinations (Orpi 187). Additionally, in 2012, President Mujica formally acknowledged the State's responsibility in the enforced disappearance of "María Claudia Gelman and all the victims imprisoned in the former clandestine detention center known as Centro de Altos Estudios Nacionales" (Lessa and Skaar 93), despite his own reservations about doing so. Mujica's apology aptly illustrates Michel-Rolph Trouillot's claim that collective apologies are abortive rituals, complicated and ineffective due to the disconnect between the actual perpetrators/victims and the apologizer/addressees of the apology both temporally and in terms of their identities.[33] Consider the paradox of Mujica, himself a former political prisoner who suffered for 12 years, having to apologize on behalf of the very regime and the very military who tortured him. In sum, although they occasionally succumb to popular pressure and have made some progress, the Frente Amplio is in a difficult position as a collective victim of the government that it now leads, and as such has done significantly less than they could do in the pursuit of truth and justice in Uruguay.

While the government has dragged its feet on dealing with the aftermath of the dictatorship, some Uruguayan filmmakers have confronted the past despite funding challenges and a small national audience.[34] While Uruguay has a long tradition of filmmaking, with prominent filmmakers like Mario Handler and Ugo Ulive putting Uruguayan cinema on the map in the 1950s and 1960s, the military dictatorship impacted the film industry significantly (Larrosa-Vecchio 468). As Larrosa-Vecchio posits in his chapter on Uruguayan cinema in *Les Cinémas de l'Amérique Latine*:

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[33] See: Trouillot, Michel-Rolfe. "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era." *Interventions.* Vol. 2 (2). 171-186. DOI: 10.1080/136980100427298

[34] Uruguay's population was tallied to be at 3.4 million people according to Worldometers in 2019. Source: http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uruguay-population/

> [. . .] c'est un cinéma sans cinéastes, puisque la plupart d'entre eux sont en exil, et que ceux qui restent ont dû se tourner vers la publicité ou la fabrication de films d'où toute allusion à la situation politique et sociale est absente et qui font abstraction des conditions objectives dans lesquelles vit le peuple uruguayen. Par conséquent, on pouvait considérer en 1980 que le cinéma était mort en Uruguay. (470)

A slow growth of the Uruguayan film industry and the inauguration of new film schools occurred with the transition to democracy beginning in the mid-eighties (Dufuur 50; Martin-Jones and Montañez 334; Rocha 19). The Uruguayan film industry began to take off again at the turn of the 21st century when Control Z, Uruguay's most celebrated production company of "New" Uruguayan Cinema, was founded in 2001, coinciding with the late surge in political and judicial actions towards transitional justice in Uruguay (Campos 96; Dufuur 56; Martin-Jones and Montañez 336). Despite this, some scholars posit that the transnational nature of Uruguayan cinema threatens to obscure the Uruguayan cultural presence in film, as filmmakers seeking funding pitch narratives that could attract an international audience (Martin-Jones and Montañez 343). Uruguayan cinema relies heavily on co-productions and the international film festival circuit to secure funding and distribution of films, which Carolina Rocha claims, results in a "characterization that muddles the depiction of national memory" (20) to satisfy the demands of spectators abroad who are more interested in regional or transnational stories.[35] Uruguayan film scholar, Luis Dufuur, in his article, "Cine uruguayo y su aspecto (in)visible," considers the dictatorship to be a theme that has not been dealt with effectively in Uruguayan cinema, "Es

[35] Marina Moguillansky has examined the impact of co-productions on cinema from the MERCOSUR countries. See: Moguillansky, Marina. "Cine, identidades y comunidades. Reflexiones metodológicas a partir de una investigación sobre cine e imaginarios sociales en el MERCOSUR." *De prácticas y discursos: Cuadernos de Ciencias Sociales*. Vol. 7, no. 9, 2018. pp. 231-251. and Moguillansky, Marina. "Imaginando el MERCOSUR y sus fronteras. Un análisis de las coproducciones cinematográficas de la región." *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*. Vol. 24, no. 1, 2013. pp.115-129.

curioso que, siendo una temática de absoluta actualidad que concita la atención de la sociedad uruguaya, no sea abordada por el cine; más curioso aún es que haya una extensa literatura que la aborda y que bien podría ser el fundamento de algún film" (54). There have been few films about the dictatorship coming out of Uruguay and few scholars taking on Uruguayan cinema and dictatorship as a theme. The two films that include the most graphic and explicit representations of the dictatorship are quite recent: *Migas de pan* by Manane Rodríguez from 2016 and *La noche de 12 años* by Álvaro Brechner from 2018, both of which tell the stories of political prisoner and contain numerous horrific torture scenes.[36] For a cinematic tradition with relatively few productions, Uruguayan cinema boasts a handful of compelling films that deal with state violence and the dictatorship that certainly merit academic inquiry.[37]

Analysis of *Zanahoria*[38]

Zanahoria (2014) is Enrique Buchichio's (b. 1973) much anticipated second feature-length film after his successful debut, *El cuarto de Leo* (2009). Buchichio garnered support and

[36] *La noche de 12 años* tells the story of the 12 years that Tupamaros militants, José Mujica, Mauricio Rosencof, and Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro spent in clandestine detention. Mujica went on to successful political career, and he was the president of Uruguay from 2010-2015; Huido also launched a political career with the Frente Amplio and, most notably, served as Mujica's Minister of Defense while Rosencof is a prolific writer.

[37] Examples other than the films analyzed in this chapter include *Estrella del sur* (2002) by Luis Nieto; *Crónica de un sueño* (2005) by Mariana Viñoles and Stefano Tononi; *Polvo nuestro que estás en los cielos* (2008) by Beatriz Flores Silva; *Paisito* (2008) by Ana Díez; *DF Destino Final* (2008) by Mateo Gutiérrez; *El lugar del hijo* (2013) by Manolo Nieto; *Migas de pan* (2016) by Manane Rodríguez; and most recently the Netflix film *La noche de 12 años* (2018) by Álvaro Brechner.

[38] *Zanahoria* won a number of awards on the festival circuit: the Golden Colon and Radio Exterior de España prizes for Best Film and the Manuel Barba Award for Best Screenplay at the 2014 Huelva Latin American Festival; Best Screenplay at the 2015 Lleida Latin American Film Festival; and Best Actor for César Troncoso at the 2014 Uruguayan Film Critics Association.

picked up enthusiastic co-producers when he participated in the BrLab, a workshop in São Paulo where filmmakers dedicate ten days to intense work with mentors. With support from the Fundación Carolina, he conducted the necessary research for his project and wrote the screenplay based on a true story that happened to journalists from the weekly, *Semanario Voces*. To prepare, he interviewed them, read their work, and wrote the screenplay based on his research. By adapting their experiences to film, Buchichio amplifies this strange but true story to an audience that may not have heard about it otherwise, including an international audience. Motivated by the conviction that this story deserved to be told again, Buchichio advocates for the pursuit of truth and justice through his filmmaking. As he explained in an interview with *Télam*, "Pienso que un país que no cierra sanamente sus heridas, a través de la verdad y la justicia, está condenada a reabrirlas permanentemente a través del rencor, el odio y la división" (Minghetti). Beyond telling the story, Buchichio uses his film to show different sides of post-dictatorship and the problems that proliferate because of the open wounds left by the dictatorship, even amidst a political victory for the left. Buchichio's project is a deliberate attempt to show how silence and oblivion surrounding the dictatorship are detrimental to Uruguayans.

Zanahoria confronts the inadequacies of Uruguayan transitional justice at a pivotal moment in its young democracy: the 2004 elections which ended in a Frente Amplio victory. Based on a true story, *Zanahoria* recounts the unusual experiences of two journalists, Alfredo (Abel Tripaldi) and Jorge (Martín Rodriguez), from the Frente Amplio publication, *Semanario Voces*. When a mysterious informant contacts Alfredo promising evidence of the state's crimes during the dictatorship, Alfredo takes his junior colleague, Jorge, along to meet him for safety.

The informant, Walter[39] (César Troncoso), explains that he had worked for military intelligence and that he holds hundreds of documents, computer diskettes, and video proving human rights violations and even information about enforced disappearances, including the location of remains. However, Walter makes excuses and stalls, promising to produce the evidence, but never delivering. Meanwhile, Alfredo and Jorge are left wondering if he is a fraud. In my analysis, I will focus on how the film shows the rift among the left that has characterized leftist politics in Uruguay during the transition and the vulnerability that proliferates amidst the dearth of truth and justice.

The opening shots of the film are campaign ads, informing the spectator that the film is set during the 2004 general election. The campaign ads also reveal the political landscape and the divisive propaganda circulating in Uruguay at the time. It becomes apparent that the ads are a commercial break during the nightly news, and the newscaster reports on the latest poll showing Tabaré Vasquez leading at nearly 50%, well ahead of the candidates from the Partido Nacional and the Partido Colorado. As the camera zooms out, the spectator sees the television itself and then its surroundings: what will later be revealed as Walter's home workshop. The election is an important part of the setting for two reasons: first, because the 2004 election was the first time that the left achieved victory since the dictatorship and, therefore, was considered a triumph of Uruguayan democracy. Second, and most importantly for the sake of this analysis, the election fueled the debate within the Uruguayan left about how to deal with the dictatorship, and the film is quite effective in showing the two dominant philosophies about how the left should govern.

[39] I refer to this character as "Walter" throughout the analysis because that is how the other characters call him even after his identification card shows that his legal name is "Milton."

The dialogues between Alfredo and the *Semanario Voces* editor, Osvaldo (Nelson Guzzini), are paradigmatic of the debates occurring within the Uruguayan left regarding transitional politics. Indeed, the spectator is introduced to the staff of the weekly publication through the debate about whether or not to pursue a story about a former coronel who was accused of torture and is apparently fleeing the country. Osvaldo tells Alfredo to drop his investigation about the coronel to focus on the election campaign, which is only three weeks away. Alfredo responds, "Ah, la campaña. Claro. Derechos humanos no es un tema de campaña. ¿No? ¿Les digo esto a Familiares? Mañana tengo una entrevista con ellos." For Alfredo, investigating in order to gather information about the dictatorship is important and a central concern for the elections. However, for Osvaldo, the editor-in-chief of the publication, covering the election in a way that is advantageous to the FA to contribute to its victory is first and foremost over any issue. In this scene, the two men are in the two-shot together, both standing and facing one another. The camera remains in this position, and there are no close ups that would suggest identification with either character, but rather this scene presents a balanced view of both sides (see Figure 15). This debate echoes the rift in the left that had existed since Uruguay began to transition to democracy with one side focused on gaining political power and the other pursuing human rights, truth, and justice. Even between two enthusiastic supporters of the FA, the debate about the party's priorities and the best path to victory persisted.

Figure 15: Osvaldo (left, Nelson Guzzini) and Alfredo (right, Abel Tripaldi) argue over the priorities of the publication as the election nears.

Osvaldo and Alfredo are both of the generation that experienced the dictatorship as adults. As such, their attitudes about the past, human rights, and how best to support the FA through their journalism are informed by their experiences. While it is never revealed what Osvaldo experienced during the dictatorship, Alfredo alludes to a past run-in with the military, suggesting that he had been arrested or was at least under surveillance at some point. Their junior colleague, Jorge, is younger and was a child during the dictatorship. He apparently knows very little about the repression, as evidenced by his comment, "No es un tema que yo maneje," when Alfredo asks him to go interview Familiares in his place. Jorge represents the post-dictatorship generation: those who were young children or not yet born during the years of the repression. He begins the film with no opinion or experience dealing with the dictatorship in his capacity as a journalist, but over the course of the film becomes committed to the pursuit of truth and justice.

The tension in the story comes from how the film represents uncertainty. Uncertainty operates on two levels, which emerge from the beginning of the film. First, there is the uncertainty regarding what happened during the Uruguayan dictatorship, which is first addressed

during Jorge's interview with activists from Madres and Familiares, Mario (Carlos Vallarino) and Clara (Ana Rosa). When Jorge asks about their expectations of an impending Frente Amplio government, they explain that their foremost hope would be that the new government comply with Article 4 of the Ley de Caducidad, which calls for an investigation into enforced disappearances. Mario explains, "Eso sería para nosotros ya un cambio fundamental por la posición de los gobiernos anteriores que se negaron permanentemente a investigar las denuncias." As the Familiares activists give their interview and explain their positions and hopes to Jorge, they also educate the spectator about the status of Uruguayan transitional justice, or rather the lack thereof, as of 2004.

Jorge's interview with Familiares contains within the dialogue common discourses about transitional justice at the time. For example, in response to the Familiares' hope for the new FA government to use Article 4 of the Ley de Caducidad, he asks, "¿Y no sería una contradicción que bajo un gobierno de izquierda existe una ley que ampara a violadores de los derechos humanos?" Jorge's question presupposes that the Ley de Caducidad protects perpetrators who violated human rights, and furthermore, that the law goes against the left's ideology. However, the decades of negotiation between politicians and the military in addition to the 1989 plebiscite show that the Ley de Caducidad garnered support from different figures across the political spectrum in the name of overcoming an impasse and establishing a functioning democracy. In the case of the Familiares who Jorge interviews, using the Ley de Caducidad is the most pragmatic option for learning about what happened to their disappeared loved ones. In response to Jorge's provocation about using the Article 4 to investigate cases of enforced disappearance, the activists explain:

> Mario: Para mí la ley es un mamarracho jurídico de todo punto de vista. Pero yo no soy ni abogado, ni político. Simplemente soy el padre

de una joven desaparecida que quiere saber dónde están ocultados sus restos.

Clara: El próximo gobierno que venga, sea cual sea, no importa cual, va a tener que ejercer su autoridad. Y va a tener que ordenarles a los mandos militares que den toda la información que tienen porque la tienen. Esa información tiene que existir. Nuestros familiares no desaparecieron solos.

Mario: Tiene que saberse lo que pasó en este país. Mientras nos sigan ocultando la verdad que nosotros venimos buscando de hace 30 años, nosotros seremos víctimas de engaños y mentiras.

Mario posits that as long as there is a pact of silence, the uncertainty creates an environment in which anyone seeking the truth becomes vulnerable to lies and deception. Indeed, this vulnerability is a consequence of enforced disappearance as a mechanism of state terror and the pact of silence regarding what happened to the people who were disappeared. The surviving family members of the disappeared are also victims of state terror, and they are revictimized by those who use the uncertainty to take advantage of them. As the spectator will see, the case of Walter is just one among many others who use the desperation of victim's families for personal or political gain.

This warning foreshadows what is to come in the film's plot, and Mario's words are repeated in the film when Jorge transcribes this interview once he suspects that Walter is conning them. As Jorge transcribes and listens again to Mario's quote after having experienced Walter's scam, the camera zooms in slowly on his face, showing that he is connecting Mario's words to Walter. As he transcribes and thinks about what Mario had said, he attains a deeper understanding of the vulnerability of Familiares as well as the way that uncertainty about the past impacts Uruguayan society.

Whereas before Jorge and Alfredo were perplexed and frustrated by Walter's deception as they learned that he had done the same to other journalists, their indignation and outrage grow

with the empathy they feel for Mario when he tells them towards the film's end that Walter had also deceived Familiares. When Jorge and Alfredo return to the Familiares office to talk to Mario about his past interactions with Walter, they learn that he had contacted Familiares promising information about their disappeared loved ones and then made off with small quantities of money allegedly to be used for materials. In this scene, there are three shots: a close-up from the shoulders up of Mario, who tells the story of how Walter contacted him claiming to have information about his daughter's disappearance and the appropriation of his grandchild born after the abduction, and close ups of Jorge and Alfredo in separate frames of only their faces, from their chins to mid-foreheads. By focusing on close ups of Jorge and Alfredo as Mario tells his story, the spectator can see that both men are fighting back tears and are deeply moved. This is the moment where their empathy for Mario is transformed into outrage and prompts them to ultimately denounce Walter on the front page of *Semanario Voces*.

The second way that *Zanahoria* uses uncertainty to build suspense is the way it portrays the uncertainty regarding Walter's identity. As he is introduced as a character, the way that light and shadows are cast across him hide parts of his face and allude to the mystery surrounding who he is (see Figure 16). His whole face is first revealed in daylight in the scene in which he meets Jorge and Alfredo to tell them that because of technical difficulties, the copies of the tapes did not come out and he will need more money to copy them to DVDs. His face appears for the first time only when he begins to give them the runaround and give excuses for the delay in delivering what he had promised.

Figure 16: Walter's identity is hidden by the shadows.

Like the uncertainty regarding Uruguay's past, the mystery of Walter's identity is never resolved. Even after Walter's face is revealed and his identification card shows that his real name is Milton Romero Sánchez, Jorge continues to call him Walter. In the last scene of the film there is a voice-over as Alfredo reads his editorial about Walter's deception, and on screen Walter is chased by two unidentified men wearing all black. It is never clear who these men are: they could be allies of Familiares who want revenge for his tricks and lies, or they could indeed be men from the military who want revenge for his breaking the pact of silence. As such, the film ends with uncertainty and with no conclusion. The only conclusion that the film offers echoes Mario's words about the vulnerability produced amidst silence and hidden truths: Alfredo closes his editorial explaining that what had happened with Walter was only possible "en un país en que la verdad todavía sigue secuestrada y enterrada en alguna parte." As long as details of the enforced disappearances during the Uruguayan repression remain guarded by a pact of silence, the truth to which Alfredo refers is unattainable.

Zanahoria contributes to the memory of the dictatorship while it also actively advocates on behalf of truth and justice. Though "nunca más" declares that the violence of the dictatorship years must never happen again, the film shows that Uruguayan society and, in particular, Familiares and other survivors, are continuously revictimized amidst a peaceful democracy. Furthermore, *Zanahoria* shows the important role of independent, investigative journalism is uncovering the secrets of the past and educating the public about what happened. As such, Buchichio's film challenges the spectator to consider how the unresolved past reverberates into the present, stifling justice and protecting perpetrators through silence.

Analysis of *Matar a todos*[40]

Matar a todos (2007), written by Daniel Henriquez, Alejandra Marino, Pablo Vierci and directed by Esteban Schroeder, focuses on the important role of the Uruguayan judiciary in investigating the crimes of the dictatorship, yet the film depicts a stifled judiciary where hierarchy and interpersonal relationships undermine the efforts of lower-ranking prosecutors to pursue truth and justice. The screenplay is based on a previous script that Schroeder wrote with Pablo Vierci called *99% Asesinados* and enjoyed critical acclaim at numerous festivals.[41]

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[40] Schroeder's family was personally affected by the repression and by Operation Condor. His brother, Gabriel Schroeder Orozco and his sister-in-law, Rosario del Carmen Barredo were Tupamaros militants. Gabriel was assassinated in 1972 and Carmen, late into a pregnancy, was arrested and soon thereafter gave birth to a daughter, Gabriela Schroeder Barredo. Carmen and Gabriela went into exile in Chile but had to move to Argentina after the coup there in 1973. There she became involved with Tupamaro militant, William Whitelaw, and they had two children. The couple was abducted by the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (AAA) and found dead in the same vehicle as Ruiz and Michelini in 1976. Esteban dedicates *Matar a todos* to his niece, Gabriela.

[41] *Matar a todos* won the following awards: Best Actress (and Best Screenplay and Signis Prize at the 2007 Festival Interncacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano de La Habana; Best Actress at the 2008 Festival de Cine Internacional de Ourense; Audience Choice awards at the 2007

Based on true events, the film is a fictional retelling of one of the most outrageous scandals of post-dictatorship Uruguay, known as the Berríos case, focalized through the experiences of Julia (Roxana Blanco). In 1993, Julia is a prosecutor, torture survivor, a human rights activist, and the black sheep of her military family. In this thriller, she investigates an international conspiracy to cover up the Uruguayan military's custody of a Chilean chemist who fabricated chemical weapons for the regime of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). The political becomes personal as Julia must confront her past and her family while she seeks to uncover the truth about the military's conspiracy to cover up Operation Condor-era crimes that bleed into democratic Uruguay and Chile. Like *Zanahoria*, *Matar a todos*'s open ending suggests the unresolved nature of the Uruguayan dictatorship in 1993, depicting a continuation of military crimes carried out by the very high-ranking officials who oversaw Uruguay's involvement in Operation Condor and crimes against humanity, enabled by judges invested in protecting the status quo.[42] In my analysis of *Matar a todos*, I will discuss how the film represents divergent conceptualizations of how post-dictatorship democracy should function as well as the impact of uninterrupted military power in democratic Uruguay.

Biarritz Film Festival and the 2008 Festivalísimo de Montreal; Best Fiction from the Asociación de Críticos de Cine de Uruguay; Best Screenplay at the 2009 Muestra de Cine Latinoamericano de Cataluña; Best Screenplay at the 2008 Festival de Cine Latinoamericano de Santa Cruz (Bolivia); the Jury Award and Best Supporting Actress at the 2008 Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena de Indias; and the Pedro Sienna Prize from the Ministerio de las Culturas, Chile. Schroeder was nominated for the Grand Prix at the Fribourg International Film Festival. *Matar a Todos* was also declared of National Interest by President Tabaré in 2005.

[42] Not only is the Southern Cone region important in the story, which takes place in Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina, but the film is co-produced by all three countries. In her article, "National and Transnational Dimensions of Memory in *Matar a todos* and *Paisito*," Carolina Rocha argues that co-production is significant for fostering memory transnationally, positing, "As a co-produced film, *Matar a todos* stands as a 'healing' or democratic project" (22). However, she also points out that few spectators saw the film in Argentina (753 spectators) and Chile (6,000 spectators) compared to the 22,000 who saw the film in Uruguay (Rocha 25).

The film begins with a prologue that contextualizes the story for the spectator. The prologue goes back into the history of the Cold War and it introduces Operation Condor:

> La Guerra Fría fue en América Latina una guerra caliente y sangrienta. La faceta más oscura y siniestra de este período fue la Operación Cóndor, una asociación entre los servicios de inteligencia de las Fuerzas Armadas de seis países del Sur de América, promovida por Estados Unidos, que especializó grupos represivos muy eficientes, llegando incluso a desarrollar armas químicas y biológicas para eliminar opositores.
>
> "Los químicos de la muerte" eran protegidos por el alto mando de los gobiernos militares, pero cuando las democracias se reinstalaban en América Latina y el Muro de Berlín caía, la red que antes protegió a estos agentes, debía ahora asegurar su silencio… (*Matar a todos*)

The prologue, therefore, prepares the spectator for a number of issues that the film addresses: the ideological struggle at the heart of the Cold War; the coordination among South American civic-military regimes and the U.S. through Operation Condor; the existence of the so-called "químicos de la muerte" and their importance to the regimes; and the imperative to maintain a pact of silence after the dictatorships transitioned to democracy. All of this information sets up the spectator to recognize within the story set in 1993 the remnants of the Cold War, of Operation Condor, and of the South American dictatorships.

Matar a todos uses the disturbing and enigmatic true story of Berríos' kidnapping, escape, re-abduction, and eventual death as a point of departure for exploring the status of democracy in post-dictatorship South America. Berríos is held captive in Uruguay under the watch of an Uruguayan military official, Robaina (Arturo Fleitas) and a Chilean officer, Rodrigo (Ramón González). The coordination between multiple levels of both governments is clear when Berríos escapes and seeks help in a rural police station: the commissioner receivers orders from above to "dar marcha atrás;" Robaina and Rodrigo are alerted to Berríos's location; and Rodrigo must update other Chilean officials about the case. Berríos' case is confidential, but Julia learns

that many high-ranking officials in the Uruguayan military, including her father, General Gudari (Walter Reyno), and her brother, Captain Ivan Gudari (César Troncoso), know something of the case. What Julia does not know that the spectator sees is that General Gudari is close friends with one of Berríos' captors, Robaina.

Schroeder's film uses a number of approaches to convey information about the Berríos case to the spectator as Julia's investigation also requires seeking information from numerous sources. For example, the film contains a documentary-within-the-film about Berríos that Julia receives from Jiménez (Patricio Contreras), a Chilean journalist who wants to collaborate with her. The documentary explains that Berríos worked for the Pinochet regime to produce sarin gas, an undetectable chemical weapon that the Nazis used in World War II. The documentary is narrated over the sounds of screams and dramatic music, adding to the sensation of horror induced by the archival images of murdered children from the Holocaust and a newspaper showing the Chilean presidential palace under attack on September 11, 1973, the day of the coup. As Julia watches the documentary, her son, Nico, interrupts and asks her about it. She pauses the video and goes to bed with him, but soon thereafter, the camera returns to the television set where the video resumes playing, giving the spectator more information about the Pinochet regime and its use of sarin gas to assassinate political dissidents as the camera zooms into the image on the screen (see Figure 17). The scene with the documentary functions to educate the spectator about the Pinochet dictatorship's use of sarin gas and Berríos' central role in perpetrating crimes against humanity. Furthermore, the documentary connects the Chilean dictatorship to the Holocaust through the use of sarin gas, presenting the two authoritarian regimes as analogous in their cruelty and criminality. When Julia pauses the film to console her son, who is troubled by the images on the screen and curious as to what they are, the spectator

sees another side of her motivation for pursuing the Berríos case and seeking truth and justice: the future of the world in which her son will grow up and the imperative that such atrocities must never happen again: *nunca más.* With international conspiracies attempting to cover up and protect perpetrators of human rights violations, *nunca más* is an impossibility. The documentary scene presents the stakes for Julia's investigation: truth and justice to address the crimes committed in the past and to ensure a safe, free future.

Figure 17: The video resumes playing, but Julia is not watching. The documentary presents information to the spectator about Chile's use of sarin gas.

Matar a todos shows the false paradigm of the common rhetoric in transitional and post-dictatorship governments that sets up democracy and transitional justice in binary opposition, as if the pursuit of truth and justice would undermine democratic rule. Julia challenges this idea repeatedly when agents of the Uruguayan and Chilean states use it to justify their insistence that she halt her investigation. For example, when she travels to Chile to interview María Morris

(María Izquierdo) about her history with Berríos, Julia is intercepted by Reyes (Jaime Vadell), an official from the Ministry of the Interior. He explains to her that her superior, Judge Santa Cruz (Jorge Bolani), had contacted the Ministry about her unauthorized trip, clearly in a desperate attempt to rein in her efforts. However, what is striking about Reyes's appeal to Julia is that he attempts to persuade her against furthering her investigation and interviewing Morris by suggesting the Chilean democracy is at stake:

> Reyes: Doctora, tenemos una democracia frágil e incierta. Hacemos todo lo que podemos pero hay problemas muy complicados—inmanejables—que ponen incluso en peligro la estabilidad del estado.
>
> Julia: Justamente por la estabilidad de los estados que hay que aclarecer estos hechos, ¿no?
>
> Reyes: Usted está en contacto con el periodista Jiménez. El periodista Jiménez tiene mucha información pero puede ser que no está informado de que aquí estamos recuperando la democracia.

Reyes' tone is passive-aggressively threatening, and his threat is emphasized by the music in the scene that fades in as Reyes mentions Jiménez. The music, slow percussion and deep, prolonged chimes of bells, gains volume as Julia becomes increasingly visibly uncomfortable with Reyes and his knowledge of the details of her trip and investigation. As such, *Matar a todos* shows the spectator the extent to which the Berríos case is a regional conspiracy involving many people at different levels of the governments of Chile and Uruguay during democratic governance in both countries. Furthermore, it debunks the common argument, perpetuated here by Reyes and at other times by General Gudari, that democratic stability depends on hiding the truth— that the truth would be the source of the instability. They posit that stability depends upon their holding the power, but their power depends on hiding evidence of criminal activity and avoiding any investigation into the crimes during the dictatorships and into the democratic era.

This sentiment is reiterated when Julia visits her father on his deathbed. After Robaina apparently broke into Julia's gym locker, stole her keys, picked up her son from school, and let him into her house to show her the vulnerability of her family, Julia confronts her father as he lay dying. In this last conversation between them, he uses the rationale of the theory of the two demons to justify the military's actions positing that he fought a war against subversion to defend the homeland. His parting words to her are that her efforts are in vain: "No alcanza con la fuerza que vos tenés; hay que tener el poder. El poder." General Gudari confirms that it is the military who has the power, not her even in her position as a prosecutor.

Whereas in *Zanahoria* there is uncertainty regarding the state's continuous repression and violence, *Matar a todos* shows a state that obstructs justice, manipulates, and colludes with the national and international militaries to cover up its criminal activity. The state has a heavy hand in creating the appearance of a functioning democracy, where the police and the judicial branch of the government could transparently cooperate in order to serve justice. Julia begins to recognize that she is working within a corrupt and despotic political system. Ultimately, she refuses to compromise her principles when her boss presents falsified evidence that Berríos is living in Italy. She quits her job on the grounds that Judge Santa Cruz is "un vendido hijo de puta." While the film ends without resolving Julia's life and employment, the ending suggests her redemption: in a prolepsis to two years later when the discovery of Berríos' remains on the beach, the world will learn that not only was Berríos in Uruguay the whole time, but also that the Uruguayan and Chilean governments orchestrated a cover up and a state-sanctioned murder. The overlapping soundbites of journalists reporting on Berríos' death show that the media suspects a conspiracy between Chilean and Uruguayan militaries. Nonetheless, the film ends without

resolution, pointing to the Uruguay's post-dictatorship situation as pending with justice yet to come.

Matar a todos presents Uruguayan democracy as a façade for a system devoid of a moral compass and solely concerned with maintaining power. The military is controlled by the same high-ranking officials, such as Julia's father, who were in power during the dictatorship and are still in power in democracy, but in democracy they leverage their power and rule covertly. The courts cooperate with the military to carry out their will allegedly to preserve stability for democracy. *Matar a todos* reveals a system that is called democratic governance but is in fact something else. It shows a continuation of the mechanisms of power from the dictatorship period, both within Uruguay and regionally, revealing Operation Condor-style regional military cooperation.

Analysis of *Secretos de lucha*[43]

Secretos de lucha (2007) is a documentary by Maiana Bidegain, the daughter of Uruguayan exiles who was born and raised in the Basque region of France. Not learning of her father's experience as a political prisoner and torture survivor until she was an adult, Maiana films as she seeks to learn more about her family history. The premise of *Secretos de Lucha* is aligned with other works by second-generation filmmakers who document the process of learning about their families' struggles during the dictatorship.[44] Maiana Bidegain embarks on a

[43] *Secretos de lucha* won awards for Best Documentary from the 2007 Biarritz Latino Film Festival and Audience Choice awards from the 2007 Pessac History Film Festival and the 2008 Sydney Latino Film Festival.

[44] Marianne Hirsch's conceptualization of postmemory has been a common lens for scholars who have written about *Secretos de lucha* for the use of family photos and family memories to reconstruct the trauma and violence that the Bidegains faced during the repression. In this

journey to Uruguay with her father, Jean Paul, who left as a political exile after being imprisoned and tortured during the dictatorship. There, he is reunited with his seven siblings for the first time since 1968 and Maiana has the opportunity to document their reunion and ask her family about their experiences during the dictatorship. The film was shot in Uruguay, Buenos Aires, Santiago, and the French Basque Country in 2003 and 2005. Maiana's documentary uses a variety of techniques to convey information about the past: from interviews with her family members, to reenactments of certain episodes with actors, to her use of archival footage and stills of headline news and family photos. While she appears in few shots, her voiceover narration guides the story and explains her experience of learning about her family's history and her motivation to further pursue more information. This analysis will focus primarily on how *Secretos de lucha* deals with the aftermath of the dictatorship and functions as a call for transitional justice. The documentary shows an intimate portrait of how state violence and repression in the years leading up to Bordaberry's auto-golpe and during the dictatorship shattered the Bidegain family and it concludes by opening the scope of the film to transitional justice efforts, human rights activism, and national politics.

Like the other films in this chapter, *Secretos de lucha* shows that repression and state violence bled into democratic Uruguay. *Secretos de lucha* also shows how Uruguayans experienced a transition *to* dictatorship. In the testimony of Jean Paul and his siblings, they recall instances of extreme repression and violence from as early as the Pacheco Areco's presidency

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chapter, I am attempting to redirect the conversation towards how the film shows the shortcomings of Uruguayan transitional justice and the role of the second generation in intervening in the pursuit of truth and justice. For an example of scholarship that engages with *Secretos de lucha* from a postmemory perspective, see: Fuica, Beatriz Tadeo. "Memory or postmemory: Documentaries directed by Uruguay's second generation." Memory Studies. vol. 8, no. 3, 2015. pp. 298-312.

(1967-1972). In response to the repression, the Bidegains, who all share values of social justice grounded in their Catholicism, spoke out against injustice and repression and were punished as a result. For example, Jean Paul's brother, José María, was arrested when he was a priest before the official beginning of the dictatorship and was imprisoned for over four years without being charged with a crime. Jean Paul's sister, Marcelle, who was a mother of four children and a schoolteacher at the time, describes the pre-dictatorship years as the time in which she was most active in the struggle. As Maiana learns about her family's experiences with state violence, illegal arrests, and torture from before the Bordaberry presidency and what is widely considered the beginning of the military dictatorship after the dissolution of parliament, the spectator also learns details about this history that is often overshadowed by cultural production about dictatorship years (1973-1985). Maiana's documentary gives her family members a platform to talk about the repression they experienced before the official beginning of the dictatorship as well as the fear that lingers in re-democratized Uruguay.

One consequence that Maiana begins to understand is the force of fear in imposing silence regarding all those years. She explains, "Pensaba que mi ignorancia al respeto del pasado de mi familia era debida al exilio de mis padres. Sin embargo, descubro que más allá de mi experiencia, es toda una generación dentro del pueblo uruguayo la que heredó este silencio impuesto por miedos que todavía son palpables." She supports this claim by showing that when she asks her family members if they feel at liberty to talk about the repression now that Uruguay is a democracy, they respond negatively. As such, *Secretos de lucha* reveals the unresolved nature of the Uruguayan repression even twenty years after the country returned to democracy. When she asks if her uncle Tito feels that Uruguayan society allows for him to speak freely about his experiences and opinions about what happened, he explains that he feels the need to be

careful because the low-ranking soldiers who carried out the repression in the past have since moved up the ranks and command the armed forces. The silence also permeates the Bidegain family, as some siblings went into exile and others suffered in prison, they did not want to pry about the traumatic experiences of one another. As such, scenes in the film show moments where Maiana's father and his siblings talk to each other for the first time about certain aspects of the past.

The tension in the film increases as the Bidegains reveal how their traumas continue to affect them and the more she learns about her aunts and uncles, the more Maiana understands her father. For example, when Marcelle describes her time in clandestine detention and the torture she suffered. Maiana reflects, "Rompí un tabú al pedirle a Marcelle que me contara lo que había pasado. Y me conmovió aun más su relato al saber que cuando la llegaron en el '75 ella ya no era miembro del movimiento. Pero no me imaginaba que a través de su relato, también descubriría yo nuevos aspectos de la historia de mi proprio padre." She learns that her father taught Marcelle techniques for withstanding torture, and upon this discovery she delves deeper into her father's lasting trauma that he suffers as a torture survivor, which Maiana calls his "última lucha."

Jean Paul's most pressing struggle challenges his Christian beliefs and disturbs him spiritually: he struggles with his own incapacity for forgiveness. What troubles Jean Paul most about survival is how to reckon with feelings of hate, anger, and a desire for revenge against his torturer and the Christian imperatives of forgiveness and love. Both he and Marcelle describe the horrific discoveries they made after they were arrested— that people they knew from the past would enjoy participating in their torture and humiliation. Both were cruelly tortured by former students at the schools where they worked when Jean Paul was a chaplain and Marcelle was a teacher. The siblings engage in a philosophical argument about human nature, forgiveness, and

revenge. Maiana learns that her father has struggled with his feelings of hate and his desire for revenge. In an interview, Jean Paul explains his moral dilemma to Maiana, “Ya pasó tanto tiempo, si pensé que tenía que perdonar. ¿Qué pasaría de encontrarme con él? ¿Qué actitud sería la suya? ¿Qué actitud sería la mía?” He ruminates on what could have happened to psychologically to transform a good boy into a torturer, and he concludes that he would accept the opportunity to meet him if given the chance. At this point Maiana surprises him with a recording of a phone call between her and Jean Paul’s torturer. He puts on the headphones, and she films his reactions to the conversation between his daughter and his torturer (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Jean Paul listens to Maiana's phone conversation with his torturer.

The phone call between Maiana and the torturer, whose anonymity she respects by bleeping out his name, contains within it the discourse of the military in post-dictatorship Uruguay, but this discourse, which is apologist for human rights violations, is delivered amidst

pleasantries and fond reminiscence of the torturer's school days. The torturer has a friendly voice, he is polite, and he asks how Jean Paul is doing as soon as he realizes that Maiana is his daughter. With a voice full of nostalgia, he talks about his time at the Colegio Sagrada Familia, where he first met Jean Paul. When Maiana asks him if he wants to talk about his reencounter with her father after that, alluding to the dictatorship, he responds with a perspective that is aligned with and informed by the military's official story:

Torturer:	No, no, no, no, no. Esas son etapas superadas. Son etapas suparadas. [. . .] Lamentablemente, hubieron en su momento buenas relaciones que se truncaron y caminos que se agarraron por distintos lados. [. . .] Ojalá que nunca vuelva a pasar, porque no ha dejado buenas secuelas.
Maiana:	Claro. Y una pregunta porque de lo poco que yo sé, yo sé que—bueno, hubo un enfrentamiento con mi padre y que usted lo presenció, por lo menos. Me interesaría saber cómo se siente al respeto a esto ahora.
Torturer:	¿Cómo me siento? ¿Cómo? [. . .] ¿Si eso me preocupa? ¿Si lo considero como un recargo de conciencia o algo así?
Maiana:	Por ejemplo.
Torturer:	No, no, no. Siendo militar yo estaba cumpliendo funciones que fueron y son y serán legítimas y punto. Nada más. Es como el médico, se opera y trata de salvar una vida y de repente si murió por una mala praxis, y no por eso deja de operar. No sé si me entiende.
Maiana:	Trato.
Torturer:	Pero, ya le digo. Le pediría una cosa.
Maiana:	Sí.
Torturer:	No me haga más preguntas.
Maiano:	Bueno.
Torturer:	Dentro del llamado de atención que usted me deja con su llamada lo que más me alegro es que su padre esté bien.

Maiana: Sí, está bien.

Torturer: Bueno. Delo mis saludos. Que disfruten la estadía por Uruguay.

The mingling of well wishes with justifications for torture makes this phone call unsettling, "Bárbaro" as Jean Paul puts it, but it is revelatory of the sentiment about the dictatorship from the perspective a retired officer. For him, it is a past that has been overcome and, anyway, he was just following orders. For Jean Paul, those years changed the trajectory of his life and his family unit forever. The phone call reveals that the torturer disconnects his treatment of Jean Paul when he was a political prisoner with Jean Paul's wellbeing and apparently compartmentalizes his memory into his fond memories of his youth— the past about which he will speak— and the years that he claims have been overcome, that he refuses to discuss.

The significance of Maiana's phone call to the torturer has many layers. First, it gives Jean Paul answers to some of the questions that plague him. He now understands the point of view of this man who tortured him and knows for certain that he feels no remorse for his actions, thereby helping Jean Paul navigate his moral crisis about forgiveness. He achieves a kind of closure, "Así como yo no me olvido, se ve que él tampoco se olvida de mí. Para que pueda haber perdón, yo lo he dicho, importante que da reconocimiento de que estuvo mal y que no se va a pasar más aquello. Y que a él no. No hubo nada. Si no hubo nada, esto sería lo malo que podría repetirse." Maiana's intervention into her father's life and into the family history that she is documenting helps her father fight what she had identified as the last fight— the internal struggle over how to deal with so many intense and negative feelings about the torturer. As such, she contributes to her father's healing process in an unexpected way. Maiana intervenes in her

father's story by contacting his torturer just as her film intervenes in the Uruguayan collective memory and the pursuit for transitional justice.

Rather than ending the film here with her father, Maiana chooses to contextualize her family's story with the national political conjuncture in the mid-2000's, and more specifically with the challenges and achievements of the transitional justice movement and the newly elected FA government.[45] She summarizes the Uruguayan transition to democracy as, "Un silencio de plomo, de miedos y de vergüenza fundó una paz que dependía del olvido," and explains the laws that protected the military from answering to their crimes. Her family's struggle, she suggests, is not in vain because of the FA victory and that former political prisoners, like Pepe Mujica, who she cites, have achieved political power and can affect changes to policy that can bring about justice in democratic Uruguay. The film ends with a Familiares march in Montevideo, pointing to the future of the struggle for justice in Uruguay. The tone is hopeful, but still presents the situation as unresolved and justice as pending.

Secretos de lucha is a film about the family secrets that Maiana learns and the important lesson that some secrets will remain secrets. The process of making the film was educational for her, and this education is passed on to the spectator who learns the personal struggles of the Bidegains and the national struggles for justice and truth in Uruguay. Though she did not experience the repression first hand, Maiana inherits the struggle from her father and his siblings

[45] In her article, "Memory or postmemory? Documentaries directed by Uruguay's second generation," Beatriz Tadeo Fuica makes the interesting observation that *Secretos de lucha* has two "false endings" before the film's actual ending (305). According to Fuica, the first false ending shows Jean Paul in the Basque Country, the place of his exile, alluding to a return trip home after his family reunions in Uruguay. The second ending concludes with a subtitle about Bordaberry's conviction. Then the third and final ending shows the Marcha del Silencio and fades into a final scene where Maiana describes what she has learned over images of the family all together (305).

through the values they impart upon her, which at numerous points in the film, they understand as an inheritance from their Basque ancestors. Maiana concludes her film reflecting on how she has grown and changed through the process of learning about her family's experiences: "Me quedo con el sentido de la lucha, con la certeza que todavía es posible hacer avanzar el mundo. Hoy es mi turno emprender mi propia marcha y aunque sé ahora que muchas veces debería antes de todo luchar contra mis propios miedos, descubrí que para ayudarme cuento con una arma invencible— el amor de una familia." Rather than focusing on the trauma and memories that are transmitted to the second generation, Maiana concludes with her newfound sense of responsibility to fight for a better world as part of her family legacy. Her first endeavor, it seems, is to make her film *Secretos de lucha* as an intervention through which she advocates for truth and memory over oblivion.

Maiana's documentary contributes to the memory of the dictatorship, offering a counterpoint to the military's version of events, which is still a dominant perspective of the past. *Secretos de lucha* shows how the post-dictatorship generation, even those who were born in exile and have never lived in Uruguay, is rising to the occasion to share their family histories of living under the repression and participating in the process of fostering memory and pursuing truth and justice.

Conclusion

It is no coincidence that the three films analyzed in this chapter were all released after the FA came to power. As Lessa and Skaar conclude their 2016 study of the status of transitional justice in Uruguay:

> The curve towards accountability became noticeably steeper after the Frente Amplio government took office in 2005, suggesting that one of the principal

> explanations for the general shift from impunity towards accountability in Uruguay is political will. The Frente Amplio government, although politically split, signaled to civil society that there was room for public deliberation of these issues, and it signaled to the judiciary that addressing human rights violations could be done without causing institutional instability. (93)

These films entered into circulation at a time when debates about the dictatorship and impunity were finally a part of open public debate. As such, they contribute their versions of the past and of their positions regarding how to deal with it all in the future. Each film has an open ending, signaling to the public that truth and justice are yet to come.

Situated between Argentina, where the pursuit of truth and justice continues to propel new discoveries of "nietos" and compel *escraches*, and Brazil, where President Jair Bolsonaro commemorates the 1964 coup and honors the memory of torturers, Uruguayan transitional justice is also between these two tendencies. Journalists, politicians, and activists work towards truth and justice as the theory of two demons remains a dominant discourse that justifies the repression, absolving rank and file military officials of human rights violations. As Uruguayan cinema about the dictatorship suggests, this time in history is yet to be resolved.

CHAPTER THREE

Orphans of State Terror: Post-Dictatorship Film in Argentina

Introduction

With a staggering 30,000 estimated victims of enforced disappearance in Argentina, the dictatorship left a generation orphaned by state terror. The films in this chapter feature protagonists who are these children of the so-called disappeared— political prisoners who were kidnapped and murdered by military, paramilitary, or police officials and their bodies disposed of in such a way that most remains were never recovered. The children of the disappeared have played an important role in Argentine transitional justice and in story-telling about dictatorship and its aftermath. The three films that this chapter analyzes are *Cautiva* (2003) by Gastón Biraben (b. 1958), *Los Rubios* (2003) by Albertina Carri (b. 1973), and *Buenos Aires Viceversa* (1996) by Alejandro Agresti (b. 1961). *Cautiva* is a feature-length fiction film that focuses on children of the disappeared who were taken, or "appropriated," by the military and adopted out to families who supported the ideals of the regime. The story is told through the protagonist as she learns of her true identity and reclaims it. *Los Rubios* is a documentary about the impossibility of documentary filmmaking in the post-dictatorship. Carri, herself the daughter of disappeared activists, utilizes a variety of technical and narrative approaches, diegetic levels, and resources to learn about her parents. *Buenos Aires Viceversa*, a feature-length fiction film, portrays the difficulties of life in Argentina's capital in the 1990's through the story of children orphaned by state terror.

I argue that *Cautiva, Los Rubios*, and *Buenos Aires Viceversa* intervene in dominant discourses about the past in post-dictatorship Argentina, transmit information about transitional justice processes, and challenge the dominant categories of victimhood. *Cautiva* shows a range

of discourses about the dictatorship and represents, through the experience of an appropriated girl, how the post-dictatorship state works towards bringing justice to victims. In *Los Rubios*, Carri struggles to make space for the narratives of the children of the disappeared in a field dominated by stories of their parents' generation. Meanwhile, *Buenos Aires Viceversa* raises questions about the limits of filmic representation in the wake of trauma and depicts the struggles of those impacted by the dictatorship who do not fit into the traditional category of victim, understood at the time as those who disappeared, survived torture and state terror, and their families. While *Cautiva* shows the challenges of reclaiming identity and navigating opposing viewpoints of the past and *Los Rubios* offers a critical perspective of the intergenerational struggle over memory and victimhood, *Buenos Aires Viceversa* reveals how violence and persecution continue into democratic Argentina and the exclusionary effect of human rights discourses in the post-dictatorship. Each film challenges spectators to consider subjectivities that had previously been overshadowed or altogether omitted from narratives about the dictatorship and its aftermath.

In this chapter, I begin with historical context through a brief summary of Argentina's transitional justice trajectory and waves of memory regarding the dictatorship to show the relationship between the two and to help us identify what memories are canonized in Argentina.

Transition to Democracy and Canonization of Memory

After the British defeated Argentina in the War of the Malvinas/Faulkland Islands (April 2 to June 14, 1982), the Argentine military junta lost credibility and initiated steps to transition the country to democratic rule (Romero 247). The military regime orchestrated the transition with its own protection and interests in mind. "Before the end of the regime," Ros writes, "the

junta passed the 'Law of National Pacification,' which amnestied the 'excesses' of the repression. In addition, before passing the law, they released the 'Final Document of the Military Junta on the War Against Subversion and Terrorism' (1983), an attempt to frame its public understanding and the acts it amnestied" (15). In the earliest stages of the transition, the military set the tone as to how the dictatorship should be remembered. This document insisted that the disappeared were actually in exile or killed in combat, denying the institutionalized and systemic extermination of an estimated 30,000 people (Romero 248, Ros 15). However, the first democratically-elected president, Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), prosecuted the military leaders of the first three juntas and also ordered the prosecution of leaders from the guerrilla organizations, the Montoneros and the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Romero 262).[46] This move fostered what is commonly called *the theory of the two demons*, which survived as a common discourse through which Argentines understand the violent years of the dictatorship. The theory essentially assigns guilt to both political sides, positing that the military was forced to act in response to the threats that revolutionary, armed organizations posed to the nation. The theory of the two demons, "which blames the tragic events on the leaders of the two groups and presents society as a passive victim of their violence" (Ros 16), was reproduced in the famous *Nunca Más* report, which, as Ros reminds us, "condemned political violence regardless of its ideology" (16) and attributed the horror of the years of the dictatorship to extreme violence perpetrated by both sides.[47] Rajca rightly points out that "the goal of much cultural production during this first phase

[46] It is worth mentioning that in 1987 Alfonsín also enacted the Law of Due Obedience, which exonerated lower ranking military personnel, some of whom participated in torture and executions. See Romero 263-265 and Ros 17.

[47] The theory of the two demons is so engrained in discussion about the dictatorship that even the common moniker of the period as "the dirty war" implies a struggle between two aggressive opponents. For this reason, I refer to the years under military rule as "the dictatorship." I must

of post-dictatorship was to attract international attention to the systemic repression of political dissidents and to legitimize the roles of former political prisoners and those returning from exile in building a democratic post-dictatorial society" (11). Cultural production from this period tends to be grounded in testimonial narratives that expose human rights violations and stress the need for remembrance over oblivion. While these narratives brought visibility to victims and their families, they also tended to minimize the political activities of the disappeared and rendered the topic of political activism taboo, portraying the disappeared as innocents instead of activists working towards a revolutionary transformation of Argentina into a more just and equal society (Rajca 10, Romero 326, Ros 17-18).

As it is well-known, beginning in 1977 the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo played a pioneering role in activism. Since then, they have gathered in front of the presidential palace to demand the whereabouts of their missing children, and they still lead the conversation and struggle for justice, thereby creating "the impression that the 'ownership' of the memory of the *desaparecidos* was restricted to family members: only relatives could protest in their name since their loss made them, too, victims of state terrorism" (Ros 19). Citing Gabriel Gatti, Ros reiterates that the relatives of the disappeared became "the only authorized spokespersons" (19), a process that can be understood in terms of Aleida Assmann's concept of canonizing memory. Canonized memories are those that are distilled into "active cultural memory [having] passed rigorous processes of selection, which secure for certain artifacts a lasting place in the cultural working memory of society" (A. Assmann 100). The memories of family members, particularly

give credit to Clara Mari and Victoria Saez at Espacio Cultural Nuestros Hijos (ECuNHi) for bringing this point to my attention during my visit in 2015.

of the generations who were adults during the dictatorship and were widely considered to be victims, were canonized in the Argentine collective memory.

In 1990, President Carlos Saúl Menem (1989-1999) gave clemency to the guerrilla leaders and military officials who had been convicted of human rights violations, which Ros attributes in part to his desire for reconciliation as he accelerated the neoliberal transformation of Argentina's economy that the military government had initiated (19). These pardons caused an uproar and resulted in mass street demonstrations beyond the usual weekly demonstrations of the Madres.

The period of the mid-nineties to early 2000's is considered the second wave of post-dictatorial memory, the so-called "memory boom" (Rajca 12, Ros 21), which was set off by a series of occurrences: Menem's pardons; the Madres and the Abuelas of Plaza de Mayo's formal charges against the military for abducting the infants of prisoners; the coming of age of the children of the disappeared and emergence of the group H.I.J.O.S (Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio); and the public confession of Adolfo Scilingo, who was the first military officer to publicly break the *pacto de silencio* among all levels of the perpetrators of the repression, and to admit the long-rumored death flights were the military's method of choice for "disappearing" the bodies of political prisoners (Ros 20). In addition to literature, film, and art serving as vehicles for memory during the boom and the intellectual work that analyzed it, memorials and sites of memory emerged at this time. The production of the boom further canonized memories that centered the pain of the victims' families, now also including the post-dictatorship generation as part of the struggle. Ros notes that the post-dictatorship generation refocused on their parents' activism, chipping away at the canonized narrative of the innocent victim — as the one described in *Nunca Más* — in favor of an image of

the activist victim, while advocating for justice (21). The 2001 *corralito* financial crisis in Argentina sparked renewed interest in activism, and some saw the activism of the post-dictatorship generation as a continuation of their parents' interrupted activist project of the 1970's (Ros 22).

Presidents Néstor Kirschner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirschner (2007-2015), who themselves identified with the 1970's activists of their generation, awarded reparations to the victims of state terror, replaced high-ranking military and court officials who had been in favor of Menem's pardons, and pursued trials against high and low ranking military officials at a previously unprecedented rate. Rajca considers the third wave of memory as beginning with the Kirschner presidency and continuing until today, and classifies this wave as a boom of works produced by the post-dictatorship generation, as well as works by others who were not related to the disappeared, yet were affected by living under the dictatorship (15). Ros introduces the concept of self-aware memory to better understand production by the post-dictatorship generation:

> This period is characterized by an increasing awareness that memory is a construction informed by specific needs and produces specific effects. Memory is no longer seen as static, but as an open-ended and inclusive process that can be used to orient action in the present. Members of the post-dictatorship generation start questioning established institutionalized narratives. They explore subjects typically left aside, such as left-wing political violence and the role of 'bystanders'—those who thought of themselves (and were often thought of) as mere spectators of conflict. (Ros 5)

Indeed, some works of post-dictatorship film perpetuate the monopoly on memory that the older generations have held and downplay the revolutionary political project of the generation decimated by genocide. For example, the films *La noche de los lapices* (Héctor Olivera, 1986), *Garage Olimpo* (Marco Bechis, 1999), and *Crónica de una fuga* (Adrián Caetano, 2006) focus largely on the experience of detention and torture while the characters' activism appears vaguely

and briefly. Other filmmakers, such as Carri and Agresti, critique the canonized forms of memory of the dictatorship and represent subjects who were previously left out of the conversation; not only bystanders who survived the dictatorship period, but also people who are marginalized by the economic and political projects implemented by the dictatorship that can be traced through to present-day Argentina. Biraben's film falls in between, as *Cautiva* omits information about the activism of Cristina's murdered parents, thereby perpetuating the innocent victim trope, yet the film centers the experience of a post-dictatorship subject and shows the problematic nature of post-memorial transmission.

Scholars currently have access to more material on state terror in Argentina than ever before, due to the efforts of organizations such as the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Asociación Civil Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, the Comisión por la Memoria, and many others are at the world's forefront of pursuing justice in courts of law, constructing memory spaces, and fighting impunity. Their success has drawn international attention to the plight of human rights in Argentina and to the horrors of the dictatorship, influencing international action on declassifying the documents that describe what went on during those years. This includes the mass declassification of documents that U.S. President Barack Obama ordered in 2016 when he visited Argentina during the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the dictatorship. Also coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the coup was Pope Francisco's decree to declassify the Vatican's collection of documents regarding the dictatorship from the secret archive. The work of Argentina's activist groups continues, and therefore new testimony, new information and revelations about the time are constantly being published. Their use of the UN's Convention for the Protection of All Persons against Forced Disappearance and the Convention against Torture

as a framework for pursuing justice is unmatched in the world. However, under the Macri administration (2015 to present), transitional justice is becoming more precarious.

In May 2017, Argentina's supreme court ruled that those convicted of crimes against humanity could have their sentences reduced. *The New York Times* reported, "The court's decision led to a flood of requests for the same leniency from others imprisoned for kidnapping, torture and murder. Activists warned that the ruling could pave the way for the early release of some of the era's most notorious offenders" (Politi). Although Macri eventually condemned the ruling and worked with congress to pass a law preventing reduced sentences for those imprisoned for human rights crimes, the Argentine press blasted Macri for his delayed reaction to the court decision, for claiming to have "no idea" how many disappeared during the dictatorship and for propagating the theory of the two demons. Furthermore, "[h]is government has dismantled human rights departments in several ministries that were helping investigate dictatorship-era crimes" (Politi).

In sum, the canonization of memory and the political and social processes of the democratic transition appear to respond to one another and in some cases even inform each other. In moments, such as during Menem's presidency, where the political realm attempts to rein in processes of truth and justice, activists and cultural producers rally support to push back against conciliatory policies and oblivion. In addition, there has not been a clear and steady progression towards truth and justice since 1983, as the Menem and Macri administrations have supported policies that challenge laws and legal processes established during the Alfonsín and both Kirschner administrations. The course of transitional justice in Argentina has been wrought with tension and fluctuation. Even though Argentina is recognized as the most advanced South

American government in terms of its pursuit of truth and justice, the pace has been three steps forward, and one step back since the end of the dictatorship.

Analysis of *Cautiva*

Despite his work on a long list of Hollywood productions, *Cautiva* (2003) is the only film that Gastón Biraben wrote, produced, and directed.[48] *Cautiva* is the story of a particular aspect of Argentine transitional justice: the identification of the so-called *niños apropiados* and the process of informing them of their true identities and connecting them with their biological relatives. The spectator experiences the story through the character of Cristina/Sofía, a teenage girl who learns that she is the daughter of two disappeared architects, that she was born while her mother was in clandestine detention, and that the couple who raised her illegally had adopted her in a process called known as appropriation.[49][50] The concept of focalization from the field of film narratology is important for understanding how *Cautiva* functions as a narrative that conveys information to

[48] An inspiration to graduate students, Biraben transformed his film school thesis into the screenplay for *Cautiva*.

[49] In my analysis, I refer to the protagonist as Cristina because after she learns that her real name is "Sofía," she insists that her friend call her Cristina and at no point in the movie doe she verbally express a desire to be called Sofía.

[50] Biraben has explained that the story of *Cautiva* is not based on a single case, but rather is an amalgamation of many cases of appropriation. However, one case that is particularly close to that of the film is the story of Mariana Zaffaroni, who learned in 1991 that she had been appropriated. Like Cristina, a Judge used DNA evidence to prove that she was the daughter of two disappeared prisoners. Zaffaroni explained to the *BBC* "El juez no me hizo vivir con mi familia biológica porque yo ya tenía 17 y no quería. Me puso como condición verlos en Argentina. Por muchos años ellos vinieron una o dos veces al año. Yo no quería escuchar lo que ellos tenían que decirme porque era demasiado doloroso. No quería, no podía, construir una relación a partir de una obligación" (Chamy), a similar sentiment to that expressed in the film. Zaffaroni needed years to accept her birth name, which had been changed to Daniela when she was kidnapped.

the spectator about transitional justice and the ways in which transitional justice impacts Argentine society.

In his breakthrough study on film narratology, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, Edward Branigan identifies among levels of narration the narratological concept of focalization. Focalization occurs when a character becomes the spectator's source of information through her experiences in the story. Branigan writes, "Focalization (reflection) involves a character neither speaking (narrating, reporting, communicating) nor acting (focusing, focused by), but rather actually experiencing something through seeing or hearing it. Focalization also extends to more complex experiencing of objects: thinking, remembering, interpreting, wondering, fearing, believing, desiring, understanding, feeling guilt" (101). Focalization differs from narration in that narrators explicitly tell stories. A film's narrator might give the spectator information in a voiceover without ever appearing as a character. Other times a character functions as a narrator who tells a story about past experiences or about the experiences of another character. A focalizer, according to narratologist David Herman, is a "reflector figure, whose vantage-point point provides a window on the action being recounted" (60). *Cautiva* has no narrator, but the protagonist, Cristina, is the focalizer of the film, meaning that the spectator experiences the action of the film through her. The film's focalization restricts and frames how the story conveys information about Argentine transitional justice.

Focalization occurs in *Cautiva* on two levels: externally, meaning that the spectator receives information through what occurs outside of Cristina's mind and body and also internally through the representation of her imagination, such as in a dream sequence or in the scene that shows how she imagined herself as a baby abandoned on a train— a story that proves false. As such, the spectator only has as much information as Cristina has, and the spectator learns about

her past and true identity as it unfolds for her. Therefore, the spectator learns about the divergent discourses regarding the dictatorship and transitional justice as Cristina does, while other aspects of the process of identifying her and connecting her with her biological family are omitted from the film.

What are perceived as anachronisms and omissions have been central to the criticism of Biraben's film. In her article, "Iconic Fictions: Narrating Recent Argentine History in Post-2000 Second-Generation Films," Verónica Garibotto posits that certain representations seem like they belong to the 1980's and not 1994, the year in which the film is set. Specifically, Garibotto takes issue with the discourses of Cristina's classmates that seem to "speak as they would have spoken before the 1990's in the first years of the new democracy" (179). On the other hand, she also points to certain aspects of the mise-en-scène that did not yet exist in 1994, such as certain technologies and the graffiti that mentions H.I.J.O.S., an organization that was not created until 1995. Ultimately, she understands temporal dissonance in *Cautiva* as indicative of ideological and political tension regarding the past when the film was shot in 2001 and 2002.[51]

In an interview between the lead actress, Bárbara Lombardo, and María Gracia Iglesias, a psychologist and activist from H.I.J.O.S., the conversation turns to where the film falls short according to Iglesias, who works with the people that were appropriated as babies and have been identified as the children of the disappeared. The root of Iglesias's complaints is a perceived lack of verisimilitude. She posits that a person in Cristina's situation would have more support:

[51] Biraben began shooting in 2001, but the project was interrupted by the financial crisis. He told *Clarín*: "Si, hacíamos el casting cuando la gente se estaba matando afuera en la calle, fue increíble. Porque además, con todos los cambios de Presidente, no sabíamos si el presupuesto que nos había aprobado el INCAA nos lo iban a dar o no. Fue una locura absoluta, no sabíamos lo que iba a pasar con el país, pero todos nos tiramos a la pileta. Filmamos unos meses y después tuvimos que parar porque no teníamos cómo seguir. Entre abril y octubre de 2002, no pudimos hacer nada de la película" ("El enorme dolor de no saber quién es uno").

> Omite la intervención de los organismos de derechos humanos, narra como en un thriller estadounidense pero lo fusión con el tono de un manual pedagógico sobre víctimas y verdugos. Su quiebre será recreado como un shock cuando sea separada de su familia apropiadora de modo violento y por la fuerza, en imágenes que podrían llevar a pensar que "los que le hacen daño a la chica son el juez y los organismos de derechos humanos"— se queja María Gracia Iglesias—, cuando en realidad son ellos mismos los que devuelven la identidad a las personas hablándoles de su verdad". (Gorodischer).

Iglesias goes on to note other omissions that she argues render the film an unrealistic, if not unhelpful, account of the restitution of identity of the children of the disappeared. She points out the absence of any explicit role of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo in Cristina's case and that the film reproduces certain discourses that undermine the work of activists who fight for DNA testing and the search for other people who were appropriated children. "Pero a mí me preocupa más allá de la obra del autor, y en el sentido de que ése es un típico pensamiento argentino," Iglesias explains, "Cuando planteamos el debate del ADN obligatorio, para que la decisión sobre quién uno es deje de ser individual, todo el mundo se puso en el lugar del pobrecito, con todo lo que le pasó. Es un pensamiento muy argentino el de bregar por el silencio, por no hablar del tema" (Gorondischer). Her preoccupation points to the potential for films to educate the audience through the stories they tell and the information conveyed through storytelling that relates to what we think of as history and reality.

Indeed, because the film externally focalizes on Cristina's experience, the scenes that lead up to the revelation of her status as the daughter of disappeared political prisoners exploit the spectator's distrust in strangers and activate the background knowledge that the title imparts, *Cautiva*. When she is summoned by the judge, Cristina and the spectator learn that her parents are not aware that she will be taken off of her high school campus before learning why she must go, thus creating mystery and tension. The spectator wonders if it is not some sort of elaborate plan to kidnap Cristina, as she herself might wonder sitting in the backseat of the car between a

nun from her school and someone who claims to be a federal police officer, indeed in the custody of the Church and the state (See Figure 19).

Figure 19: Cristina (Bárbara Lombardo) sits between a federal police officer and a nun from her school on her way to see Judge Berrechenea.

By keeping the spectator's level of knowledge equal to Cristina's, the film fosters empathy between the audience and the young protagonist.

While most of the scenes are focalized through Cristina, the film includes within its discourse divergent perspectives and attitudes about transitional justice. The film presents transitional justice as controversial and occurring amidst a battle over how the past should be remembered. Before Cristina learns that she was appropriated, she hears two different stories about the dictatorship by members of her own generation— the post-dictatorship generation that is too young to have their own memories of the time and has vicarious memories from their parents. Her schoolmates, Angélica and Susana, each put forth versions of the past that are paradigmatic for the sorts of discourses about the dictatorship circulating in the mid-nineties.

Cristina's political science class is the first battleground between different ways of understanding the government. The classroom is managed so that when the teacher calls upon a student to answer a question, the student must stand up and answer. However, when the teacher asks for an example of an instance in which the President could pass a law without the congress's authorization, Angélica violates the protocol by answering without being called upon and without standing. She says, "El indulto," which alludes to the controversial clemency that then President Menem gave to high-ranking officials of the military, including the former Junta members, in 1989 and 1990 as a conciliatory gesture (Romero 301). The teacher informs the class that presidential pardons are a power protected by the Constitution:

Angélica:	Si quiere, ¿puede echar a la basura toda la evidencia acumulada en contra de esos asesinos?
Teacher:	Sí, puede hacerlo en contra de quien quiera, nos guste o no nos guste.
Angélica:	Profesora, usted lo sabe. Estos dictadores suspendieron la constitución y ahora son protegidos por ella.
Teacher:	Pero acá no se trata de proteger o no proteger. Estoy tratando de explicarles cuales son las atribuciones que la Constitución le da al Presidente.
Angélica:	¿Al presidente, o un tirano? Por que la verdad es que esa gente fue encontrada culpable en una corte de justicia. ¡Culpable! y el presidente no tiene el poder de ignorarlo.

This scene reveals how the controversy over transitional justice ripples into Argentine society and how it is reproduced in interpersonal relations. Here the teacher, who is giving a lesson on how the government operates, takes for granted the powers described in the constitution and has faith in the political system as a functional entity. She avoids engaging with the ethical and moral implications of Menem's pardons, and instead stands by their validity from a constitutional standpoint. As a faculty member of the elite Catholic school, she is also a part of the very system

that she defends and therefore has a stake in its recognized legitimacy. On the other side, Angélica points to the precarity of the political system, reminding the class that the junta had suspended the constitution to act under a state of exception. For Angélica, the executive powers will ultimately do whatever they want irrespective of the constitution or congress. She condemns Menem's pardons as immoral, but also posits that they undermine the political system by ignoring the judicial processes and evidence that determined the guilt of the junta under President Alfonsín. Cristina and her classmates witness and react to the exchange, giggling when Angélica calls the politicians, "una banda de forros vendidos," an offense for which she is expelled from school.

Angélica's classmates do not take her seriously, as evidenced by the writing on the bathroom stall, "Angélica!!! Alguien la vio??? Dicen que busca la bombacha que perdió." While sneaking cigarettes in the bathroom stall, Cristina and Susana, her best friend whose parents are Cristina's godparents, talk about Angélica. Their dialogue reveals, on one hand, the version of the recent past that Susana's parents have passed onto her— a viewpoint from her father who we later learn was a cruel torturer— and on the other hand Cristina's lack of information about the dictatorship years. Susana tells Cristina that Angélica's parents were subversives, people who used to kill even priests with bombs. When Cristina asks Susana how she knows, she said "Es la verdad. Todo el mundo lo sabe." Cristina asks clarifying questions to understand what Susana means, and she is exposed to the official discourse of the military regarding the dictatorship:

Cristina: Entonces están desaparecidos.

Susana: ¿Qué desaparecidos? Son todos versos. Se rajaron, se fueron del país. Pero eso fue hace tiempo, durante la guerra.

Cristina: ¿La de las Malvinas?

Susana: ¿Otra vez con Malvinas, boluda? La guerra de los comunistas. ¿Tus viejos nunca te contaron nada?

According to Susana, the real war was the war against the communists, who fled the country. Echoing the "Documento Final de la Junta Militar sobre la guerra contra la subversión y el terrorismo," the disappeared are irrelevant lies and the war was against terrorists.[52] Furthermore, Angélica is discredited for being the daughter of "subversivos," while Susana puts forth her version of the past as the truth that everyone knows. These scenes occur early in the film, preparing the spectators to understand the complicated political milieu of the mid-nineties that Cristina must navigate. The discourses of Angélica, Susana and their teacher are important for understanding the positions of victims, perpetrators and the implicated subjects who, in one way or another, enable and benefit from the Argentine political system.[53] Divergent discourses about the dictatorship and its aftermath that are passed down to the post-dictatorship generation from their parents and proliferated intra-generationally in class and in private conversations among the

[52] The "Documento Final de la Junta Militar sobre la Guerra contra la subversion y el terrorismo" states: La experiencia vivida permite afirmar que muchas de las desapariciones son una consecuencia de la manera de operar de los terroristas. Ellos cambian sus auténticos nombres y apellidos, se conocen entre si por los que denominan "nombre de guerra" y disponen de abundante documentación personal fraguada. Las mismas están vinculadas con lo que se denomina como el "pasaje a la clandestinidad"; quienes deciden incorporarse a organizaciones terroristas lo hacen en forma subrepticia, abandonando su medio familiar, laboral y social. Es el caso más típico: los familiares denuncian una desaparición cuya causa no se explican o, conociendo la causa, no la quieren explicar. (Available at : http://www.ruinasdigitales.com/revistas/dictadura/Dictadura%20-%20Documento%20Final.pdf)

[53] Michael Rothberg makes a case for broadening our understanding of human-inflicted trauma beyond the categories of victim and perpetrator to also consider implicated subjects. He posits that implicated subjects are "a large and heterogeneous collection of subjects who enable and benefit from traumatic violence without taking part in it directly" ("Trauma Theory, Implicated Subjects, and the Question of Israel/Palestine").

girls.[54] These opposing worldviews frame the story, preparing the spectator to recognize the contradictions that further exacerbate an already traumatic and difficult scenario.

The state plays an important role in the film as the enabler of transitional justice and the entity that empowers the judge and his team to pursue Cristina's case. The previously described postmemories of the dictatorship, particularly that of Angélica, points towards the contradiction that the state in its democratic iteration is responsible for serving justice to the very victims of the state when it was a dictatorship operating under a state of exception. It is worth mentioning that this is the same state that, under Menem, pardoned the Junta for crimes against humanity. Representatives of the state have the authority to order tests, issue subpoenas, and administer justice as the state deems appropriate. In the film, information about the juridical processes that are transitional justice in practice comes through agents of the state and are focalized through Cristina. For example, when Cristina meets Judge Berrechenea for the first time, he summarizes the information that he decides is necessary for her to understand her case as appropriation. He explains that DNA tests were conducted in three countries as evidence that Cristina is not the daughter of the couple who raised her, but rather the daughter of two architects who were kidnapped and disappeared.[55] He tells her that hers is a case of appropriation, that there are many other young people in her situation, and defines it, telling her "el traspaso de la tenencia no ha contado con la voluntad de tus padres verdaderos, por lo cual vos sos reclamada, con toda

[54] Marianne Hirsch theorizes these two forms of transmission in her article, "The Generation of Postmemory." For Hirsch, familial transmission describes the memories passed down between the generations within the family, such as the memories that Angélica and Susana have inherited from their parents. When Angélica and Susana share these memories with members of their own generation, such as Cristina, these are examples of affiliative transmission, or transmission that occurs within the same generation of memories passed down from the older generation ("The Generation of Postmemory" 114).

[55] The law making DNA testing compulsory did not pass until 2009.

justicia, por sus familiares." Through Cristina, the spectator learns what appropriation means in this context, that it was a systematic criminal practice during the dictatorship, and that the biological family has the legal right to custody of the minor.

As Cristina's identity is reclaimed, the spectator sees the psychological services she receives, DNA testing with her biological grandmother to confirm her identity, and the process of bonding with her biological family. Indeed, *Cautiva* conveys much information about appropriation of children and the pain and challenges that occur for the child as she reclaims her identity caught between the adoptive family and her biological family, two groups that embody very different perspectives about the military dictatorship rooted in distinct experiences of life at the time.

This distinction is poignantly illustrated in two scenes of the film that show 1978 Argentina: one is the opening scene of the film which shows archival footage of Argentina's victory in the 1978 World Cup and the other is a flashback sequence at the film's climax which shows Cristina's birth. Considered together, these scenes show two extremes of experience during the dictatorship.

First, the film opens with a television screen as evidenced by the presence of static noise, which dissipates as the frame grows to full screen (Figure 20).

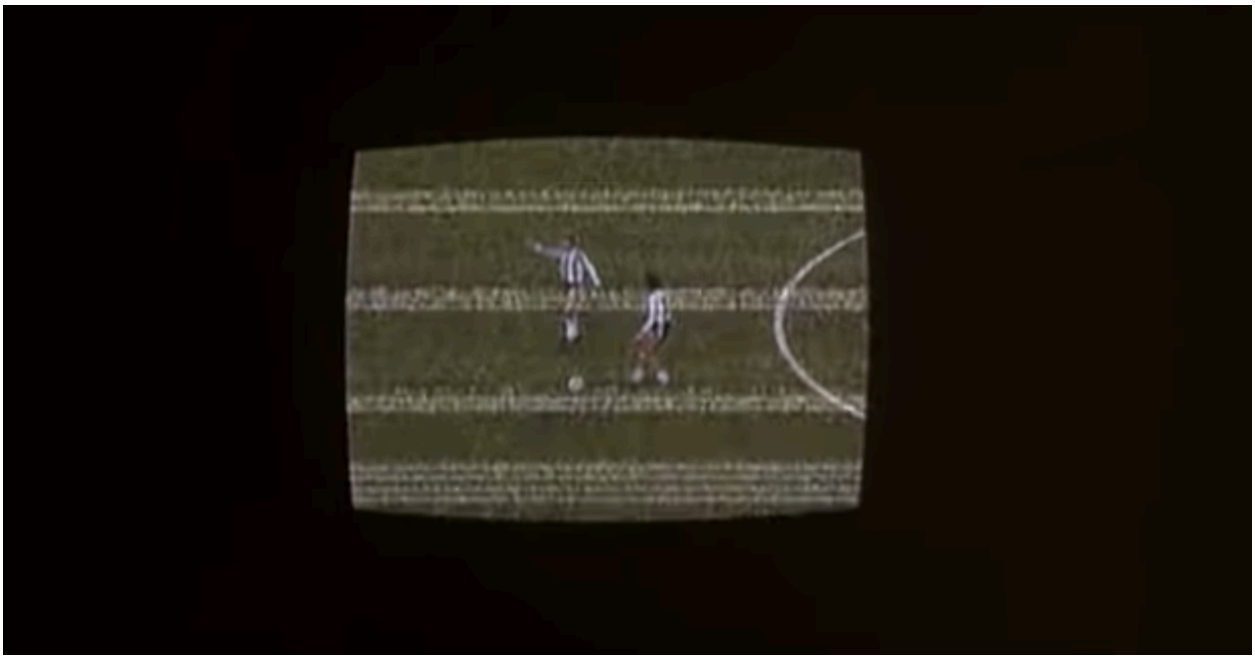

Figure 20: The first shot opens from a television screen displaying the 1978 world cup game.

On the television, Argentina scores the winning goal against the Netherlands. What is remarkable about the footage is not the men on the field, but rather the men watching from the box. The film textually identifies the junta members, then-President Jorge Rafael Videla and Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera. The film also points out the presence of Henry Kissinger, who at the time was no longer serving as Secretary of State but was apparently still cozy with the Argentine dictator. Videla himself bestows the team captain, Daniel Passarella, with the trophy. Meanwhile in the stands, cheering crowds, Argentine flags, and confetti demonstrate the euphoria and excitement of the Argentine fans, a nationalist pride that the military would attempt to exploit to empower their regime (Romero 220).

The opening credits of the film roll over the archival footage of the World Cup and continue as the cheering crowd fades into applause at Cristina's fifteenth birthday party. These two scenes are connected by more than the opening credits, which continue to roll as Cristina dances with her (adoptive) father, Pablo. The *quinceañera* displays the status of the Cristina's (adoptive) family, the Quadris, as affluent and traditional. Cristina and Pablo dance to the

Strauss's waltz, "Blue Danube," and the well-dressed party-goers fawn over Cristina, now a "mujercita." Indeed, the Quadris embody the values of the Argentine military regime, which emphasized European heritage, traditional family values, religion, and ruled on behalf of the elite. Only later to we learn that this connection is deepened by Pablo's career as a Federal Police officer and that the family was deemed fit to raise Cristina precisely because of their values and connections.

The World Cup is a point of departure for revealing the other side of 1978 Argentina, that of clandestine detention, enforced disappearance, and the appropriation of infants. A little-known fact is that the disappeared were publicly memorialized at every 1978 World Cup match through the black bands painted on the goal, which were secret symbols of mourning for Argentina's missing loved ones (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: The black bands on the goal posts were a secret memorial for the disappeared, an almost imperceptible but significant act of protest.

In the 2018 article, "Remembering Argentina 1978: The Dirtiest World Cup of All Time," published in *Esquire*, Will Hersey, points out, "In earshot of the stadium drums, just a few streets away, inside the tree-lined campus of the Navy Petty-Officers School of Mechanics, the junta's flagship torture centre continued to operate. The largest and most notorious of several hundred such concentration camps, this was one place where '*Los Desaparecidos*' were taken." Cristina is born amidst the post-victory euphoria, in the depths of the hidden side of Argentina.

Although she was not born at ESMA, the guards at the prison where her mother gave birth also cheered for the national team's win. When Marta, the delivery nurse, tells Cristina the story of her birth, she prefaces it by explaining that she remembered the date because everyone was celebrating. Marta narrates her story over a flashback sequence of the birth. Cristina's mother, marked with wounds from torture, handcuffed to the bed, and blindfolded, gives birth. Marta explains that against protocol, Cristina was breastfed—signaling a command from high up the ranks to maintain her health. Then, the mother disappears, leaving only a note scratched into the wall, "Sofía nació." Marta's story confirms Cristina's origins and gives her the information needed for her to confront the Quadris and reclaim her identity. She learns which Argentina she is from: the Argentina of concentration camps and secret messages, not the Argentina of victory and fancy celebrations.

As such, *Cautiva* represents the ideological landscape of post-dictatorship Argentina, showing the contradictions, the secrets, and the misinformation that transitional justice efforts must overcome for the sake of restitution. Biraben's *obra prima* has been consecrated as an important film for understanding the Argentine dictatorship and, I argue, for understanding possibilities for justice in democratic Argentina.

Analysis of *Los Rubios*

Albertina Carri lost her parents, Ana María Caruso and Roberto Carri, to enforced disappearance in 1977 when she was only three years old.[56] Her parents were Montoneros militants who were abducted separately from their house in La Matanza, the suburban, working-class neighborhood where they were living underground. Her 2003 film, *Los Rubios*, depicts her search for information about her parents, poses questions about memory and testimony, and challenges a number of the discourses about the dictatorship that were previously taken for granted in the collective imaginary.

Los Rubios is a meta-documentary because it is a documentary about making a documentary. As such, it deals with crises of representation, it shows the processes of filming and directing, and even of seeking financial support for the film's production. However, labeling *Los Rubios* as a meta-documentary or any other genre proves to be rather reductive. Carri's film challenges generic definition and calls attention to the creative choices and fictionalization that occur in documentary filmmaking, which typically presupposes non-fiction and faithfulness to a referent in what we consider the real world. She does so by utilizing multiple diegetic levels, and filmmaking methodologies that are typically omitted from or at least hidden in documentary filmmaking. *Los Rubios* switches between diegetic levels, sometimes within the same scene: on one level is a film depicting Carri as she directs a film about her search for information about her parents; this diegetic level, shot sometimes in color and sometimes in black and white, shows Carri, the director, as she directs the actress who portrays her, Analía Couceyro. Then there is the film within the film, which operates on the meta-diegetic level. The meta-diegetic level is the

[56] I shy away from referring to Carri as an *hija* because of her repeated statements in which she distances herself from the activist organization, H.I.J.O.S. For more information about Carri's critique of H.I.J.O.S. refer to her book, *Los Rubios: Cartografiía de una Película.*

film that the spectator sees being produced on the aforementioned level: Carri, the character played by Couceyro searches for information about her parents, and Playmobil toys act out certain scenes from Carri's childhood imagination. Testimonial interviews and scenic shots of the city and the country appear on these different diegetic levels. The documentary includes what seem to be classic characteristics of documentary filmmaking, such as talking-head interviews, but even these interviews prove unconventional as the interviewees are relegated to anonymity, and they transition from shots of the interview playing on a television that the actress is watching (a video within the film within the film) to shots of the interview taking up the full frame. At times, the soundtrack and the visual shot are mismatched, such as when the actress contemplates photographs on the wall of the forensics center over the reverberating sounds of VHS tapes rewinding. Carri resorts to various resources to tell the story because each approach proves inadequate to relate the story of the past in its totality: for example, the memories conveyed in testimony focus on politics, the neighbors in La Matanza are unreliable or hesitant to speak, and revisiting sites of memory like the clandestine detention center called "Sheraton" offer a repressed view of the past.

Los Rubios emerges during what Rajca identifies as the third-wave of post-dictatorship memory and reflects what Ros has called self-aware memory. Through Carri's experience, the film depicts the struggle of the children of the disappeared to access information about the past and their necessity to rely upon a plethora of resources in their plight, but it also exposes the intergenerational struggle over memory that challenges the post-dictatorship generation's entitlement to speak on how the dictatorship has affected them. In my analysis of *Los Rubios*, I will closely read the scenes that depict this intergenerational struggle, then identify how the film presents the post-dictatorship subject, and finally I will contemplate how this film depicts the

intergenerational repetition of trauma. I posit that Carri's film challenges the absolutist category of victim that previously had been limited to the disappeared and their family members of older generations who survived the dictatorship by presenting her own experience of victimhood.

Los Rubios is widely recognized as a breakthrough film for post-dictatorship Argentina. In his study, *The Politics of Postmemory: Violence and Victimhood in Contemporary Argentine Culture,* Geoffrey Maguire points out that "*Los Rubios* was, of course, not the first to deal with the dictatorship period from the perspective of an *hijo*, but it did have the greatest impact on the cultural sphere" (28). In a 2003 interview with the director in *Pagina /12*, María Moreno calls Carri's film, "Una de las películas más originales y valientes del nuevo cine argentino." Carri's perspective as the child of disappeared activists diverges from the canonized memory of the dictatorship which had centered on the immediate victims of the dictatorship, such as her parents. In his *Estudio Crítico sobre Los Rubios*, Gustavo Noriega posits that the film resists meeting any expectations that a spectator might have when watching a film about the disappeared. Carri rejects the traditional approaches to biographical documentaries that set out to reconstruct and celebrate lives. Instead, "Todo lo que uno espera de un documental relacionado con desaparecidos no está o aparece oblicuo, distinto, tergiversado" (Noriega 21). For example, the photos that appear in the film are defaced or do not appear in their entirety in the shot, and it is never clear who exactly the "talking head" interviewees are or what their relationship is to the Carris.

Much of the scholarship about *Los Rubios* comments on its innovative form as a meta-documentary and how the form relates to the film's themes of the construction of identity and memory. "The film's willingness to put on display its own process of composition not only

highlights its conceptual sophistication," explains Silvia Tandeciarz in *Citizens of Memory: Affect, Representation, and Human Rights in Postdictatorship Argentina*:

> it has the added benefit of laying bare some of the affective imperatives guiding Carri's choice of cinematic strategies. The use of a double to represent her is particularly instructive in this respect: it enhances the film's metacritical articulation through its insistence on performance as a key element in the construction of identity and simultaneously protects Carri from the exposure and vulnerability all recollection entails. (131)

Tandeciarz points out that the choice to hire an actress to play Carri is framed to be a consequence of the first interview, which Carri and her crew conduct with a neighbor in La Matanza. During this interview, the neighbor recognizes Carri and the interview becomes uncomfortable for everyone. In her chapter, "Violence and Representation: Postdictatorship Visions in Lita Stantic and Albertina Carri," Ana Forcinito observes that Carri's use of Couceyro to portray her reveals the crisis of representation that is characteristic of Argentine films from this era, which is inextricably linked to the residual violence that permeates post-dictatorship culture. Indeed, "violent" is the word that Carri and her crew used to describe the first interview in La Matanza. While featuring an actress seems to go against the doxa of documentary-filmmaking, Layla Queilez Esteve points out, in "Autobiografía y ficción en el documental contemporáneo argentino" that Carri's use of Couceyro in her film enables her the distance and anonymity necessary for directing *Los Rubios.*

Carri deals with memory and imagination through the use of Playmobil dolls to reenact scenes from the past as she remembers them. The stop-motion scenes that feature the dolls, indeed a toy reminiscent of childhood and associated with play, imagination, and innocence, act out the scenes that Carri imagined about her parents— of them living with her and holding her hand— but most controversially they also act out their abduction… by aliens. In it, Playmobil figures that represent her parents drive down a road in a convertible. The sound track plays the

sounds of a highway with cars and trucks passing by. Suddenly a UFO appears and snatches the female figure from the passenger seat (see Figure 22). Scream sound effects and spooky music sampled from *The Day the Earth Stood Still* plays as the UFO returns to take the male figure, leaving empty car on the road. The UFO flies off with the abducted Playmobil dolls dangling from below.

Figure 22: Carri uses Playmobil toys to show her parent's kidnapping and disappearance as an alien abduction.

Soon after, three blond girl figures wander the road strewn with suitcases and baggage. Critics, such as Martín Kohen in "La apariencia celebrada," slammed Carri for using Playmobil dolls to show her parents' disappearance as paranormal, saying that it depoliticized their kidnapping and murder.[57] Nonetheless, these scenes appear to be representations of Carri's imagination, and they challenge the spectator to consider how a child might understand and experience the enforced disappearance of her parents.

[57] For an in-depth critique of this scene as depolitical, see Kohen, Martín. "La apariencia celebrada." *Punto de Vista* 78, April 2004. http://www.ahira.com.ar/rh/revistas/pdv/71/pdv78.pdf

One point of contention that arises in discussions of postmemory is the tension between the generations. From the position of a member of the post-generation of the Holocaust, Hirsch poses the questions, "How do we regard and recall what Susan Sontag has so powerfully described as 'the pain of others?' What do we owe the victims? How can we best carry their stories forward, without appropriating them, without unduly calling attention to ourselves, and without, in turn, having our own stories displaced by them? How are we implicated in the crimes that we did not ourselves witness?" (*The Generation of Postmemory* 2). While Carri does not explicitly set out to answer these questions with *Los Rubios*, she does address these concerns by exploring the intergenerational struggle over memory in her film. *Los Rubios* confronts the older generation's hegemony over how the story of the dictatorship and disappearance is told and over how they represent themselves. She challenges the older generation's ownership over memory by interrogating the contradictions inherent within it.

In interviews Carri affirms that the struggle over memory was indeed one of her central preoccupations in making the film. As she spoke to her parents' comrades and to family, she realized that the memories they shared with her did not tell her what she wanted to know about her parents. In describing the process of trying to get to know her parents through interviews with their peers, Carri recalls, "Yo les hacía preguntas personales, como: '¿Fumaban?', ¡quería saber esas cosas! '¿Hablaban idiomas?'. Boludeces así… Y sí, ¿qué quería saber un hijo de sus padres? '¿Qué música escuchaban?'" (qtd. in Noriega 25). Therefore, Carri's project stems from her dissatisfaction with the way that her parents' generation handled memory, "Los compañeros de mis padres estructuran el recuerdo de forma tal que todo se convierte en un análisis político" (qtd. in Noriega 25). Rather than transmitting memories of who her parents were as people with tastes, habits, tendencies and personalities — the quotidian aspects of memory — Carri found

that her parents' generation remembered them in terms of their political positions and activism. *Los Rubios* interrogates this disconnect between what the older generation who assume ownership of memory and the post-dictatorship generation who depend on them for information about the past.

In 2007, nearly four years after the film's release, Carri published a book, *Los Rubios: Cartografía de una película*, in which she describes her motivation for making the film and her intentions with its production. The book articulates Carri's self-awareness as a filmmaker, and that she is aware of the film as a position that she assumes and as a turning point in the struggle over memory. Among her primary concerns is the sanctification of certain narratives that she recognizes as dangerous for memory in the post-dictatorship. Carri clarifies her position:

> La historia argentina, sobretodo la reciente masacre de una generación, corre el riesgo de la santificación: la misma mitologización del pasado que no nos permite tener una mirada crítica sobre los actos y consecuencias que marcaron a las generaciones posteriores. La canonización y la necesidad de llenarlo todo, de reconstruir una memoria histórica y clausurar hasta el más remoto de los misterios dejándonos así sin espacio para la sorpresa o la pasión, lejos de acercarnos a una postura reflexiva nos expulsa del conflicto verdadero y sólo contribuye a distanciarnos de aquello que fuimos. No permite una verdadera interpelación a un pasado que, al no subrayar nuestra libertad, opaca. (Carri 23)

Carri consciously enters into the debate about memory as a frustrated daughter who has been disappointed in the narratives transmitted to her and the older generation's methods of transmission. Moreover, she enters as a filmmaker who has the talent and the habitus[58] to make an impact. As her book and her film show, Carri has her own memory theories and her own vision for how remembrance is operating in Argentina. I posit that Carri's position is not one of

[58] Here I use habitus as Pierre Bourdieu describes it as "the subjective basis of the perception and appreciation of [a cultural producer's] objective chances" (64) towards a position in the field of cultural production. Randal Johnson describes it in clearer terms as "a set of dispositions which generates practices and perceptions" (Bourdieu 5), noting that it is often likened to "a feel for the game" (Bourdieu 5).

competition with the generation of her parents, but rather it is one of multidirectionality in Michael Rothberg's sense of memory "as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative" (*Multidirectional Memory* 3). This results in a productive critical analysis not only of her film, but of the status of memory in Argentina. Her questioning of memory, victimhood, and responsibility make space for the inclusion of other subjectivities to stake their claims in the discussion and negotiation of meaning of the past. The result is the potential for mutual understanding among generations and a call to engage in a more nuanced reckoning with state terror.

The intergenerational struggle over memory becomes apparent as a central preoccupation of *Los Rubios* when a letter from the Comité de Preclasificación del Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales (INCAA) arrives rejecting Carri's application for support for *Los Rubios*. The letter reads:

> En Buenos Aires, a los 30 días de octubre de 2002, el Comité de Preclasificación de Proyectos decide NO EXPEDIRSE, en esta instancia, sobre el proyecto titulado "LOS RUBIOS", por considerar insuficiente la presentación del guión. Las razones son las siguientes:
> Creemos que este proyecto es valioso y pide—en este sentido—ser revisado con un mayor rigor documental. La historia, tal como está formulada, plantea el conflicto de ficcionar la propia experiencia cuando el dolor puede nublar la interpretación de hechos lacerantes.
> El reclamo de la protagonista por la ausencia de sus padres, si bien es el eje, requiere una búsqueda más exigente de testimonios propios, que se concentrarían en la participación de los compañeros de sus padres, con afinidades y discrepancias. Roberto Carri y Ana María Caruso fueron dos intelectuales comprometidos en los '70, cuyo destino trágico merece que este trabajo se realice. (Carri 5)

The letter explicitly states the position of the INCAA: that while Carri's parents' story is valuable and must be shared, her approach is not *how* the INCAA envisions their story should be told. The letter privileges above all the testimony of the comrades of her parents, and insinuates

that a film about Albertina Carri, daughter of disappeared activists, is not as important as a film about her parents.

The letter appears in the film on two diegetic levels: sometimes with Carri as herself and sometimes with the actress portraying Carri in the metadiegetic film. First, in a color shot, the actress portraying Carri prints the letter; in the next shot, also she reads it the letter out loud; then the next shot appears in the signaled by the use black and white, where the actress (now as herself), the crew, and Carri (performing herself) discuss the letter. The discussion turns to the generational tension over how the dictatorship and its implications can be represented on film with the support of the INCAA:

Carri:	No, en realidad quieren la película que necesitan.
Analía:	Claro.
Jésica:	¿Como institución?
Carri:	No, como generación, y yo lo entiendo. Lo que pasa es que es una película la que tiene hacer otro, no yo. […] Ellos necesitan esta película y yo entiendo que la necesiten. Pero no es mi lugar hacerla o no tengo ganas de hacerla.
Marcelo:	No es tu proyecto.

Carri recognizes the position of the INCAA not as an institutional demand, but as the demand of a generation that controls the institution and that seeks to control the construction of collective memory. This scene reveals how institutions in post-dictatorship Argentina actively work towards canonizing particular forms of memory and excluding others that do not reinforce their perspective of the past.

Clearly, Carri is aware not only of the intergenerational struggle over memory, but also of her film as espousing a position that falls outside of the narratives and stories that were circulated regarding the dictatorship and the disappeared. In this sense, Carri personifies Elizabeth Jelin's

memory entrepreneur, someone who is pitching her version the past. In *Los trabajos de la memoria,* Jelin posits that the process of working through memory to give meaning to the past entails a struggle over memory through which various groups and individuals vie for their narrative to become the widely accepted version of the past. "Se trata de actores que luchan por el poder, que legitiman su posición en vínculos privilegiados con el pasado, afirmando su continuidad o su ruptura" (Jelin 40). Jelin claims that "una lucha entre 'emprendedores de la memoria,' que pretenden el reconocimiento social y de legitimidad política de *una* (su) versión o narrativa del pasado" (Jelin 49). For Jelin, the enterprise of the memory entrepreneur is their narrative of the past that they are peddling to the public, presupposing that the dominant discourses on the past will inform the future. In putting forth her story, Carri is challenging the older generation. The INCAA committee, as part of a government institution, has the power to support or reject emerging filmmakers in Argentina and therefore imposes their own vision on the Argentine film industry and the positions of different filmmakers in the field.[59] The INCAA gives cultural capital to the filmmakers that they support bestowing them with a certain authority to tell stories through filmmaking. Carri, however, is not granted support; the INCAA does not respect her authority or creative endeavor, and she is rejected.

In her description of the struggle over memory and the construction of an official story, Jelin describes the role that institutions play in permitting or blocking certain narratives from the mainstream. The INCAA letter in *Los Rubios* and the crew's analysis of the letter exemplifies Jelin's argument in two interesting ways. First, it accounts for the INCAA's position that the

[59] Once again, I am using Bourdieu's sense of the field of cultural production, which is "understood as the system of objective relations between those agents or institutions and as the site of struggles for the monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated" (78). The INCAA is one such institution operating within the field.

testimony of survivors is necessary, and second, it addresses the role of institutions in authorizing subjects, such as filmmakers, to contribute to the construction of memory. Jelin writes:

> La memoria como construcción social narrativa implica el estudio de las propiedades de quien narra, de la institución que le otorga o niega poder y lo/a autoriza a pronunciar las palabras, ya que, como señala Bourdieu, la eficacia del discurso performativo es proporcional a la autoridad de quien lo enuncia. Implica también prestar atención a los procesos de construcción del reconocimiento legítimo, otorgado socialmente por el grupo al cual se dirige. (Jelin 35)

At once, the INCAA simultaneously interferes in Carri's filmmaking process by denying her support while also interfering in the possibility of her becoming an authority. To be sure, filmmaker with institutional support is received as an authority just as a film with INCAA backing gains cultural importance as a project that merits institutional support.

By including the letter in *Los Rubios*, Carri exposes the agenda of the INCAA to foment a specific version of the dictatorship, which centers on the disappeared and the generation of survivors. In other words, the INCAA contributes to the widely accepted version of the dictatorship that frames the families of the disappeared who were adults during state terror as the rightful owners of memory and the only authorities who can speak on the past. Carri addresses her inclusion of the letter in the film in interviews explaining that it indeed illustrated a point that she thought was key to understanding her experience. "Lo que me di cuenta es que la carta era sintomática, era parte de lo que la película estaba contando, por eso la incluí. Hasta sugería que yo estaba intentando hablar de mis padres y no me animaba. La carta era también como una palmada en la espalda por los 'hechos lacerantes'" (qtd. in Moreno). For Carri, including the letter was an effective way of showing what she confronted, and the letter becomes a symbol of the struggle over memory more generally with which Carri is engaged.

The intergenerational struggle over memory also seems to have spilled into the critical reception of *Los Rubios*. While the critical reception does not show a clear intergenerational divide, it does show how the struggle over memory plays out in scholarship with some critics siding with the INCAA's view that Carri's film is not rigorous enough and does not offer anything in terms of understanding memory and the past, while other critics praise Carri's filmmaking as brave and innovative. Ros explains, "All the aspects of the past unearthed by Carri's film—the sensorial and the concrete, the armed struggle and the disagreements about it, the class gap between activists and members of the working class—unsettled the preestablished human rights narrative and therefore provoked strong reactions in the groups that identified with it" (41). Indeed, the old guard of memory, as represented by activist groups such as Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, advocated for human rights while promoting a narrative that split the past in terms of good and evil, innocent and guilty, right and wrong. *Los Rubios* challenges such binaries by suggesting that these dichotomies inadvertently strip people of their humanity.

The tone that the film espouses regarding the older generation has been the subject of critique. Critics took particular offense to the scenes on the metadiegetic level in which Carri (performed by Couceyro) plays the recorded interviews with her parents' peers. Martín Kohan writes, "La actuación de Couceyro es en estos casos el despliegue de un vasto muestrario de modos de la desconsideración: da la espalda a la imagen grabada de quienes hablan, desoye, desatiende, ensaya gestos o se pone a hacer otra cosa" (qtd. in Noriega 27). In his analysis, Noriega posits that by showing the interviews on a monitor within the metadiegetic level of the film with its distorted sound quality and fuzzy images shows that "Los testimonios, entonces, deliberadamente no son centrales de *Los Rubios*; el contenido de esas conversaciones no es esencial a la película sino como demonstración de una distancia insalvable entre la experiencia

de aquellos que convivieron con Roberto Carri y Ana María Caruso y la de Albertina, que solo tenía tres años cuando aquellos fueron secuestrados" (Noriega 26). What some read as belittling the experiences of the older generation, other critics, like Noriega, interpret as an approach to show the disconnect between the generations.

Beatriz Sarlo argues that Carri's film is not really about her parents, but a self-centered production about her search for her parents. In her reading, which deals exclusively with the narrative of the film, all but overlooking the possible interpretations available through formal analysis, Sarlo critiques how Carri portrays the interviews with her parents' peers. She argues that Carri mutes her parents' political projects and the reasons behind their activism:

> Ciertamente, el film de Carri muestra poco interés por lo que dicen de sus padres quienes los conocieron. Porque esos contemporáneos de los padres todavía quieren gobernar las cosas desde su perspectiva política; porque no pueden sino hablar desde ese pasado; o porque ponen siempre en comunicación la dimensión familiar privada con la militancia, para la directora-hija de los desaparecidos, las cosas pierden por completo su interés. (Sarlo 147)

Sarlo criticized Carri not only for choosing to focus on the non-political aspects of her parents, but also for focusing more on her childhood in the country, on her own search for identity and goes so far as to represent herself doubly through her own appearance in the film and through Couceyro, while relegating the members of her parents' generation to anonymity. Sarlo's more general critique of post-dictatorship memory's "giro subjetivo" (22) that is, the privileging of testimony and first-hand experience, and more specifically the post-dictatorship generation's subjective movement towards memory is that the affective connection that defines their position to past events also undermines the possibility of any rigorous understanding of the past. Sarlo's critique seems to agree with the INCAA's: that *Los Rubios* should be more focused on Carri's parents and what happened and less on her own feelings and experience. In response to Sarlo, Tandeciarz points out that Carri's film in fact, "Triggered precisely the kind of deep reflection

and response that Sarlo and her counterparts reserved for *avanzada* aesthetics and for arguably more *objective* academic treatises, as if these were not also subjectively encoded" (xxxi). Although Sarlo's critique is framed by a privileging of what she considers objective and rigorous works on memory of the dictatorship over the subjective and identity-centered works such as Carri's, this paradigm can also be understood as part of the intergenerational struggle over how memory of the dictatorship should be expressed and analyzed. Tandeciarz mentions that of the few works that deal with memory of the military dictatorship that Sarlo applauds are works conducted by survivors of state terror, such as Pilar Calveiro and Emilio de Ipola. To be sure, Calveiro and de Ipola both approach their excellent research from their personal and affective links to state terror as survivors of clandestine detention and torture.

Los Rubios does not merely offer a critique of the old guard of memory. Through her film, Carri relates her experience as a member of the post-dictatorship generation. The post-dictatorship subject, as shown in Carri's film, is someone with a mediated experience of state terror, and as such it is someone who must wade through the ideology and emotions of the older generation upon whom they rely for these vicarious memories. Carri suggests that ultimately, the politics of her parents and their revolutionary struggle do not matter to her, because what matters is that they are gone. In a scene in which Carri (played by Couceyro) screams into the open space of the pampa, her voiceover poses questions about her parents' choice to stay and fight instead of fleeing with their children to protect their family. She says "Me cuesta entender la elección de mamá. ¿Por qué no se fue del país? me pregunto una y otra vez. O a veces me pregunto ¿por qué me dejó aquí, en el mundo de los vivos?" The question of her relationship to her parents leads to more existential questions about what happens after death, "¿Dónde están las almas de los muertos? ¿Comparten sitio todos los muertos o los asesinatos transitan otros lugares? ¿Las almas

de los muertos están en los que venimos después? ¿En aquellos que intentamos recordarlos? Y ese recuerdo, ¿cuánto tiene de preservación y cuánto de capricho?" This scene, which occurs purely in the metadiegetic level, shows the existential crisis of the post-dictatorship generation, particularly that of the children of the disappeared. Carri contemplates her parents' choices to pursue the armed struggle over fleeing with the children for safety.[60] She asks questions that she can never answer about her parents' motivations. She connects her rage to her father's, suggesting a sort of inheritance, but rather than being outraged over the political situation like Roberto supposedly was, she is outraged for surviving her parents. Her position as a survivor raises existential questions about life, death, and the afterlife. For Carri, understanding her parents' political project is not urgent when compared to these larger metaphysical questions; a viewpoint that distances her from other *hijos* who set out to revive their parents' revolutionary projects.

Hirsch's conceptualization of postmemory sheds light on *Los Rubios* as a post-dictatorship narrative of return in which the trauma of Carri's parents is reproduced. Hirsch describes postmemory as a structure rather than an identity. In considering postmemory among other "post" movements, such as postcolonialism and postmodernism, Hirsch explains:

> "Postmemory" shares the layering and belatedness of these other "posts," aligning itself with the practices of citation and supplementarity that characterize them. Like the other "posts," "postmemory" reflects an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture. And yet postmemory is not a movement, method, or idea; I see it, rather as a structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge an embodied experience. (*The Generation of Postmemory* 5-6)

[60] This struggle is the central theme of Benjamin Ávila's *Infancia clandestina* (2013), based on the filmmaker's childhood experience.

Unlike memories of traumatic first-hand experiences, postmemory is a structure of transmission of information about traumatic experiences from the parents who experienced it to their children who have no memories of their own of the trauma in question.

I would like to highlight three moments that illustrate this point: first, in the scene that takes place at the forensics lab; second, in the scene in which Carri and crew visit the police department that used to be the clandestine detention center known as the Sheraton; and finally in the scenes that take place in the La Matanza neighborhood. Carri visits these places seeking information about the past and about her identity, and each place plays a different role in her parents' disappearance: the neighborhood and the detention center were the places where they spent their last days, and the forensics center could have their DNA if their remains were ever recovered. "Return journeys," Hirsch writes, "*Can* have the *effect* of such a reconnection of severed parts, and, if this indeed happens, they can release latent, repressed, or dissociated memories—memories that, metaphorically speaking, remained behind, concealed within the object" (*The Generation of Postmemory* 211-212; emphasis in original). Carri's return journeys are precisely to find these concealed memories, and as they emerge she experiences trauma.

Due to the nature of enforced disappearance, the traumatic experiences leading up to the extermination 30,000 people in Argentina may never be known in much detail. Forensic investigation offers some information about the bodies that are recuperated; therefore, many family members of the disappeared submitted DNA samples and some of them have received confirmation of the deaths of loved ones when their DNA has matched that of remains. The forensics lab appears in *Los Rubios* when Carri (played by Couceyro) calls the lab to get their hours and organize her visit. Then, she goes to the lab to submit a DNA sample. The scene at the lab transitions from one diegetic level to another. On the metadiegetic level, Carri/Couceyro

gives a DNA sample and the shot is in color. Immediately following, in a black and white intradiegetic shot, Carri played by herself submits a DNA sample. She offers her finger to the lab technician, and when he pricks it, she starts. The shot captures the whole process of the DNA collection, from the prick of Carri's finger, to squeezing out her blood, collecting her blood, and then storing the sample to be analyzed.

The scene in the forensics lab depicts a uniquely post-dictatorship practice that is an integral part of Argentine transitional justice: collecting DNA in order to identify the human remains that may belong to disappeared political prisoners. As a post-dictatorship subject, Carri answers the imperative to contribute a DNA sample. The DNA collection, despite consisting of a little prick, is a moment in which the physical trauma of her parents is reproduced. Because her parents were murdered by the state, it is her duty to submit her body to injury and give her blood in anticipation of learning about the past. This scene shows the way in which the post-dictatorship generation must return to trauma in order to work through it and understand the past. Interestingly, Couceyro (playing Carri in a metadiegetic color shot) also submits her DNA although no personal information about the actress and any possible relationships to disappeared people appears in *Los Rubios*. However, as the actress playing Carri, Couceyro must also go through the process of DNA collection to fulfill her role. The results of the DNA tests do not appear in the film, which suggest that they did not match any DNA in their bank of samples collected from remains.

Another approach to understanding the trauma that her parents' experienced and to learning about their last days was returning to the Sheraton, the clandestine detention center where they were detained before their deaths. At the time of the filming, the building that once served as a clandestine prison was a functioning police station. As such, the building is a

palimpsest of state violence, once clandestine and illegal and now official and legitimized. Before entering, the crew, Couceyro played by herself, Carri played by herself, and Carri's aunt prepare for their visit. Then, in a metadiegetic shot, Carri (played by Couceyro) enters the police station. The spectator is immediately reminded of state violence upon entering the building. In the lobby, the camera focuses on the guns in the hip holsters of officers interspersed with shots of the crew shooting and of Carri's aunt waiting. The violence of the state, crystallized in the weapon of the officer, still occupies the building even though the Sheraton no longer serves as a concentration camp. A shot of Carri (played by herself) holding a camera and walking through a hallway cuts to the perspective of Carri's camera, and from here the rest of the scene takes place on the metadiegetic level. Shots of the actress as she walks throughout the building cut to shots from Carri's camera. This shift in perspective to Carri's camera shows what she sees as she tours the clandestine detention center where her parents were held and tortured, whilst reminding the spectator that Carri is also being played by an actress. On one hand, the effect of the sequence is that the spectator sympathizes with Carri played by Couceyro and the point of view shots from the camera seem to be from the perspective of Carri played by Couceyro. In fact, all of the shots in this sequence are from the perspective of Carri, the director. Her direction drives Couceyro in the scene, and the shots from Carri's camera give us her perspective. Regardless of the resources at Carri's disposal to learn about her parents' time at the Sheraton, (these resources include the actress, her aunt, the tour, and her background information), what her visit shows is a rather unremarkable police station with cells, a dirty bathroom, sleeping quarters and a kitchen for the officers on duty. Physically returning to the place where her parents were held offers little information, yet the camera shows the erasure of the past. Following the visit, there is no mention of the impact of Carri's visit or how it affected her search. If nothing else, it is clear that

the visit to the Sheraton reveals that the clandestine, repressive organs of government transformed to official and legal forms of law enforcement as Argentina transitioned to democratic governance, a point that will be further addressed in my analysis of *Buenos Aires Viceversa*.

Finally, *Los Rubios* is a narrative of return as it depicts Carri's return to the neighborhood of La Matanza, the working-class neighborhood where her family lived underground. The trauma of her parents is repeated in her return to La Matanza as Carri realizes, first, that she and her crew stick out as outsiders. In an interview, Carri (played by Couceyro) describes the position of the crew in the neighborhood, that they were "como un punto blanco que se movía y era muy evidente que no éramos de ahí, que éramos extranjeros para ese lugar. Y me imagino que sería parecido a lo que pasaba en su momento con mis padres." Towards the end of the film, Carri's suspicions are verified as she learns that her parents were indeed considered outsiders and treated as such. The revelation occurs at what I consider the climax of the film, when Carri and her crew interview a neighbor from La Matanza.

Over the course of the interviews, it becomes evident that neighbors were not merely complicit in state terror by virtue of inaction and silence, but actively aided the military in the pursuit for Roberto and Ana María. In its nuanced presentation of a variety of subjectivities affected by the dictatorship such as the neighbor who is implicated in the kidnapping and disappearance of Ana María and Roberto, Carri raises questions regarding the widely accepted view of society during the dictatorship as innocent and uninvolved as put forth in the theory of the two demons. In order to arrive at these questions, she had to undergo the repetition of her parents' trauma— indeed, her visit with former neighbors was traumatic in that it transmitted

memories of her parents' abductions— as it is an apparently necessary step in her pursuit of information about the past.

Los Rubios not only offers a challenge to the previously canonized memories of the dictatorship as told by members of the older generation, but it also shows how the effects of state violence ripple into society, permeating it for decades into the post-dictatorship. While it has often been read within the paradigm of competitive memory, namely the competition between generations to tell the story of the dictatorship and to have ownership over memory of the time, the film offers more when we can analyze as a move towards multidimensional memory. *Los Rubios* offers a challenge to push the spectator to consider the past more critically, to revive nuance, to remember the humanity of the disappeared and not just their politics and their horrific deaths, and to recognize the victimization of the younger generation who suffers the ripple effects of state terror. It pushes the old guard to make room for other victims of state terror, such as the generation that was too young to have a political position at the time or engage in conscious resistance or complicity. *Los Rubios* challenges the canonized memory of the dictatorship and dominant discourses regarding the disappeared to include more nuance and humanity.

Analysis of *Buenos Aires Viceversa*

Alejandro Agresti's 1996 film, *Buenos Aires Viceversa*, offers a glimpse into how the legacy of the military dictatorship and its policies have thrown Argentine society, symbolized by the city of Buenos Aires, into disorder and in reverse. The film opens with a dedication: "En los años de la dictadura militar en la Argentina desaparecieron y fueron asesinadas unas 30.000 personas. La mayoría de ellos eran jóvenes y los hijos que dejaron recién hoy están en edad para

pedir respuesta a la sociedad. A ellos está dedicado este film." The dedication prepares the viewer to connect the atrocities of the past to the 1990's in which the film takes place.

Buenos Aires Viceversa has a fragmented tandem structure with many characters whose stories all converge at the end of the film. It is a collage of the difficult interpersonal relationships, the precarious labor situation in 1990's Buenos Aires, and an identity crisis exacerbated by uncertainty regarding the traumatic past. The protagonist, Daniela (Vera Fogwell), is a young film student who struggles to find work and whose parents disappeared when she was a baby. The film also shows the older generations in Buenos Aires whose lives were altered dramatically by the dictatorship, including a former torturer (Harry Havilo) who tricks a blind woman into accompanying him to a motel where he assaults her, reproducing the sort of torture acts he carried out during the dictatorship, and an elderly couple, Don Nicolás and Doña Amalia (Carlos Galettini and Floria Bloise, respectively), who have not left their apartment since their daughter's disappearance during the dictatorship. Agresti also includes the youngest generation through the figures of various children who are experiencing homelessness, including Bocha (Nazareno Casero), a boy whom Daniela informally adopts. While Nicolás and Amalia suffer the trauma from the last dictatorship as manifested in their inabilities to cope with life in contemporary Buenos Aires, the younger generations, especially those with no family safety net, additionally suffer social exclusion and poverty as direct victims of the neoliberal economic policies implemented during the dictatorship and accelerated in democratic governance under Menem.[61] In this analysis, I focus on how the film presents the people who are left out of discourses on human rights and *Nunca más* in post-dictatorship Argentina.

[61] Menem (1989-1999) is credited with implementing the Washington Consensus, a framework characterized by domestic austerity and opening markets to foreign investment.

Though there are several subplots, the central plot follows Daniela as she is hired to film Buenos Aires and meets Bocha while filming in the street, and this narrative line touches on all of the aforementioned points that I will address here. While looking for work, Daniela answers the newspaper ad of an elderly, aristocratic couple, Don Nicolás and Doña Amalia, who want a young person who can film the city for them. The couple explains that they have not left their apartment since their daughter moved to Europe and married, and they want video of ". . . lo que está sucediendo ahí a fuera," and of people in the city. Later, they reveal that their daughter was an activist who disappeared, and that they have been too afraid to leave their apartment since then. Daniela shoots images of Buenos Aires and the people in public, including children in the slum and people eating and embracing in plazas. She brings the couple raw footage of abject poverty and close-ups of homeless people, immigrants, street children, and other people she encounters in public. In other words, Daniela captures a side of Buenos Aires quite other than the image that Nicolás and Amalia remember of the glorious South American capital, populated with wealthy, white Argentines against the backdrop of European-influenced architecture. Indeed, Argentina boasted the highest standard of living in Latin America for many years as well as a booming manufacturing industry in the 1960's. The pre-dictatorship Buenos Aires that Don Nicolás and Doña Amalia remember had less inequality and poverty than the post-dictatorship.[62]

In the scene when Daniela and the couple discuss her film, their dialogue is interjected with Nicolás screaming and cursing at Daniela. Shots of Nicolás, Amalia, and Daniela, quickly cut between a close-up of Nicolás (see Figure 23), a low-angle close-up of Daniela (Figure 24), and long shots that include all three characters in the elegant sitting room (Figure 25)

[62] For more on Argentina's economic decline, see Cooney, Paul. "Argentina's Quarter Century Experiment with Neoliberalism: from Dictatorship to Depression." *Revista De Economia Contemporânea*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2007, pp. 7–37., doi:10.1590/s1415-98482007000100001.

interspersed with the film within the film. On the television, a homeless woman in a brassiere in a plaza scratches her belly and stares into the camera, invading Nicolás and Amalia's home with her gaze (Figure 26).

Figure 23: Don Nicolás (Carlos Galettini)

Figure 24: Daniela (Vera Fogwell)

Figure 25: The shot including Doña Amalia (Floria Bloise), who watch her husband scold Daniela.

Figure 26: A shot from Daniela's film.

He tells Daniela, “Esto no es la calle, no es arte, ¡no es nada! ¡A vos lo que te gusta es a choquear la gente!” When Daniela tells him that she does not understand why he’s so angry, he

tells her, “Nos enojamos porque muchachas como vos nos hace preocupar mucho gente como nosotros,” and explains that they had a granddaughter and that they do not want more girls to end up like her, alluding to their granddaughter’s disappearance. Gunderman rightly identifies Daniela’s style of filmmaking as reminiscent of the revolutionary film movements of the 1960s and 1970s, such as *cinema verité* and Brazilian *cinema novo*, thereby linking her to activist filmmaking that sought to depict and denounce social inequality (95-96). Daniela’s affinity with revolutionary cinema connects her to the sort of activism that Nicolás and Amalia blame for their daughter’s disappearance, and this is what worries them.

The story of Nicolás and Amalia effectively shows the way that the culture of fear established during the dictatorship remained even after the transition to democracy. When the dictatorship ended, the disappeared remained missing, their whereabouts remained a mystery and, therefore, the effects of genocide through enforced disappearance linger in society even today. Ultimately, Nicolás gives Daniela a second chance, offers her even more money, and tells her “¡Traés cosas como la gente!” Confused, Daniela asks, “¿Qué gente?” Daniela’s question, “¿Qué gente?” is the question of who is considered a person worthy of representing on film. Furthermore, who counts as a person? Apparently for Don Nicolás and Doña Amalia, the people in Daniela’s film do not. The question remains: what are the implications when the people that Daniela filmed are not considered people?

Susana Draper identifies the subjects of Daniela’s film as “’cabecitas negras’ (literally ‘little black heads’), historically a pejorative racial epithet denoting subalternity in terms of class (poverty), race (Indigenous features), and national origin (Latin American immigrants). The epithet is used to refer to the non-European ethnic population” (185). She notes, “The theme of visible space, class, and race is crucial to the anger of the elderly aristocrat/aesthete. His

understanding of people emerges as an implicit effect of ideology, as a pact (sharing the meaning of street-art-people) that Daniela's images shatter by questioning the implicit framing of the city and the people who are supposed to inhabit it" (Draper 186). Indeed, Daniela's depiction of Buenos Aires and the "cabecitas negras" is not a depiction of the city or the people that Nicolás remembers and wants to see.

White supremacy and European supremacy underlie Nicolás's discourse about "people," as it was also underlying in the couple's inquiry into Daniela's last name and Italian heritage. The historical tension between the white aristocracy of European descent and the people of color in Argentina is marked by the genocide of indigenous people and Afro-Argentines. Genocide was part of the nation's founding and a mechanism for whitening Argentina's population and culture as part of its nation-forming project. Indeed, white supremacy is written into the Argentine constitution, which explicitly promotes European immigration.[63] The subjects of Daniela's film are not people in the eyes of traditional Argentine society, as embodied by the aristocratic couple, and therefore they have no place in a film about Buenos Aires. However, they are in Daniela's film and furthermore, they are in Agresti's film about Buenos Aires.

Buenos Aires Vice Versa depicts the people traditionally excluded from the white supremacist vision of Argentine society through both Agresti's and Daniela's cameras. In moments of the film that focus on different characters, Agresti shows poverty in Buenos Aires, children selling flowers in the street, a man defecating in the park, and orphaned homeless

[63] The language of Article 25 of the Argentine constitution explains: The Federal Government will encourage European immigration; and will not restrict, limit, nor tax the entry of any foreigner into the territory of Argentina who comes with the goal of working the land, bettering industry, or introducing or teaching sciences or the arts. (El Gobierno federal fomentará la inmigración europea; y no podrá restringir, limitar ni gravar con impuesto alguno la entrada en el territorio argentino de los extranjeros que traigan por objeto labrar la tierra, mejorar las industrias, e introducir y enseñar las ciencias y las artes.)

children including a main character, Bocha. Both films show people occupying public spaces in Buenos Aires— the plazas, the bus stops, the street. Public space in Buenos Aires, where anyone regardless of social status or race can be, is juxtaposed by the shopping mall where the story in *Buenos Aires Viceversa* climaxes and all of the characters converge.

Setting the film in the 1990's in the midst of Argentina's neoliberal transformation through Menem's implementation of the policies of the Washington Consensus, *Buenos Aires Viceversa* shows Argentina's capital becoming at once a global city connected to the global economy and, simultaneously, a site of increasing inequity. Both of these phenomena coalesce in the shopping mall scene. The shopping mall is an example of what Marc Augé calls a non-place. Augé's hypothesis is that, "if a place defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (63). Non-places are those in which circulation, consumption, and communication occur in the context of globalization, which Augé characterizes as "the extension over the whole surface of the planet of the so-called free market and the technological networks of communication and information" (x). Considering the mall as a non-place, it follows that the mall in *Buenos Aires Viceversa* is a symbol of Argentina's new presence in the global market and a space for circulation and consumption of global goods as well as the restriction of the organic interactions, exchanges and un-predictability of society.

It is important to remember that the mall is not like the public plaza and the street open to all; rather it is an exclusive space open to customers who make purchases and policed by private security. As Augé posits, "Alone, but one of many, the user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it). He is reminded, when necessary, that the

contract exists" (82). The security guard at the mall is this very reminder of the contract, and anyone who breaks the contract will have to face him.

The mall scene illustrates what happens when the contract is broken. At the mall, Daniela goes to the record store to search for a song that reminds her of her disappeared parents. When she puts on the headphones, the song, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice,* becomes the diegetic sound that Daniela hears and simultaneously the soundtrack over what follows: Bocha goes off on his own and finds a video camera and steals it, thereby violating the contract of the mall. In the commotion, the mall security guard, who we know from previous scenes was a torturer during the dictatorship, shoots him in an act of *gatillo fácil*.[64] Bocha's body falls among a pile of empty boxes— like the boxes, he is residual in the global economic system as someone without the means to be a customer (Figure 27).

[64] *Gatillo fácil* is equivalent to "shoot first, ask questions later" in English, and is a common refrain in Argentina to describe incidents where an armed person shoots an unarmed person who is not a threat.

Figure 27: Bocha,(Nazareno Casero) like the discarded boxes, is residual of the global capitalist system.

The shooting is a spectacle in the mall with dozens of witnesses. One witness is the up-and-coming boxer, El Tigre, who is a "cabecita negra" like Bocha (Draper 188), and who comes from poverty but dreams becoming a wealthy boxing champion. He attacks the guard and beats him. Following this scene, a television news program covers the incident, reporting that a drunken boxer belligerently attacked a mall security guard, whose gun accidentally fired, killing an innocent boy. This sequence reveals the omnipotence of the global economic system and the mechanisms through which it protects itself. First, when Bocha breaks the contract by attempting to steal, the mall security guard exterminates him. When El Tigre identifies this injustice and retaliates against the security guard in solidarity with Bocha, he is punished and blamed for the whole incident, exonerating the security guard and hiding Bocha's violation of the contract for which he was murdered. Consequently, El Tigre is subjected to the justice system of the state, which is ultimately protecting the security guard and the economic system. Furthermore, it

shows how the violence of democratic Argentina is recycled from the violence of the dictatorship, as embodied by the torturer-turned-private security guard.

The depiction of filmmaking and television production casts the possibility of representing the truth in film and television in post-dictatorship Argentina as bleak. Daniela's film documenting Buenos Aires is rejected and the media portrays events in a light that will always be favorable to the state and its policies, which are rooted in the politics of the dictatorship. These media contribute to the construction of cultural memory and their discourses compete for dominant positions among all the other possible memories that are actively or passively remembered or forgotten. Agresti's film reveals the struggle over how events are remembered and the dispute over who counts as "people" in the post-dictatorship.

Buenos Aires Viceversa raises questions about the idea of personhood in the post-dictatorship by portraying a Bocha, a homeless boy, as a victim. I propose that Agresti, therefore, expands the scope of victimhood in the post-dictatorship beyond the group most often depicted as victims, the disappeared and their families. In doing so, the director depicts the amplification of the category of victim as part of a fundamental broadening of the scope of the human rights movement in Argentina. Agresti's film does not deny the victimhood of the disappeared and their families: the loss and fear the aristocratic couple experiences as a result of the dictatorship are undeniably heartbreaking. These manifestations of victimhood need not compete, as they can help illuminate each other for a richer understanding of the post-dictatorship Argentina.

Agresti connects the violence of dictatorship to neoliberal violence, and the disappeared of the 1970's to what Mariano Saravia calls the "economic disappeared" (183) of the 1990's. Like Agresti, Saravia draws a clear connection between the military's "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional," including its genocide, and the neoliberal economic model that the

military also set into motion. In his research on the genocides of twentieth-century Argentina, he cites Argentina's history of organizing and resistance as an impediment towards implementing the market fundamentalism and argues that a genocide was needed to destroy any possible popular resistance. Saravia directly connects the violence of the 1970's to that of the 1990's:

> Si los '70 nos dejaron a los desaparecidos, los '90 nos dejaron desaparecidos económicos, todos los que no están, no existen, no queremos ver, los que viven en esas verdaderas ciudades ocultas que son las villas miserias, donde no entra ni el Estado, pero no sólo por inseguridad, también por indiferencia, porque es mejor pensar que no existen. Los seres humanos que viven allí son verdaderos desaparecidos económicos y civiles. (Saravia 183)

The economic disappeared are precisely the Bochas and the human beings in Daniela's video that the Argentine elite do not see as people. These people are excluded from the economy; as Saravia observes, they are not even able to be exploited within the system that will not buy their labor. By including Bocha as a victim of the violence that is a continuation of the dictatorship, Agresti pushes us to reconsider categories of victimhood as well as the discourses on victimhood and memory put forth in *Nunca más.*

In his critique of *Nunca más*, Rajca observes that human rights discourse in Argentina is rooted in liberal humanitarianism and refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (37).[65] It follows the tradition of human rights that centers political and civil rights rather than economic and social rights, and describes the victims of enforced disappearance as a specific

[65] It is worth mentioning that human rights as defined in the tradition of liberal humanitarianism, although called "universal" also exclude those in the moment they need protection the most. Arendt examines this in "Decline of Nation-State; End of Rights of Man" in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

class of Argentines.[66] *Nunca más* was written about victims more like the daughter of Don Nicolás and Doña Amalia. That is, people who in life enjoyed relative economic and social privilege who used their status to fight inequality and push for social change. "However," Rajca points out, "this description also performs a foundational exclusion of those very people in need—those living in *villas-miserias* and *barriadas miserables*—as the non-subjects of *nunca más*" (39).

Nunca más contributed to the construction of the identity of the victim of state violence, concentrating on the middle-class activist and neglecting the marginalized poor. While denouncing the violation of the human rights of the disappeared, it fails to acknowledge the violated human rights of those excluded from the system and the state altogether. This conceptualization of the victim has also contributed to the privileging of memories of these victims and their families. Recalling the concept of exemplary memory in Jelin's sense of memory that teaches a lesson, the only state violence that we can learn from is the violence inflicted upon those who we recognize as victims (51). In order to recognize victimhood, we must first recognize personhood and the right to rights.

Buenos Aires Viceversa shows how state terror ripples through society, claiming additional victims to the ones that are traditionally recognized as victims in the canonized memories of the dictatorship as put forth in *Nunca más*. Therefore, this film makes a bold intervention in the struggle that Jelin identifies as the social construction of what it means to be a victim and the issue over "ownership" of memory (43). As a child of the disappeared, Daniela's right to remember transforms the process of building collective memory. At the same time, she

[66] For more on the erasure of social and economic rights from global human rights discourse, see: Moyn, Samuel. *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World.* Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018.

uses her camera to show the people who are not considered victims by the standards of *Nunca más,* but who clearly are victimized in the aftermath of the dictatorship. Cultural agents, such as Daniela, dramatically transform the process of building collective memory.

Despite this, Agresti proposes a version of how the past has informed the present, and his vision of the ramifications of the dictatorship is more inclusive than the prevailing discourses about the dictatorship. Agresti chooses the children of the disappeared for his protagonists, who at the time were only beginning to claim space for their memories and experiences in the struggle over memories of the dictatorship. Indeed, the children of the disappeared suffer a particular form of trauma as both inheritors of trauma and orphans of state terror. *Buenos Aires Viceversa* does not portray life during the dictatorship or offer any reconstructions of the past. In the inclusive spirit of multidirectionality proposed by Rothberg, the film shows how two seemingly distinct historical moments with seemingly distinct sets of victims can contribute to reciprocal and multidirectional forms of understanding. The story of Bocha adds to a more profound understanding of the story of those disappeared during the dictatorship and vice versa.

VI. Conclusion

Argentina's trajectory toward truth and justice in the post-dictatorship sets it apart from its Latin American neighbors and many other societies dealing with the aftermath of state violence. The human rights movement, led by organizations such as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and the H.I.J.O.S., relentlessly pursued truth and justice and drew international attention to the horrors of the dictatorship. Among the most prominent discourses of the human rights movement in Argentina is the idea of *nunca más*; the imperative to remember so that the atrocities never happen again.

Biraben's film presents post-dictatorship Argentina as a battle ground, with one side fighting for their right to the truth and for transitional justice while the other side clings to outmoded narratives that justify the repression of the dictatorship. By focalizing the narrative through the young protagonist, the spectator sees the necessity of understanding the past in order to have hope for the future. The final shot of the film shows Cristina gazing out from her balcony as the camera pulls out to show the city of Buenos Aires, where hundreds of other young people have yet to learn of their true identities. In *Cautiva*, memory is the key to understanding the present and looking forward to the future.

Carri takes a position critical of the human rights movement and of the memory movement as they had manifested in Argentina. *Los Rubios* presents memory as a problem, society as ambivalent, and testimony about her parents as politically-motivated and dehumanizing. She exposes the intergenerational struggle over memory that impedes her filmmaking process. Carri presents alternatives to the canonized memories of the dictatorship and the dominant discourses about the disappeared, victimhood, and human rights. As such, the film proposes a more inclusive post-dictatorship in which there is space for nuance and for the perspectives and memories that do not promote or reinforce the political projects of groups like the H.I.J.O.S. Rather than criticizing Carri's position as competitive, if we consider her move as multidirectional, the possibilities for a more inclusive movement that values diverse perspectives is clear.

Agresti's film also pushes for a more inclusive conceptualization of victimhood and personhood than that put forth in post-dictatorship memory movements. *Buenos Aires Viceversa* shows the continuation of violence from the dictatorship into re-democratization through the figure of the torturer-turned-mall security guard. By portraying the murder of a homeless child as

the film's climax, showing the subsequent continuation of impunity, and through Daniela's diegetic films of Buenos Aires, Agresti calls attention to the wide range of subjectivities excluded from *Nunca más.* The film is a counterpoint to the canonized memories and dominant discourses about the dictatorship as put forth by the most visible memory, truth, and justice activists in Argentina of the 1990's. By pushing for a broader vision of victimhood and of human rights, Agresti's film puts forth the nuanced critique missing from a predominant and iconic public discourse at the time.

The solidarity expressed among the characters, particularly in *Cautiva* and in *Buenos Aires Viceversa*, is in the same spirit as the solidarity that was burgeoning among activist groups in the 1990's. These films take place at a moment when activist circles joined efforts to organize and carry out *escraches*, which are organized protests at the home or in the community of a perpetrator as a form of public condemnation of their crimes (see Figure 28 and Figure 29).[67]

[67] For a description of an *escrache* and analysis of the performativity of this form of activism, see Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke Unviersity Press, 2003.

Figure 28 and 29: Flyers announcing escraches.

The group H.I.J.O.S., an activist group that advocated for the children of the disappeared, are credited with this approach to collective action, and in organizing *escraches* have called upon activists from other social movements to participate. Through solidarity among the H.I.J.O.S., Madres de Plaza de Mayo, labor unions, and other activist groups, *escraches* have functioned as a powerful and effective approach to pursuing justice even during the moments when political support for truth and justice waned.

As a result, the activism in Argentina is today characterized by seemingly disparate groups joining together to organize actions. A recent example that shows this dynamic is the struggle for access to safe and legal abortion, which gained momentum in 2018 when the Argentine senate debated, but ultimately rejected, a bill that would have legalized abortion. In addition to pro-choice and feminist groups, the H.I.J.O.S., Abuelas, y Madres de Plaza de Mayo demonstrated in solidarity in favor of legalizing abortion with over one million people protesting

at the Congreso de la Nación as the legislature considered the bill (Donda). Further connecting groups that resisted the dictatorship and pushed for truth with the pro-choice movement is the green *pañuelo* that activists wore on their heads. The green *pañuelos* printed with calls for legal abortion is a homage to the Madres (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Abortion rights protest in 2018. Photo by Gustavo Basso/Nurphoto

Nonetheless, the current Argentine government also remained unmoved by the outpouring of solidarity in the street. Women with money will continue to have professional and discrete abortions in private clinics, while desperate women will continue to die of infections and complications from clandestine and shoddy abortions. Despite a robust human rights agenda regarding the dictatorship and its aftermath, the state's view of women's rights remains consistent with that of dictatorship years during which women endured perverse forms of sexual

and psychological torture.[68] Nonetheless, the movement for legal and safe abortion in Argentina is a testament to an impressive culture of activism which will continue fighting and growing from the seeds of solidarity sown in the postdictatorship.

Such solidarity is enabled when multiple experiences are considered and taken seriously. Suffering under dictatorship is not the homogenous experience of a single demographic. *Cautiva, Los Rubios*, and *Buenos Aires Viceversa* offer fascinating counterpoints to the canonized memories and dominant discourses about the dictatorship as put forth by those who were traditionally the most visible memory, truth, and justice activists in Argentina. By pushing for a more inclusive vision of victimhood and of human rights, these films call for a recognition of diverse experiences of suffering and the necessity of reckoning with the past to look forward to the future.

[68] See Calveiro, Pilar. *Poder y desaparación: los campos de concentración em Argentina.* Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue, 1998; and Wornat, Olga and Miriam Lewin. *Putas y guerrilleras.* Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2014.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored the ways in which filmmakers from Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina deal with transitional justice in their films. My research has shown the correlation between each country's approach to transitional justice and the kinds of narratives about the dictatorship and post-dictatorship that circulate through cinema. After considering transitional justice processes in each country and the level of accountability for past violence that each state assumes, it is apparent that filmmakers who are working within contexts of impunity and oblivion are compelled to tell stories that challenge the narratives put forth by the military as official. These films offer another perspective of a history that has been repressed or monopolized by the military's version, which certainly employs the theory of the two demons to justify their gross violations of human rights. As such, filmmakers denounce state terror and, as memory entrepreneurs, pitch their versions of the past for public consumption. Some films, such as Murat's *Que bom te ver viva* and Buchichio's *Zanahoria* appeal to the empathy of the spectator. Others, such as Schroeder's *Matar a todos* and Brant's *Ação entre amigos* show the deadly consequences of impunity and amnesty, which leave the past unsettled. Meanwhile, with more accountability for past wrongdoing comes opportunities to tell stories that engage in self-critique and depict a more inclusive conceptualization of victimhood and memory.

In Brazil, the country with the least accountability, filmmakers have offered a version of the dictatorship that challenges the official narrative put forth by the military. Films such as *Que bom te ver viva, Ação entre amigos*, and *Hoje* depict the lives of torture survivors and frame them as once-idealistic, young revolutionaries fighting for a better Brazil. These films do not shy away from including information about the revolutionary struggles of the characters who took up

arms against the dictatorship. Indeed, they offer an unflinching look at young people willing to kill and willing to die for political and social transformation. However, these films also show the devastating aftermath of torture and extra-judicial killings. As adults, these characters carry the baggage of torture survival with them. Despite going on to pursue interesting careers, receiving reparations from the state, and appearing to move on, the pain that persists is visible across all three films.

While these and other films from Brazil can potentially educate the spectator about the state's human rights violations and elicit empathy for torture survivors, they also consolidate and reproduce the same story of a particular type of victim: that of the revolutionary who is captured and tortured, and the pain of survival. Even though it shows the world-destroying nature of torture, this narrative has been used to support the theory of the two demons as it has been utilized by the Brazilian military and the right: that the Brazilian military carried out a coup and declared a state of exception to fight the threat of a violent, communist revolution. The consequences of this are apparent today, as the ultra-right President Jair Bolsonaro has called for commemorative celebrations of the military coup, the so-called Revolution of 1964, pays homage to accused torturer, Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, and uses anti-communist rhetoric to attack political opponents, academics, and social activists.

The situation in Uruguay is between impunity and accountability, but both scholarship and cultural production express an expectation that Uruguayan transitional justice is a work-in-progress. As such, the Uruguayan films analyzed in this dissertation as well as others that deal with the dictatorship, have inconclusive endings, pointing to the unresolved nature of Uruguay's approach to dealing with human rights violations. Not only are the narratives unresolved by the films' endings, but *Zanahoria*, *Matar a todos,* and *Secretos de lucha* show that life in democratic

Uruguay can be, at best, unsettling and at worst, downright terrifying for survivors of the dictatorship and those working to pursue transitional justice.

Like in the Brazilian case, Uruguayan filmmakers are creating films that can potentially educate the spectator about the past and influence public opinion about not only the way the dictatorship should be remembered but also how Uruguay should proceed with dealing with the past. Each film presents the stakes of not addressing the past: in *Zanahoria*, Familiares are tricked and revictimized for the material gains of others; in *Matar a todos,* it is apparent that the states that worked together under Operation Condor continue to coordinate to cover up their crimes as military officials enjoy total impunity; and in *Secretos de lucha*, family ties and other interpersonal relations are damaged because of the unresolved past. Nonetheless, the inconclusive endings point towards a resolution that is yet to come. After fifteen years under the Frente Amplio, there has been some progress towards accountability, but cultural producers and scholars alike express their dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, the body of films with unresolved endings also imply that there is hope for further progress towards accountability in Uruguay.

Argentina's achievements towards full accountability for the dictatorship have fostered a strong memory movement with cultural production that explores various subjectivities and perspectives of the dictatorship and post-dictatorship. The works that depict children of the disappeared delve into a number of issues and present new possibilities for story-telling and for critique. There is not a consensus on one version of the past, and Argentina's cultural production about the dictatorship begins to reflect the diversity of experiences.

Though the films in this dissertation focus on protagonists who are children of the disappeared, these characters each have vastly different stories from one another. *Cautiva* broaches the subject of one of the horrific consequences of enforced disappearance in Argentina:

the appropriation of infants. However, through a coordinated effort between the judiciary system, psychologists, forensic anthropologists, and families of the disappeared, those who were stolen from their biological families are identified and restituted. *Cautiva* shows this process in all its pain and complexity, informing the spectator about Argentine transitional justice and eliciting empathy for Cristina and her biological family. Albertina Carri's experience in *Los rubios* is quite different, but two commonalities are her search for information about her parents and the inclusion of processes of transitional justice, such as DNA testing. Carri's film pushes boundaries of post-dictatorship storytelling by focusing on her own experiences rather than making a film in homage to her disappeared parents while experimenting with the limits of the cinematic genres. Finally, *Buenos Aires Viceversa* illustrates the social solidarity that has come about following the strong human rights and memory activist movements spearheaded by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo that continues into contemporary struggles. These Argentine films show an effort to expand the spectator's understanding of victimhood and the consequences of the dictatorship that are still suffered in democratic Argentina.

While I hope to have shown that transitional justice, or the lack thereof, affects the kinds of narratives that filmmakers take on when making movies about the dictatorship and its aftermath, I cannot say that there is a correlation between how each country dealt with the dictatorship and, say, the standard of living or quality of democracy in these countries today. For example, accountability for the past will not necessarily eschew the sorts of financial crises that have occurred in Argentina and total impunity will not stunt the sort of economic growth that Brazil boasted at the beginning of this century. As such, this research project has no prescriptive conclusion that would offer any insight into which transitional justice paradigms may bring about social or economic prosperity.

Yet, as a humanist I am convinced that it is worth considering the impact that political and legal frameworks have on the cultural field, on storytelling, and on how the past is remembered. This dissertation project contributes to research on the intersection between memory studies, transitional justice, and the cultural field. I am left with more questions than I have answered, which is revelatory of the possibilities for future work that explores transitional justice and post-dictatorship cultural production. As we have seen, transitional justice does not follow a steady or straight line towards accountability. It will be interesting to see how cultural producers engage with transitional justice as these processes are still pending and subject to political shifts and policy changes. For example, how will cultural producers who deal with the dictatorship and post-dictatorship respond to the rise of the ultra-right in local and global politics? How will filmmakers from other Latin American countries deal with transitional justice amidst other contexts of transition, such as in a post-conflict situation?

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