PROJECTING HISTORY:
A socio-semiotic approach to the representations of the military
dictatorship (1976-1983) in the cinematic discourses of Argentine democracy

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A mi padre y a mi madre por heredarme la pasión
por el cine a la vez que la atracción por el pensamiento riguroso
capaz de convertirla, no sin pérdida, en objeto de estudio.

A mi abuela por la paciencia.

A mi hermana, Agustina, nacida en 1983.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes a series of films that, in different ways, seek to represent the last Argentine dictatorship. The possibility of interpreting the thematic and formal recurrences of the films as a defining characteristic of a specific genre is posed as a first hypothesis. The second hypothesis postulates the possibility of relating certain aesthetic and rhetorical changes of the series to certain socio-political processes.

After presenting a general overview of some of the various forms in which the relationship between cinema and society has been theorized before, the work proposes the instance of enunciation as a principle of articulation between textual and social systems, analysing the subjects involved in each of these levels and the relationship that can be established between them. The apparatus of enunciation (between textual figures), which can be related to the reading contract (between social subjects) can also be associated with the notion of genre. In this context, the thesis explores the possibility of a redefinition of cinematographic genres from the perspective of the Semiotics of Passions.

Having established in the previous chapters the theoretical and methodological basis, the second part of the work consists of the analysis of the enunciation in the films of the corpus, in order to establish the main characteristics of the reading contract proposed to the spectator. The analysis starts with the consideration of the genre known in television as "docudrama", paying particular atention to the relationship between what is filmed and the "real", that this genre seeks to establish. This is followed by the partial conclusions of the analysis of the totality of films included in the corpus. A first systematisation of the general characteristics of the films considered allows for a definition of a new genre which we termed "documelodrama".

Finally, the last three chapters consider different periods, in order to observe the transformation of the genre: chapter 6 (1984-86), chapter 7 (1986-89), chapter 8 (1989-97). This periodization is intended to facilitate the exploration of the different motifs which intervene in the construction of the enunciatee at different moments in time: "testimony", "denunciation" and "memory", respectively.

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Finally, a short summary of chapter 2 was delivered at the *VII International Conference of IASS* (International Asociation for Semiotic Studies), at the Technische Universität Dresden, Germany, in October 1999.

INTRODUCTION

I.   THE NEW ARGENTINE CINEMA

It is still possible to remember the real explosion Argentine Cinema underwent from 1983. A brief explanation would attribute this extraordinary growth to the new policies of cultural promotion implemented by the recent democratic government: the abolition of censorship, the granting of credit and subsidies for the development of Arts in general and cinema in particular, the placing of Manuel Antín — a well known filmmaker — in charge of the INC — *Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía* — amongst others. It is true that, beyond speculation as to its causes, Argentine Cinema reached one of its highest levels of production during the first years of democracy: 106 films during the period 1984-86[1].

Nevertheless, the development of Argentine Cinema during this period did not only consist of an indiscriminate increase in production; it also developed a well-defined thematic and aesthetic. These established a link between a political project and national cinema, the main characteristic of which — as the critics who have analysed it have observed in different ways (King 1990, Foster 1992, Couselo 1992, España 1994) — was a commitment to recent history: the actions of the military government, repression, censorship, exile, the Falklands/Malvinas war.

On the one hand, it is clear that in the context of redemocratization, cinema was considered a useful instrument for the construction of the "new democratic

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[1] Source: *Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía*, Catalogue 1984-86.

consciousness"[2]. Financed by the State through credits and subsidies granted by the INC, the films produced in this period were also part of a political project: to generate the adhesion of the public to the "democratic enterprise". On the other hand, however, as Alan Pauls points out, filmmakers found in the equation "politics = spectacle", a successful commercial formula through which they were able to mobilise an audience previously indifferent to national film production (Pauls 1986: 60). Therefore, one may well need to consider two factors in order to explain the peak reached in cinema production in democratic Argentina: not only the political project but also the commercial formula.

The focus on recent history allows us to conceptualise a continuity — in the form of a thematic — whilst at the same time observing certain transformations which can be attributed to socio-political processes. We are referring here both to government policies and to civil organizations' demands, which imply a historic evaluation of the former period. These range from different attempts of the democratic government to establish what had happened (the foundation of the *Comisión Nacional sobre Desaparición de Personas*, CONADEP) and impose justice (the taking to court of the members of the first three Military Juntas), to the laws and pardons that gradually granted impunity to those responsible for the Human Rights violations that took place during the dictatorship (the laws known as *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida* and the presidential pardons granted by Menem). Alongside these, it is important to consider the actions of different Human Rights organizations, the changes in their demands, and the formation of new groups with new demands. Each of these events was closely followed by the press and produced, at the time, various responses from society as a whole. The main hypothesis on which this research is based postulates the possibility of registering these changes both in the form and content of Argentine cinematic production of the democratic period.

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[2] See for example Foster (1992). This author analyses New Argentine Cinema as a product of the Redemocratization Process, officially postulated by the democratic government and public and private

1. The films

The authors already mentioned consider a general characteristic of postdictatorship Argentine cinema, the thematic fixation on recent history. This is, up to a point, true. However, it is important to recognise that, along with these films — which can be easily related to the dictatorship — the production of other types of films continued: light comedies, suspense movies, romantic stories, etc. In these films the relationship with history or politics is not at all clear. It is thus necessary to establish some principle of selection in order to avoid universalistic postulates that tend to flatten the object of study and deprive it of its complexity.

Moreover, within the first group — characterised by the testimonial intention — it is also necessary to establish new distinctions, according to the type of relationship between text and extratext implicit in such an intention. Indeed, the way in which the relationship between what is filmed and the "real" is posed, serves in many cases as a differentiating principle to establish certain cinematographic genres — such as the documentary, or the historical film — or television genres — including, for example, the docudrama. Following on from this, it is possible to divide the corpus of films that thematise the dictatorship into four groups:

1.   The genre known as *documentary* — both in cinema and television — in which the relationship between the film and the real is posed as *direct reference*, that is, in Pierce's terms, as indexical.

2.   *Historical films*, that is, films that depict historical events in a context clearly defined as the distant past. The relationship here is postulated as a *reconstruction of events* — according to different degrees of faithfulness, signalled by specific strategies. But also, in some cases, the narrative is proposed as a metaphor for recent events, such as, for example, the film *Camila*, according to its director, "the first film of democracy".

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sectors of the cultural establishment.

3.   Films based on real facts, in which the narrative is presented as a *faithful reconstruction* of actual or recent events, which have really *taken place* in the extratextual space[3]. This genre, known in television as *docudrama*, although presenting a particular interest for the present research, does not constitute the main object of analysis. However, as the term is used by some Argentine directors to define their work (mainly Héctor Olivera) some films catalogued within this genre will be considered in chapter five in order to contrast them with the films of the corpus.

4.   Films which depict fictional narratives situated in a historical context clearly defined as present day or recent history. In these films, the plot, whilst presenting itself as fiction, is simultaneously proposed as an *example, model or case* of what has *actually happened*. These films constitute the main object of analysis of this thesis. The selection of this corpus is based on the hypothesis that, like the films mentioned above, they can also be considered within a certain genre, which — unlike the others — has not yet been theorized. Thus, whilst looking at a specific moment of Argentine cinema, it might be possible to project some conclusions, relating to this genre, to film production in other contexts.

Within this last group, the corpus is made up of twenty-seven films produced in different moments of the postdictatorship period[4]. This selection is intended as a sample which, as such, aims to be representative whilst having no pretence of being exhaustive. Thus, the analysis of the corpus may well be relevant to other films, which could not be included here for practical reasons.

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[3] See for example the collection of essays edited by Donald F. Stevens, whose title — *Based on a True Story: Latin American History at the Movies* — defines this genre.

[4] The list of films considered and their technical information is included in appendix 1, at the end of this work.

2. *Previous work in the field*

There are very few works that consider Argentine Cinema of the postdictatorship period and these are limited to articles in magazines or chapters in books dealing with the history of Argentine or Latin-American cinema. Among the latter, the most important ones are, in Spanish, *Historia del Cine Argentino* by Jorge Miguel Couselo and *Más allá de la pantalla* by Alberto Ciria. Among the works in English, two books by John King — *Magical Reels* and *The Garden of Forking Paths* — consider briefly the period we are studying. The first one, being a history of Latin American Cinema, devotes one chapter to film production in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay in the context of Latin American cinema. The second is an anthology of texts dealing with diverse aspects of Argentine cinema. There are only two books that concentrate specifically on Argentine Cinema after 1983: *Cine argentino en democracia*: 1983-1993, a compilation made by Claudio España and *Contemporary Argentine Cinema*, by David William Foster.

These authors coincide in the definition of this cinematography as a reflexive one that intends to recuperate for history events previously denied or hidden by the official version. As has been mentioned, one of the defining characteristics is, for these authors, the thematic fixation on recent history. Silvia Hirsh (quoted by King) puts it in the following terms:

> New movies do not call to arms but to a reflection on the society's ills and conflicts. The new film directors do not attempt to provide solutions to socio-political and economic problems, but instead they are interested in presenting diverse aspects of Argentine society and history, which were previously repressed and which must be analysed in order to construct more solid democratic institutions and overcome the tragic past. (Hirsh in King 1990: 94)

Although most of these works have as their point of departure the presumption of a strong articulation between socio-historical processes and cultural productions, they do not analyse the type and mode of this relation nor the way it might be established. This is understandable given, on the one hand, their general introductory character. On the other hand, their inclusion within the field of Latin American Studies favours

a historical — rather than more theoretical — approach, therefore stressing the socio-cultural aspects of the films.

David William Foster's book, being the only one that specifically concentrates on the postdictatorship period, is the closest to our research and thus deserves to be considered separately. At the beginning of his book Foster states that his main objective is to analyse the transformation of social themes into films, that is: the relationship between the strategies of commercial cinema production and the process of redemocratization in Argentina:

> This study undertakes a detailed analysis of the intersection in these films between the strategies of commercial filmmaking and the project of Argentine redemocratization [...]. The study examines the material chosen for filming, the technical decisions made in the process of filming, and *the organizing ideological voice* that provides each film with its structural coherence. Of interest is a consideration of the overall thematic nature of each film, the sort of social world it projects, and the types of spectators and *spectator response it implies*. Special emphasis is placed on the narrative pattern of each film [...] as a key to its interpretation of individual and collective socio-political experience in Argentina. The analysis also seeks to determine what implications derive from the fact that the films were made both for Argentine and for international consumption [...] Finally, since all of these elements involve complex semiotic processes, special attention centres on the ideological complications that arise from the *cinematographic configuration of social meaning* in contemporary Argentina. (Foster: 3-4; my italics)

There are many points in common between Foster's proposal — as it appears in this proposition — and the present research. These consist of a common interest in three aspects:

a) the "organising ideological voice" (which, from a semiotic perspective, we shall refer to as enunciator),

b) the spectator responses implied in a text (the enunciatee),

c) the cinematographic configuration of social meaning — at least of certain social meanings (in the plural).

However, although Foster's book can be useful for framing a common problematic, it does not contribute much to its development, given that, when approaching the films, the analysis is most of the time restricted to the plot, establishing some connections — sometimes too obvious, sometimes too risky — with the socio-

historical context of their production. Although Foster admits that in order to analyse a corpus of films as ideological texts it is necessary to consider the relationship between cinema and society, this is never really examined.

The text is divided into three sections, in which Foster discusses a total of ten films produced during the first five years of democracy in Argentina (1983-1989): HISTORICAL CONTEXTS — which includes *Camila* (María Luisa Bemberg 1983), *Pasajeros de una pesadilla* (Fernando Ayala 1984) and *No habrá más penas ni olvido* (Héctor Olivera) — ; PERSONAL PROJECTIONS — a section that considers *Gerónima* (a documentary by Raúl Tosso), *Hombre mirando al sudeste* (Eliseo Subiela), and *Sur* (Fernando Solanas 1988) — and LOVE STORIES — which includes *Perros de la noche* (Teo Kofman), *El beso de la mujer araña* (Héctor Babenco) (hardly an Argentine film) and *Otra historia de amor* (Américo Ortiz de Zárate).

Despite receiving great accolades, such as those of Robert M. Levine (1994), this text was widely criticised by Latin Americanist academics who, nevertheless, still recognized its usefulness as an introduction to a complex subject.

According to Susan Martín-Márquez, Foster assumes a prescriptive — more than descriptive — attitude when he proposes a relationship between cinema and the process of redemocratization in Argentina. Given this attitude most of the films he considers do not reach the status of the "ideal" film the author seems to be looking for. On the other hand, the intention of focussing upon ideology leads Foster, according to this author, to leave aside the consideration of aesthetic aspects of the films, the purely cinematographic characteristics (editing, shot, lighting, camera movements and angles, etc.) as well as academic contributions within the area of Film Studies (Martín-Márquez 1994).

The other text that considers this period is a compilation made by Claudio España. In this case, being a general work, and destined for a wide audience, one could point to the same limitations. The articles that compose it develop diverse

aspects of the cinema produced throughout the first ten years of democracy (1983-93). These texts realize a survey of the films produced over the decade, narrate their plots, and set out a broad classificatory scheme, taking as a starting-point themes (the representation of the dictatorship), genre (the thriller) or certain conditions of production (women's films, films in exile). As a compilation of articles, it does not formulate a unifying view or develop an in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, as with Foster's text, it makes a useful introduction to the topic.

3. Hypothesis and organization of the work

The object of study of the present work is, as has been mentioned, not the whole of cinematographic production during the decade but instead a series of films that, in different ways, seek to represent the dictatorship. The possibility of interpreting the thematic and formal recurrences of these films as a defining characteristic of a specific genre is posed as a hypothesis. The second thesis refers to the possibility of relating certain aesthetic and rhetorical changes of the series to socio-political processes.

In relation to these, we can establish three periods:

1.   1984-1986: starting-point of the series of films about the dictatorship within the socio-historical context of the first years of democracy: return to democracy, trial of former members of the *Juntas*, founding of CONADEP (*Comisión Nacional sobre Desaparición de Personas*);

2.   1987-1989: period of socio-economic and institutional crisis which followed the first years of democratic government, sanctioning of the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida*;

3.   1989-1994: government change-over, new economic policies, granting of presidential pardons.

These three moments, broadly outlined, allow for the establishment of a principle of periodization both of the films and of the context in which they were produced. However, recognizing the relationship between various instances of a discourse — in our case, a cinematic discourse — and certain changes in the socio-political order, does not in anyway imply the assumption that this is produced automatically or linearly. There are a number of variables that mediate between both elements defining the type of articulation between the sphere of artistic production and the political order.

In this context chapter 1 presents an overview of some of the various forms in which the relationship between cinema and society has been theorised from different disciplines and perspectives. The chapter looks at this relationship from three different theoretical frameworks for which this problematic has a constitutive character: realism, the sociology of knowledge and certain theorisations within the area of Film Studies.

From the survey developed in the first chapter, chapter 2 proposes the instance of enunciation as a principle of articulation between textual and social systems, analysing the subjects involved in these and the relationship that can be established between them. Taking on the distinction established by Benveniste between "énoncé" and "enunciation", the chapter exposes some of its development in the areas of conversation analysis and semiotics, pointing out the conflicts that appear between these two perspectives. It is precisely from these conflicts that it is possible to recuperate the descriptive and analytical value of the notion of enunciation as articulation between the two aforementioned systems. After looking at the characteristics of enunciation in general, the chapter focuses on the discussion of enunciation in cinema, which involves new problems.

The apparatus of enunciation (between textual figures), which can be related to the reading contract (between empirical subjects) can also be related, as is suggested in chapter three, to the notion of genre. Thus, the chapter proposes a

redefinition of cinematographic genres from the perspective of the Semiotics of Passions. In the *Ecole de Paris*'s conception, the Semiotics of Passions is closely related to the instance of enunciation. The enunciation apparatuses of particular texts can thus be analysed in relation to the reading contract established by the cinematographic genre.

Having established in the former chapters the theoretical and methodological basis, the second part of the work consists of the analysis of the enunciation in the films of the corpus, in order to establish certain characteristics of the reading contract proposed to the spectator.

Chapter 4 analyses certain films that can be considered within the genre known in television as docudrama. In the context of Argentine Cinema this term has been used by filmmaker Héctor Olivera to define his own cinematic production. The chapter analyses the particular relationship between what is filmed and the "real" that the docudrama seeks to establish. The relationship between reality and fiction, on the one hand, and between documentary genres and melodrama, on the other, constituted an interesting nucleus of debates in the analysis of the New Latin American Cinema, which does not seem to have been recuperated afterwards. Opening up this problematic once more, the chapter concentrates in the first place on the operations that would allow us to speak of a cinematographic form of the docudrama, and the characteristics that would define it within the context of Argentine Cinema. In the second place, it compares this genre to the films included in the corpus in order to observe similarities and differences that would allow for a redefinition of the latter.

Chapter 5 presents the partial conclusions of the analysis of the totality of films included in the corpus — without distinguishing between the different periods — thus establishing a first systematisation of the general characteristics that would allow for a definition of the genre which we shall call *"documelodrama"*. This definition in terms of a genre has as its goal not only to observe the recurrences that one might find in the enounced of each particular film, but also — and most

significantly— to analyse the apparatuses of enunciation, in order to define the reading contract this implies. For this reason the chapter is divided into two parts: a first one, which concentrates on the *énoncé*, and a second part which deals with the enunciation.

Each of the following chapters considers one of the aforementioned periods, in order to observe the transformation of the genre: chapter 6 (1984-86), chapter 7 (1987-89), chapter 8 (1989-94). This last one has been expanded to include a few more recent productions that deal with the same topic. Within the general framework established in chapter five, each of these periods shows the predominance of a particular motif in the construction of the enunciatee: testimony, denunciation and memory. The shift in these positions — which, as previously mentioned, are not absolute but relative to each other — whilst pointing to different general functions of the cinematographic medium, can also be referred to certain events of a political-institutional nature, revealing but at the same time producing them.

However, as with all periodization, this one, although defined by the dates of certain events, always implies a degree of arbitrariness. In this sense, the reader will observe a certain flexibility in the analysis. The established periods should thus be considered as a principle of guidance rather than of demarcation of the field, still largely unexplored, of Argentine Cinema.

A final observation regarding the organization of the dissertation is necessary. In order to facilitate reading, when quoting within a paragraph I have translated the text used into English, even when dealing with a translation. When quoting in a separate paragraph, I have tried to use an existing English translation. In those cases in which this has not been possible — either because an English translation did not exist or was not available — I have resorted to the Spanish translation. Finally, where neither of these was available I have used the original version.

II.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. The area of Film Studies

The area of Film Studies is a relatively recent incorporation into the academic domain. Following the traditional disciplinary differentiation regarding objects of study rather than a common theoretical perspective (as with Gender Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, Post-colonial Studies, etc.), it is proposed as a multi or inter-disciplinary approach to an object "films" — the texts — or "cinema" — the institution. But this approach, undoubtedly productive, lacks a theoretical or even methodological framework and therefore runs the risk of losing rigour. Even with all these limitations, Film Studies have had the merit of consolidating an area of research, within the academic field, of a problematic worth studying and often disregarded as not serious enough.

Among the variety of interdisciplinary crossings and contributions, it is possible, however, to establish, a certain order. Thus, leaving aside film criticism or books on the history of cinema, we can observe in recent works in the area of Film Studies, the combination of concepts originally pertaining to five disciplines:

1.   Film Semiotics,

2.   Narratological theories,

3.   Psychoanalytical theories,

4.   Sociological theories,

5.   Some recent works develop a philosophical approach — as for example Giles Deleuze's reflection on the cinematographic medium (Deleuze 1994) — or incorporate concepts from post-structuralism and deconstruction (as in Brunette and Wills 1989).

In relation to Film Semiotics, although cinema theory starts almost at the same time as cinematic practice, with filmmakers who are also theorists and theorists who make films — such as Sergei Eisenstein, for example — the first ones to explore from a

scientific perspective the consequences for cinema of Ferdinand de Saussure's formulations are the Russian Formalists. This group publishes in 1927 an anthology of texts entitled *Poetica Kino* (which includes works by Eikhenbaum, Schklovsky and Tynianov) and in which problems in Film Semiotics are posed for the first time.

The main focus of these works, as of those that were to follow, is the notion of cinema as a language, and the main area of research is therefore the comparison between the arbitrary signs of natural languages and the motivated iconic and indexical signs of cinema. Within the Saussurean paradigm, but incorporating contributions from other linguists such as Louis Hjemslev, André Martinet and Emile Benveniste, cinema semiologists of the 1960s will continue this line of research. The main purpose of these analyses is to contrast linguistic and filmic units. In this context appear the first works of the author who was to become *the* semiologist of cinema: Christian Metz — *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma*, volume I (1968) and volume II (1973), *Propositions Méthodologiques pour l'Analyse du Film* (1970), *Langage et Cinéma* (1973), *Essais Sémiotiques* (1977). In this same context, Yuri Lotman, who might be considered a semiologist of culture, writes his *Semiotics of Cinema*, published in Russian in 1973, which develops the same problematic.

Almost simultaneously, French narratology, given its interest in the analysis of narrative, provides many contributions to the study of film narration. This discipline occupies an important place in those works that develop methodological frameworks for the analysis of films (Casetti & Di Chio 1990; Bordwell & Stainger & Thompson 1985; Aumont & Marie 1988). Following French narratology's principle of considering narratives independently of their material realization, these works tend to centre on narrative cinema. Therefore, technical options — such as mise-en-scène, lighting, camera movements, acting, etc. — are considered as a first level of approach to the cinematographic text, using categories borrowed from Literary Semiotics for the analysis of all other aspects.

A model frequently drawn upon is Roland Barthes' proposal in "The structural analysis of narrative". In some cases, the multiple codes proposed in his analysis of *Sarrazine* in *S/Z* are also used as a model. A dubious use of this work, if one considers that it was not intended as a model but exactly the opposite; that is, as a confirmation of the impossibility of reducing a work to a common underlying structure, thus depriving it of its difference, its play, its "plural". Widely accepted, instead, is the use of Gerard Genette's model for the analysis of time and perspective in cinema. This extrapolation, as any other, needs to be reexamined. For the analysis of the narrative level it is usual to resort to other models also borrowed and simplified from narratology: Roland Barthes's, as has been mentioned, but also, Claude Bremond's or Algirdas Julien Greimas's.

These works are intended as guides for the analysis of films and are therefore aimed at a wide public without any knowledge of linguistics or semiotics; thus, they entail a necessary simplification of the models considered. The transferal of categories from Literary Semiotics to cinema can undoubtedly be of great help in the analysis of narrative films; however a detailed consideration of these is necessary in order to avoid depriving them of their descriptive or analytical value, as is often the case.

The incorporation of Psychoanalysis into Film Studies was basically promoted in the late sixties and early seventies by the magazines *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Communications*. Number 23 of the latter is entirely dedicated to "Psychoanalysis and Cinema" (1974). Among the articles included, there is one by Christian Metz, entitled "Le Signifiant Imaginaire", which would latter be published in a book of the same title (1977). Metz's work signals the beginning of a whole line of research that has had important consequences for the feminist approach to cinema — and also other minorities — as well as for the analysis of popular culture — as for example in the work of Slavoj Žižek.

The relationship between films and the society in which they are produced and consumed was also a preoccupation of many theorists. An example of this early interest is Kracauer's research on pre-nazi German Cinema (1947) or his view of cinema as "redemption of physical reality" (1960). However, this line of research acquires a new dimension with certain recent attempts to constitute a sociology specific to the cinematographic medium, as is the case with the works of Marc Ferro and Pierre Sorlin, which will be reviewed in the first chapter.

All these different approaches will be considered, in different ways, in the development of this work. Given the characteristic of the analysis proposed, we shall leave aside the philosophical consideration of the medium.

2. L'Ecole de Paris

Although within the area of Film Studies and therefore in the crossing of the aforementioned disciplines, this work relies strongly on Greimasian semiotics and its developments by what is known as *L'Ecole de Paris*. This designation, assumed by Jean Claude Coquet in an article published in 1982, refers to a corpus of research and a group of researchers that recognize their affiliation with the work of Algirdas Julien Greimas.

For this school, semiotics, rather than being a "general theory of signs" (definition found in the *Petit Robert*), constitutes a "project to establish a general theory of the systems of signification". As a "project" it does not consist of a closed corpus of research and results but is instead a process, which simultaneously involves theoretical speculation and analytical practice in a continuous movement of reciprocal feedback.

For Coquet the designation of the group as *L'Ecole de Paris*, has three advantages: it allows for the definition of a universe of research, it assigns a place where this is primarily located, and finally, it names a certain discipline (Coquet

1982: 6). However, as Teresa Mozejko points out, it should also be considered that the attribution of the name "installs the mask, the illusion of something that can be known, or even apprehended [...] it leads us to think of a unified theory, sometimes called *standard*" (Mozejko 1994: 14).

According to Coquet's article, the starting-point of such a discipline could be traced back to an article published by Greimas in 1956, "L'Actualité du Saussurisme", which defines the main lines of research of *L'Ecole de Paris* during the 1950s and 1960s. Acknowledging Saussure's legacy, alongside its developments by other authors such as Hjemslev, Merleau-Ponty, Barthes, the Circle of Prague and Lévi-Strauss, research during this period was focussed on the construction of models that would be abstract enough to account for the greatest possible number of systems of signification. The second period is delimited by two equally important dates: 1966, the year of publication of Greimas's *Sémantique Structurale*, according to Coquet the first treatise on Linguistic Semiotics, and 1979, with the publication of Greimas and Courtés' dictionary, which presents, through a list of terms that interdefined each other, a summary of the school's project.

Thus, when referring to *L'Ecole de Paris*, we are talking mainly of the work of Greimas and his followers — among these, this research frequently resorts to the dictionary, written with the collaboration of Joseph Courtés, and to the work of Jacques Fontanille. However, far from invoking orthodoxy, and within the interdisciplinary framework described above, we shall refer to the common designation of *Ecole de Paris* only when seeking to establish certain key principles underlying the general theory.

3. The generative trajectory of discourse[5]

In Greimas's theory the generative trajectory of meaning can be considered as a general model of the generation of discourse from the minimum units of meaning through the intermediate levels of lesser abstraction to the final textual surface. Ronald Schleifer refers to this process as that from virtuality, to actualization, to realization:

> [...] Greimas describes the generative trajectory of discourse comprised of a "deep level" of *virtual* meanings present in disjoined or *actualised* elements on a manifest "semio-narrative level" before the *realisation* of signification on the level of narrative discourse. (1973c: 27-29) Thus, he proposes an intermediary level between the possibilities or "virtualities" of immanence and the concrete realisations of apprehended meaning — a level of elemental but not global comprehension. In these terms he reconceives the dichotomy between immanence and manifestation as that between *virtuality* on the one hand and the *double articulation* of manifest signification, *actualisation* and *realisation*, on the other. (SL: 9) *Actualisation* is the "surface" semio-narrative level of the actants and functions, mediating between a "deep" level of immanent semantics and syntactics and apprehended discursive meanings in the same way that the *semantic level* mediates between the "virtualities" of the semiological level (1976b: 446 n2) and the "realised" meaning-effects of particular sememes. (Schleifer 1987: 86)

The generative trajectory can thus be thought of as "an inverted pyramid: at the deepest level, a minimum number of units, that we shall call logical, constitute the point of departure for all the complexizations that are necessary to produce any articulated message" (Henault 1979). As mentioned by Schleifer, this "inverted pyramid" is constituted by several levels:

> *Semio-narrative structures*: These constitute the deepest level of meaning. It is constituted, as has been mentioned, by logico-semantic units which, after undergoing several processes of transformation, generate the forms of the surface. This level can, in turn, be divided in two: fundamental semantics and syntax — which Schleifer refers to as the semiological level, but which we

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[5] For the translation of concepts we follow Greimas's own translation in the dictionary he made with Joseph Courtés. For terms that do not have their own entry in it, we follow Ronald Schleifer's translation (1987).

shall call the semic level — and narrative semantics and syntax — the level of actants and functions.

Discursive structures: These structures form an intermediate, more superficial level of elements already mediated by the instance of enunciation. They share a syntactic component — in charge of the placing into discourse of the former — which comprises three subcomponents — spatialization, temporalization and actorialization — and a semantic component constituted by thematization and figurativization.

Textual structures: These form the base of the pyramid, and comprise the manifestation of the text; we shall also refer to them as the text's surface.

The coherence and interrelation of concepts makes it rather difficult to explain Greimas's edifice in a few pages. The recourse to neologisms in French and the difficulty of translating certain concepts that do not have an equivalent in English add to this problem. For this reason it might be useful to illustrate Greimas's theory with a very elementary example.

Let's take a very short text: "Argentine cinema projects history" and compare it to a slightly different one: "History is projected by Argentine cinema". In these two cases, the elements of the first two levels (semio-narrative and discursive structures) remain the same. The change made affects only the textual structures.

Let's now consider these two sentences "Argentine cinema projects the past" and "German cinema projects the past". The change made in this case, while affecting textual structures — there has been a change in the surface of the text — also affects the discursive level — one of the actors has changed (Argentine cinema is now German cinema). By our previous knowledge we can also refer this change to space and time. However, at a deeper level, the structures remain the same: the actants and their functions are the same, and at an even deeper level, the basic opposition that articulates meaning remains between "history" and "representation".

While the theory proposes a trajectory from the minimal units of meaning to the textual surface, when approaching the texts we are faced with only the latter. Therefore, our task as analysts shall be to perform this trajectory in the opposite way: starting from the textual manifestation and progressively descending (the spatial metaphor refers only to that of the pyramid) to the levels of greater abstraction.

We referred above to the use of this theory in the area of Film Studies. Most of the works that do resort to this theory, however, consider just some of the categories proposed for the analysis of the narrative level (actants and functions) within the semio-narrative structures. These categories, isolated from their original context, lose much of their methodological value and therefore often appear as complex ways of repeating obvious observations. On the contrary, considered within the theoretical and methodological framework proposed they appear as extremely useful tools to establish critical comparisons between different texts.

Narrativity has been the main object of study of Structural Semiotics. For this line of research, it can be defined as a transformation from an initial to a final state. These states can be conceptualized as relations between a subject and an object. The minimum scheme of all narration can thus be thought of as the transformation of an initial state — of lack or possession of an object — into its contrary — a state in which the subject enters in conjunction or disjunction with the object. This basic transformation, which constitutes the elementary unit of narrativity, is called *Narrative Program*[6].

In the case described above, the subject occupies a passive position: it suffers the transformation but does not produce it. We shall call it a *subject of state*. On the contrary, it might happen that the transformation is realized by another subject. In this case the subject is called a *subject of doing*. However, in order to do, that is, to

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[6] It is worth emphasising that we are speaking here of actants — and not actors— that is, functions, empty boxes that can be occupied by one or several actors or even left empty. Therefore we shall refer to these functions using the impersonal pronoun.

operate a certain transformation (*performance*), the subject requires a previous *competence* (power, knowledge, will). The subject might also effect a transformation in response to a previous duty or mandate, that is to another subject, a Sender, with whom it has established a *contract*. This or another Sender might reappear once the transformation has been operated in order to establish a *sanction*: regarding either the performance of the subject (punishment or reward), or the subject's identity (as hero or traitor).

The narrative scheme is thus constituted by four instances: *manipulation* (order or mandate to do something), *competence* (achievement of the necessary capacities), *performance* (the action) and *sanction* (evaluation of the action). It also distinguishes two basic relationships between four actants: a) the relationship between subject and object (based on lack and desire, search); b) the relationship between Sender and Receiver (based on the circulation of an object).

At the level of *deep semionarrative structures*, we find the *elementary structures of signification*. It is worth remembering that Structuralism inherits from Phenomenology the idea that the objects of the world cannot be known in themselves but only through their properties, their values; that is, in relation to one another. Hence Saussure's assertion that "in language there is nothing but differences, without positive terms". Meaning arises from the opposition between two terms. But difference, in order to be perceived, needs to rest upon a similarity that would allow values to be situated in mutual relation. This necessary similarity is called a semantic axis. The opposition between black and white, for example, is articulated upon the semantic axis of colour. It is upon a semantic axis that difference can be perceived as such. We shall call each of the units in a semantic axis, *semes*. These can be defined as the minimal units of meaning (equivalent to the notion of "distinctive features" in Linguistics). The elementary structure of meaning is thus, on the one hand, "the unit that assembles the minimal conditions for the apprehension and/or production of signification"; on the other "a model that contains the minimal

definition of every language, or of every semiotics" (Greimas 1973). Subjected to the elementary logical relations of contrariety, contradiction and complementarity, it allows for the generation of new interdefined terms, that can be graphically represented in the *semiotic square*. Coming back to our previous example:

WHITE ----- contrariety ----- BLACK

contradiction   complementarity

NOT BLACK ------------ NOT WHITE
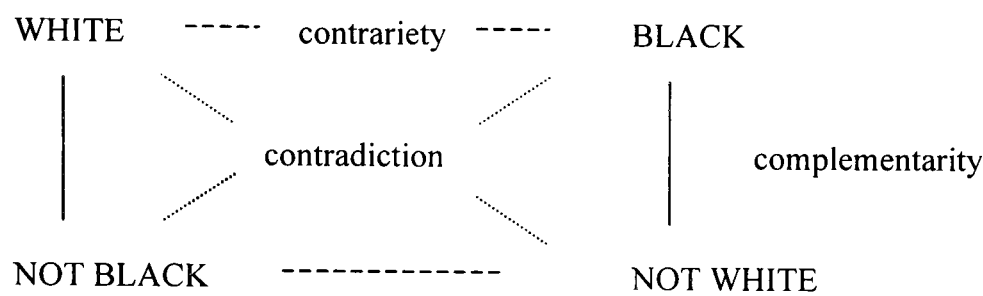
The semiotic square is the graphic representation of the elementary structure of signification in general, whilst, at the same time, it constitutes a tool of analysis for the articulation of meaning in such diverse fields as myth, folklore, literature, etc.[7]

4. *From* énoncé *to enunciation*

Although the first works of *L'Ecole de Paris* centred on the concept of transformation, in its developments, the "semiotic of action" gave rise to new problems. The incorporation of the study of the apparatuses of enunciation made the limits of the model even more obvious. Since the first works of Emile Benveniste on enunciation (1958), this notion, perceived either as the place of inscription of the actual subject in his/her discourse (as for example in conversational analysis) or as "a linguistic instance, logically presupposed by the existence of the utterance" (Greimas & Courtés 1982: 144), opened a whole new area of research and also of debate.

L'Ecole de Paris assimilated this problematic to that of belief, as it is this modality that sustains both the persuasive performance of the enunciator (in the form

of "making believe") and the interpretative performance of the enunciatee (as "believing"). Nevertheless, "belief" is closely related to another modality, "knowledge", and, as we shall see, modalities in general can be analyzed within passional configurations.

In the second chapter we shall examine in detail the consequences of these developments both for the analysis of natural languages and specifically in relation to cinema. The consideration of the apparatuses of enunciation being a central aspect of our hypothesis, we shall expand these considerations and outline the principal debates it has given rise to. At this point, however, it is interesting to note how *L'Ecole de Paris* gradually incorporated this new problematic into their research and related it to the problems of belief and the Semiotics of Passions.

Eliseo Verón in *"Cuando leer es hacer: la enunciación en la prensa escrita"* briefly recounts the development of semiotics, establishing three moments:

> La primera semiología (aquella de los años 60) puede ser caracterizada como inmanentista; se trataba de darse un "corpus" y de describir el funcionamiento connotativo del sentido; enfrentaba a las tendencias sociologizantes, psicologistas, trataba de valorizar el análisis del mensaje mismo. La "semiología de segunda generación" (la de los años 70), tratando de sobrepasar un punto de vista un poco estático y taxonómico, habló de producción de sentido, bajo la influencia (difusa) de las "gramáticas generativas": a partir de los textos se trataba de reconstruir los procesos de su engendramiento. Yo quisiera sugerir que la semiótica de los años 80 será una semiótica capaz de integrar en sus teorías los "efectos de sentido" o no existirá. Porque será solamente entonces cuando ella abrazará el conjunto de su dominio: el proceso que va de la producción de sentido al "consumo" de sentido, el mensaje en tanto que punto de pasaje que soporta la circulación social de la significación. (Verón: 1)

The present work intends to develop some of the concepts advanced by *L'Ecole de Paris* — which Verón might have placed among the second generation of semiotics — in order to integrate the study of the social circulation of meaning to its domain.

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[7] When analysing the films we shall try to avoid excessive recourse to metalanguage. However, in certain cases, the use of some of these terms will be indispensable.

CHAPTER 1

CINEMA AND SOCIETY

To reflect upon Postdictatorship Argentine Cinema and the links that can be established between it and the historical moment of its production — or between the events that it intends to represent and the forms which are chosen to do it — implies establishing a relationship between cinema and society that turns out to be far more problematical than would at first sight appear. Effectively, as has been pointed out in the introduction, when approaching Postdictatorship Argentine Cinema critics have tended to circumscribe the problem to the relation between the events depicted in the plot of the films and certain events of a historical-political nature, without analysing more deeply the mechanism that would allow this relationship to be established.

The relationship between cinema and society is thus the first point to be confronted. This problem is not new — neither is it exclusive to cinema — but has instead a history which can be traced at least in three different traditions: realism — that is, the aesthetic programme that sustains the possibility of establishing a connexion between that which is represented and its representation (a tendency that marked the origins of cinema and that concerns most of commercial production nowadays); the sociology of knowledge, the discipline that has as its object of study the material conditions of mental productions, among which one might include semiotic artefacts — such as films — that put into circulation meanings; and finally, Film Studies, a tradition that encompasses diverse perspectives related to cinematic discourse. Within the latter, it is also possible to distinguish three different tendencies, a psychological, a historical and a sociological one, which shall be analysed in the works of Sigfried Kracauer, Marc Ferro and Pierre Sorlin, respectively.

This chapter will briefly outline each of these traditions in order to establish the general problematic underlying this work. In a second part, we shall define what we understand by a socio-semiotic approach, and the contributions and limitations such a perspective might imply.

I.   THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. The beginnings of cinema and the problem of realism

Closely related to photography and, therefore, to its claims of objectivity, since its invention cinema has brought about many debates regarding its definition: a technical register, for some, a producer of fiction, for others. Between the Lumière Brothers and George Méliès, between realism and formalism, between Bazin's optimism of a "total cinema" and Arnheim's resistance to the "complete" film, film history appears as a constant fluctuation regarding the definition of cinema as a medium for fiction or an instrument for accurate representation of reality.

The clearest evidence of this tension might be seen in the contraposition of the two schools that, in the first half of the century, both in theory and practice, have claimed for themselves the aesthetic most adequate to the medium: realism and formalism. It is equally significant that a contemporary author, such as Dudley Andrews, should divide his book *The Major Film Theories* in three parts: "The formalist tradition" (in which he includes the reflection of Munsterberg, Arnheim, Eisenstein and Bálazs), "The realist tradition" (comprising Kracauer and Bazin) and finally, a third part, in which under the title "Contemporary French Theory" he includes more recent critics (Mitry, Metz, Ayfree and Agel) (Andrew 1976).

From this last perspective (closest to ours), it is easier to agree with the former — for whom cinema, as art, implies a necessary transformation of the real — than with those who believe cinema's finality to be the reproduction of reality. However, it is

interesting to review the basic ideas of Sigfried Kracauer's *Theory of Film*, as it offers consistent and coherent arguments in favour of this last option.

Kracauer observes in the way cinema was first received the two tendencies we have outlined above. However, while recognizing them, he also claims that only the realist tradition is truly faithful to the intrinsic nature of the medium. Cinema's potential for reproducing image and movement places it in a privileged position in relation to the other arts, in its ability to register and reveal the physical world. Therefore, as the title of his work makes explicit, the basic purpose of cinema is "the redemption of physical reality".

To sustain this argument, Kracauer distinguishes between "basic" properties of the medium (which he calls the "cinematic") — identical to those of photography and therefore responding to the intrinsic need to reproduce reality — and technical properties (the artistic) — as all that refers to technical manipulation and therefore distances cinema from its true purpose. Both basic and technical properties, although substantially different from each other, appear simultaneously in every film. Kracauer, on the one hand, corroborates, whilst, on the other hand, he proposes, the rule according to which the former should prevail over the latter, as they are responsible for the "cinematic" quality of a film. In this sense, the concept of art, in its traditional meaning (as creativity, individual originality, manipulation of elements, etc.) could not be strictly applied to cinema, given that the main aesthetic value should be its adequation to the nature of the medium, that is, to the representation of reality. Thus,

> Due to its fixed meaning, the concept of art does not, and cannot, cover truly "cinematic" films — films, that is, which incorporate aspects of physical reality with a view to making us experience them. And yet it is they, not the films reminiscent of traditional art works, which are valid aesthetically. If film is an art at all, it certainly should not be confused with the established arts. There may be some justification in loosely applying this fragile concept to such films as *Nanook*, or *Paisan*, or *Potemkin* which are deeply steeped in camera-life. But in defining them as art, it must always be kept in mind that even the most creative filmmaker is much less independent of nature in the raw than the painter or poet; that his creativity manifests itself in letting nature in and penetrating it. (Kracauer 1960: 40)

It is clear that the problem with this argument, and in general with any discussion about the nature of cinema, lies in establishing *a priori* the characteristics of the medium and then asking of the films to conform to them. As V. F. Perkins puts it in *Film as Film*:

> I do not believe that the film (or any other medium) has an essence which we can usefully invoke to justify our criteria. We do not deduce the standards relevant to Rembrandt from the essence of paint; nor does the nature of words impose a method of judging ballads and novels. Standards of judgement cannot be appropriate to a medium as such but only to particular ways of exploiting its opportunities. (Perkins 1972: 59)

From a very different perspective, Fredric Jameson considers realism as a particularly unstable concept, oscillating between the two terms that can be said to define it: "representation" and "reality". These terms reveal, for Jameson, two simultaneous and at the same time incompatible claims: one of them aesthetic; the other epistemological:

> These two claims then seem contradictory: the emphasis on this or that type of truth content will clearly be undermined by any intensified awareness of the technical means or representational artifice of the work itself. Meanwhile, the attempt to reinforce and to shore up the epistemological vocation of the work generally involves the suppression of the formal properties of the realistic "text" and promotes an increasingly naive and unmediated or reflective conception of aesthetic construction and reception. Thus, where the epistemological claim succeeds, it fails; and if realism validates its claim to being a correct or true representation of the world, it thereby ceases to be an *aesthetic* mode of representation and falls out of art altogether. If, on the other hand, the artistic devices and technological equipment whereby it captures that truth of the world are explored and stressed and foregrounded, "realism" will stand unmasked as a mere reality-*effect*, the reality it purported to deconceal falling at once into the sheerest representation and illusion. (Jameson 1992: 158)

However, whilst there is no possible resolution of this conflict, it is precisely the tension between these two claims that makes the concept of "realism" particularly interesting, given that:

> [...] no other aesthetic — whatever its manner of justifying the social or psychological function of art — includes the epistemological function in this central fashion (however philosophically incoherent accounts of the vocation of realism may turn out to be). (Jameson 1992: 158).

For Jameson no conception of realism is possible unless these two contradictory demands are maintained, insofar as the tension between them is constitutive of the term itself. However, a semiotic perspective necessarily implies the stressing of formal

characteristics over epistemological ones; given that the former are sustained in a relationship between signs, whereas the latter implies a relation between signs and things. Thus, from this perspective, realism appears always as an effect. This displaces the problem from the conditions of truth of a text (the relationship between a text and the extratext, a sign and its referent) to the conventions that establish verisimilitude in a certain society. It is true that, from this perspective, reality loses its founding character, as the final end of representation; however, one might ask if there is any other way of conceiving it. It is necessary to distinguish here between the perspective of the realist text — presenting itself as "faithful copy of the real" — and the perspective of the critic, that can establish the conventions behind a such proposal and analyze the strategies that sustain it.

The notion of verisimilitude, largely considered by semiotics, can be defined, according to Philippe Hamon, as an "ideological and rhetorical code, common to sender and receiver, that ensures the legibility of the message through implicit or explicit references to a system of values which takes the place of the real" (Hamon 1982). This definition posits two consequences for our analysis. On the one hand, if we consider realism as an effect produced in and by the text according to certain strategies, the relation between a film and what it intends to represent is shifted towards the relationship between a film and the society in which this reality-effect can be produced. That is, it presupposes that one is not dealing any more with the relationship between cinema and "reality", but instead is facing the relationship between cinema and society. On the other hand, insofar as this reality-effect does not imply the "real" but that "which takes the place of the real", it induces a second shift from the relationship between cinematographic discourse and a certain "extra-discursive real" — between sign and referent one could say — to an interdiscursive relationship — a relationship between signs (inasmuch as that "which *takes the place of*" must necessarily be a sign). This second movement appears to be unavoidable from a semiotic perspective — whether one

thinks with Saussure of a linguistic value established by difference, or whether one thinks with Peirce of an infinite semiosis, eternally deferring from sign to sign. However, it does not imply denying the existence of extradiscursive reality. It is rather a matter of questioning the possibilities of gaining access to this "reality" without having recourse to discourse.

2. Cinema and the Sociology of Knowledge

We shall leave aside, for the moment, the semiotic approach in order to look at the way the Sociology of Knowledge has faced the problem. As has been mentioned, the basic object of study of this discipline is the analysis of cultural products in relation to the material conditions of their production. In this definition, one can easily perceive the strong influence of Marx's works on ideology in the formulation of the problematic approached by the discipline.

Jacques Maquet in *The Sociology of Knowledge* defines this discipline as the "the study of mental productions as related to social or cultural factors" (Maquet: 5). By mental productions Maquet understands any exterior symbolic manifestation of the activity of the mind, from political ideologies to science and technology. Thus defined, it is evident that cultural products such as literature, art, music, cinema, and so on belong to the object of study of this discipline, insofar as they involve the circulation of certain meanings; that is, insofar as they are symbolic objects. However, the Sociology of Knowledge will consider "mental productions" from a certain perspective: that is, "insofar as they are influenced by social factors" (Maquet: 4). The term influence, Maquet indicates, should be understood here in its broadest sense, as "all degrees of conditioning which can exist between two variables from simple correspondence up to the most mechanical determinism" (Maquet: 5). Maquet seems to be trying to

accommodate within the discipline all possible perspectives on the relationship, from the most direct reflection theory to those that postulate vaguer links.

Once the object of study is thus established, there are, for Maquet, three questions to be asked: What are the social factors that might influence mental productions? What are the mental productions that do, or can, suffer such an influence? And finally, what is the type and degree of such conditioning? In other words, what is the relationship between these two realms (determination, correlation, compatibility, coherence)?

Regarding these questions, the Sociology of Knowledge has, according to Maquet, a short history but a long prehistory given that, although methodical investigation in this area began at the beginning of the twentieth century, the problems it approaches have been posed for a long time.

It is obvious that to postulate all knowledge as socially conditioned presupposes the necessary question about its validity. This might be the reason why, according to Maquet, early research focussed on error or falsity. The possibility, or rather the impossibility, of "neutralizing" the influence of social factors implies a necessary reformulation of such notions as validity and objectivity in order to admit that it is not only errors, beliefs and lies that are socially conditioned but also the production of truth.

Accordingly, in *Paradigm for a Sociology of Knowledge*, Robert Merton traces these same matters in the line that can be drawn from Marx to Sorokin, through Manheim, Durkheim and Scheler. For this author, the Sociology of Knowledge is mainly concerned with the relationship between knowledge (in a broad sense) and existential factors of society and culture. Merton's text consists of an extensive survey of the work of the aforementioned authors, focussing on five points: the existential base of mental productions, the types and aspects of mental productions, the relationship between mental productions and the existential base, the manifest and latent functions assigned to mental productions, and the taking or not into account of the time in which this

relationship is established (that allows us to distinguish between historical and analytical theories). These five problems and the different solutions proposed by the authors considered constitute Merton's paradigm (Merton 1977). The first three points can easily be related to the questions posed by Maquet.

Considering cinema not only as an industry that produces material objects (the films as celluloid), but also as a semiotic *dispositif* that puts into circulation meanings, we might unfold the original question regarding cinema and society into three: What elements from the social domain can be "projected" by or into a film? In what way? And finally, what factors (in the way of effects) can be transposed from the film to the social space? A first answer to these question was formulated, once again, by Sigfried Kracauer, in his analysis of the films produced in Germany in the period preceding the II World War.

3. Cinema and a Nation's mentality: the analysis of Sigfried Kracauer

In *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological History of the German Film*, published for the first time in 1947, Kracauer surveys almost the totality of films produced during the Weimar Republic in order to relate them to the society that had produced them. His central hypothesis is that these films expose the "deep psychological dispositions predominant in Germany from 1918 to 1933 — dispositions which influenced the course of events during that time and which will have to be reckoned with in the post-Hitler era" (Kracauer 1966: V). Thus, he proposes to add to economic, social and political explanations of a historical event — in this case what he calls "Hitlerism" — the consideration of the "psychological history" of a people, which might be accessed through its cinema.

> Thus, behind the overt history of economic shifts, social exigencies and political machinations runs a secret history involving the inner dispositions of the German people. The disclosure of

these dispositions through the medium of the German screen may help in the understanding of Hitler's ascent and ascendancy. (Kracauer 1966: 11)

Written before his *Theory of Film*, this work, although far removed from the realist-formalist discussion, shares the same preoccupation with the relationship between cinema and reality, now displaced to the ways in which cinema might reflect or even shape certain dispositions or tendencies of a people. It is these dispositions and tendencies that Kracauer encompasses under the term "mentality".

According to Kracauer, "the films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than other artistic media" and this is so for two reasons: on the one hand, because of the collective character of film production; on the other, given the mass public they address. It can thus be presupposed, at least for Kracauer, that popular films "satisfy existing mass desires" insofar as the film industry must adapt itself to the taste of the masses in order to increase profits. The important thing for Kracauer, more than a particular film success, is the popularity of certain pictorial and narrative motifs. The reiteration of these motifs show them to be "outward projections of inner urges" (Kracauer 1966: 8).

Thus, both in its production and in its reception, a film is, according to Kracauer, conditioned by "psychological dispositions — those deeper layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness" (Kracauer 1966: 6). Kracauer is lucid enough to recognize that when referring to a "collective mentality" one cannot allude to a fixed national character but to those that "prevail within a nation at a certain stage of its development". However, despite this distinction, his use of the concept of "masses" does suggest the idea of a homogeneous undifferentiated whole that reacts uniformly to the products of the cinematographic industry. This assumed homogeneity and malleability in reception allows Kracauer to be naively optimistic about the possibility cinema has of producing changes in a social formation, up to the point of suggesting that "studies of this kind may help planning of films — not to

mention other media of communication — which will effectively implement the cultural aims of the United Nations" (Kracauer 1966: V). One should bear in mind that he is writing this in 1947.

Equally pertinent is Pierre Sorlin's objection regarding the very notion of "mentality" as a link between cinematographic works and society: what is to be understood, for example, as "dispositions and tendencies" or how can these be analysed; how can we, as critics, gain access to the "deep psychological tendencies" of a society? The relationship between cinema and society established by Kracauer is still of direct univocal reflection, no longer of a material reality but of a nation's psychology. According to Sorlin, Kracauer starts by looking at the Nazi period and then discovers in the films only those elements that might appear as prefigurations of Nazism. This relation of homology has been, according to Sorlin, the prevailing one in the sociological approach to cinema. In the construction of these equivalences, theoreticians are condemned to saying the same thing twice: describing society first and then verifying this description in the films, or searching for the social structure in the structure of the film (Sorlin 1985). However, despite its limits, Kracauer's work remains a valuable antecedent for the analysis of films as symbolic objects inevitably related to their conditions of production.

4. Cinema and History: a historian's reading of film

Within the specific area of film studies, another attempt to relate films to their material conditions of production was undertaken by the French historian, Marc Ferro. Ferro's main hypothesis is that certain films, if not all, can function as sources and / or agents of history.

In the first of these cases, films inform the historian about different aspects of a concrete historical period, from the most superficial ones — ways of dressing, exterior

scenery — to ideological tendencies, social attitudes, values and beliefs. According to Ferro, film does not copy reality but instead reveals it, often against the intentions of the filmmaker. The camera "unveils secrets and shows the underside of a society its lapses" (Ferro 1980: 29). The similarities between this proposal and that of Pierre Macherey in *For a Theory of Literary Production* (1978) are evident — even if Ferro does not acknowledge this contribution. Indeed, both theorists combine Marxism and psychoanalysis in order to develop a "symptomatic reading" of the blanks and gaps of a discourse — in literature and in cinema, respectively — that allows them to access what a text says beyond itself, that is to say its "unconscious". Whilst a clear rupture from former developments — such as those of the realist-antirealist debate — it is also possible to trace a continuity between Ferro and Kracauer's works, insofar as what interests Ferro the most, rather than the conscious representation of a historical reality, are the blanks through which this reality might be revealed:

> These lapses of a creator, of an ideology, or a society constitute privileged significant signs that can characterize any level of film, as well as its relationship with society. Discovering them, seeing how they agree or disagree with ideology, helps to discover what is latent behind the apparent, helps to see the nonvisible by means of the visible. (Ferro 1988: 30)

Ferro thus postulates cinema as a counter-analysis of society in which one might read what a society confesses of itself as well as what it denies or intends to conceal. This has important methodological consequences for our research, given that according to Ferro:

> Film is valuable not only because of what it reveals but also because of the socio-historical approach it justifies. Thus, the analyses will not necessarily concern the totality of a work. They may be based on extracts, they may look for "series" [as is our case] or create ensembles. Nor will they be limited to the film itself. They will integrate the film into the world that surrounds it and with which it necessarily communicates. (Ferro 1988: 27)

On the other hand, films considered as agents of history contribute to the forming of opinions, the reproduction of beliefs, the transformation of attitudes, etc. Ferro, despite recognizing that in order to observe the effects of a certain film upon society empirical research is necessary, when analysing the films, tends to refer to certain public manifestations. In his analysis of the film *Jud Süss* he considers the anti-Semitic

demonstrations that took place in Marseille after its release; and similarly when examining a documentary about concentration camps in the former Soviet Union shown on French television in 1976 — whose title he does not mention — he measures its effects by recourse to the pronouncements of the Soviet authorities and of representatives of the French Communist Party.

However, what appears to be lacking in Ferro's argument is that the reaction produced by these texts can only be read in relation to other texts, whether one considers the anti-Semitic demonstrations as texts — insofar as they are symbolic practices — as Eliseo Verón would argue or whether one considers the sources — presumably journalistic where one could obtain this information from. In the case of the documentary mentioned, the recourse to other texts is even more obvious.

The main objection one could pose to Ferro's argument is, undoubtedly, that little or no freedom is attributed to the spectator. Indeed at times it would seem that one only needs a manipulatory intention at the level of production in order for a film to work as agent of historical changes. In fact this is confirmed by the type of films Ferro chooses for his analysis, mainly propaganda films or at least with the clear aim of social intervention: Soviet films, Nazi and anti-Nazi cinema, antimilitarist films. However, even within his own theory, it should not be enough to evoke a certain intentionality in order to establish a film's function as agent of history given that, as he stresses in several places, "a film is always submerged by its content" (Ferro 1988: 82). Ferro also recognizes that the spectator does not maintain a passive attitude towards the film. Nevertheless the consequences of this assertion are not confronted in his analysis.

Even if it is difficult to observe how a film might act as agent of history, one need not disregard this possibility. Whilst it is clear that cinema alone could hardly produce social transformations, it is also true that films, like any other cultural product, might in some way or another have a role to play in these changes.

5. *Cinema as symbolic practice: a sociologist's reading of film*

Still within the same research area, that is, seeking to establish connexions between cinema and the social, is Pierre Sorlin who — although he does not mention it — seems to transpose to cinema many of the ideas proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. In *Sociology of Cinema*, Sorlin considers films as symbolic practices, searching for the modes of articulation between these as ideological expressions and the social field (Sorlin 1985).

Taking as its starting-point Marx and Engels's work, Sorlin defines ideology as "the set of explanations, beliefs and values accepted and used in a social formation". Ideology is thus not a simple screen built to deceive exploited masses. Nor is it a simple effect of the economic infrastructure, with which, on the contrary, it interacts. It is not singular, insofar as at the same moment in time, the same social formation can give rise to diverse ideological expressions — that may agree, parallel or contradict themselves. It is revealed more in the internal organization of an ideological manifestation, rather than in its content. Finally, although it does rely on ideological state apparatuses to reproduce itself, it does so also through other means such as journalism, sport, and, as is the case here, cinema.

Sorlin's objective is thus to investigate:

> [...] el papel de la producción cinematográfica en la perpetuación de una instancia ideológica, la fuerza de la inculcación de los modelos fílmicos, el lugar del cine en la puesta en evidencia o en la tergiversación de los conflictos. (Sorlin 1985: 21)

Nevertheless, ideology is filtered by "mentalities", that is, the way in which individuals and groups structure their world and find a place in it. Mentalities are thus structuring virtualities, born out of concrete experience, adaptable to exterior stimulus and capable of engendering new attitudes (Sorlin 1985). Included in the concept of "mentalities" is that of "representations". These can be defined as the aspect of mentalities concerned with images. According to Sorlin, representations have as their source, at least partially,

visual perceptions and can, therefore, be transmitted through images. Hence the importance that cinema and television acquire, for this author, in the construction and reproduction of stereotypes in a social formation:

> La pantalla revela al mundo no como es sino como se le corta, como se le comprende en una época determinada; la cámara busca lo que parece importante para todos, descuida lo que es considerado secundario; jugando sobre los ángulos, sobre la profundidad, reconstruye las jerarquías y hace captar aquello sobre lo que inmeditamente se pasa la mirada. (Sorlin 1985: 28)

Research should start by considering the film in itself in order to analyse the way images, words and sounds are combined and then relate this to the historical period; analysis should thus move from the interior (the microuniverse of the film) to the exterior (the social formation). Accordingly, a historical, sociological or semiotic approach — in its strictest sense — is not sufficient. It is necessary to consider films (individually or in groups) as symbolic practices, studying their mechanism without isolating them from their social functioning, having recourse both to semiotics and sociology.

However, a film is also a cultural product and, as such, is immersed in a market and integrated in an economical system. Like any other cultural practice it is inscribed in a system of differentiation which implies the control of specific means and the recognition of a certain right exclusive to the group that specializes in such a practice. In other words: cinema as an institution constitutes a particular sub-field, within the broader one of intellectual or artistic production, and therefore participates in the logic specific to this field.

Sorlin analyses at length the characteristics of the industry, the systems of production, distribution and the composition of the "cinematographic world" (actors, directors, critics, academics). After establishing the existence of this system of production of the cinematographic industry, Sorlin considers how it influences the making of particular films, that is, how the laws that regulate the industry appear in the films. To answer this question it is necessary to focus on three aspects: the place that spectacle occupies in a certain social formation, the subject or general thematic of the

film — insofar as it reveals centres of interest and therefore allows for the grouping of films according to these — and the notion of genre, as strategy oriented both to economic and symbolic profit — a director might choose to work within an established genre, probe certain variations, or try out a new one.

At the end of this theoretical development, Sorlin examines the role of the audience. This constitutes the last link in the chain of production and is thus responsible for the transformation of the film into an exchange object, structuring the cinematographic circuit as a market of symbolic goods. Distribution constitutes a fundamental factor. Alongside questions of stock, propaganda and genre, Sorlin considers the ways in which the spectator might see him or herself involved in the film. This might be achieved through mechanisms of identification (with a character, a group, a community) or through the construction in the film of a certain place to be occupied, whether external (as a privileged observer) or internal (within the structure of the plot). However, when defining the way these mechanisms might be analysed, Sorlin's proposal seems rather vague, maybe because of its ambitiousness:

> Trabajando sobre filmes, trataremos de ver qué conocimientos, qué prejuicios, qué reflejos podrían los contemporáneos poner en acción si quisieran seguir de punta a cabo la proyección: expondremos una competencia particular, característica de una época; más allá, existe una competencia más general que permite a la gran mayoría de los hombres del siglo XX aprehender, al menos sumariamente, cualquier filme o cualquier emisión de televisión. (Sorlin 1985:30)

There are two problems with this argument. On the one hand, there is a confusion between the textual instance, the "place within the film" (what we shall call the enunciatee), the empirical subject (that Sorlin calls the "contemporaries") and a notion similar to that proposed by Umberto Eco under the name of "model reader" (in this case "model spectator"). This last figure should be placed in between the other two insofar as it establishes the competence required of the empirical subject in order to be able to occupy the place proposed in the text, that is, the role of the enunciatee. On the other hand, it is practically impossible to give an account of the competences at stake in the reception, even more so when this refers to a situation of the past.

In the development of this work, we shall not consider questions related to the cinematographic market — as opposed to what might be called a market of symbolic goods. Financial strategies, distribution companies, marketing, audiences, etc. shall only be considered obliquely when relevant. However, what interests us from Sorlin's proposal is the possibility of projecting the analysis of films on to the social formation in which they are produced and consumed in two respects: through the observation of the "representations" proposed by the films — in the instance of production — and through the place or places assigned by the films to the spectator — in the instance of reception.

II. CINEMA AND SOCIETY: A SOCIO-SEMIOTIC APPROACH

Along the theoretical trajectory described above one can observe three different areas of debate. Firstly, there is the question posed by the realist-formalist debate regarding the relationship between what is shown in a film and the reality it intends to depict — that is, between representation and that which is represented. This constitutes a central preoccupation in those films that intend to represent a certain social or political reality as is the case with the cinema about the military dictatorship in Argentina. Secondly, one needs to consider the relationship that might be established between a particular film and its conditions of production, which factors might influence it and how. Finally, it is necessary to analyse the relationship between a film — and mass media in general — and the public it is directed to, how the latter might not only be represented but also how it might be influenced, induced, persuaded, to do something, change certain attitudes, beliefs, etc. — a question that, under the general term of manipulation, was central to some analysis of mass media during the 1970s.

These three problematics, although belonging to different traditions, are not really so far apart. Indeed, they involve the same question — the relationship between cinema and society — posed at three different levels: the conditions of production of a

text, the product itself (the text) and the conditions of its reception (in Eliseo Verón's terms, its recognition).

The present research, through the analysis of the cinematographic texts, aims to explore three questions: Which social factors can be seen as influences on the series of films about the last dictatorship in Argentina? What "traces" might be found in the texts of their process of production? And finally, how is the spectator inscribed in the films and what operations is s/he assigned? However, whilst aiming at these three questions, the analysis will be centred mainly on the last one, insofar as it allows for the construction of a theory of spectatorship independently of the consideration of audiences. This problem in turn involves, from a semiotic perspective, a theory of representation but also a theory of discourse.

1. The discursive approach to social phenomena

Looking at social practices from a discursive point of view has allowed us to displace the problem of realism from the relationship between a text and its extra-textual referent to certain conventions that establish the limits of what is admissible, believable, through intertextual reference. Similarly, when discussing Ferro's proposition about films acting as agents of history, it has been necessary, in order to visualize their effects, to refer to other texts. This discursive approach, in a sense unavoidable from a semiotic perspective, centres the research on the symbolic dimension of social phenomena.

Before going any further along this line, it is necessary to face what, according to Eliseo Verón, might be considered a classic objection. This would postulate that it is neither possible nor ethical to place at the same level discourses and "real" facts, particularly when dealing with socio-political events. Whilst it might be possible to accept the discursive character of literature or cinema, when it comes to political events

(such as a military coup) or to incidents that involve the lives of people (such as violence, torture or death), a strictly semiological approach might seem unthinkable.

In "Discurso del poder, poder del discurso" (1978), Verón replies to this objection claiming the impossibility of differentiating "facts" from "discourses" in the field of politics. This distinction lies, according to this author, in a mistake, insofar as "political facts" (a president's resignation, a *coup d'etat*) do not exist independently of their discursive materiality. Moreover, all political discourse is, at the same time, a political fact. The accusation, which is often levelled against the semiotic point of view, accepts neither that social processes can be analysed in terms of symbolic production, nor that a set of signs can be as "real" as a behaviour or an institution. Thus,

> Las reticencias ante un enfoque semiótico se fundan, sobre todo, en una "evidencia": es absurdo pretender reducir el estudios de los fenómenos sociales del poder político a una cuestión de "discursos". El poder no se ejerce con "discursos", éstos son un aspecto secundario (¿superestructural?) de los procesos políticos (al igual que los aspectos "ideológicos": se les puede atribuir una cierta importancia, pero estarán siempre determinados por los niveles de funcionamiento "real"de la sociedad: economía, lucha de clases, etc.). En las sociedades capitalistas, la esencia de la dominación del Estado es la *represión* y la *violencia*: estas cuestiones no son "discursivas". (Verón 1978: 94)

Behind these arguments lies, according to Verón, the notion of power as a kind of substance, that is as "pure physical coercion, pure violence, one could say as pure materiality" (Verón 1978, my translation). Verón's rupture with these arguments consists in conceptualizing the production of meaning not as something on a different level (as part of a superstructure) but as penetrating the whole of society. However, it is not a question of inverting the relationship between "facts" and "discourses", now conceiving the former as mere epiphenomena of the latter. What is at stake, instead, is precisely the dismantling of such an opposition. In this respect Verón points out that the terms "facts" and "discourses" do not correspond to that of infra- and superstructure — in any of the two possible positions —: neither do they correspond to the verbs "to do" and "to say" given that "social action cannot be determined outside of the symbolic and imaginary structure that defines it as such" (Sigal & Verón 1985: 13).

Repression and violence cannot be separated from the discourses that they engender and that engender them; on the contrary, repression and violence constitute limit cases within a global conception of power as a symbolic practice. In Sigal and Verón's terms:

> La violencia no se opone a la palabra como el "hacer" al "decir"; ella no empieza, como la música, "donde mueren las palabras". La violencia, como los discursos, está articulada a la matriz significante que le da sentido y, en definitiva, la engendra como comportamiento enraizado en el orden simbólico y productor de imaginario. (Sigal & Verón 1985: 14).

We shall return to this point later when considering Verón's notion of a social semiosis; for the time being, it is enough to stress that, when approaching social processes, from a discursive perspective, that is, as symbolic phenomena, we are not denying the material existence of social actors, nor the relations of force or social conflict between them; instead we intend to analyse the symbolic mechanisms that allow these relations to be established.

2. Cinema and Social Discourse

In *1889: Un état du discours social*, Marc Angenot defines Social Discourse as:

> [...] todo lo que se dice y se escribe en un estado de sociedad; todo lo que se imprime, todo lo que se habla públicamente o se representa hoy en los medios electrónicos[...] Todo lo que se narra o argumenta, si entendemos que narrar y argumentar son los dos grandes modos de puesta en discurso. [...] Los sistemas genéricos, los repertorios tópicos, las reglas de encadenamientos de enunciados que en una sociedad dada organizan lo decible, lo narrable y lo opinable y aseguran la división del trabajo discursivo. (Angenot 1989)

In this first approach, one can perceive the practical problems that such a broad category might present for analysis. Later on, in the same text, Angenot narrows this concept down by defining it as "a global regulatory system" which would establish the rules of production and circulation of discourses as well as a diagram of its products. Angenot's purpose is thus to "globally consider the totality of discourses through which the *socius* speaks and is spoken" (Angenot 1989). This implies an operation of disclosure of

discourses traditionally considered as pertaining to isolated discursive fields, such as literature, philosophy, science, everyday conversation, etc.

Angenot questions those conceptions of the social that, like Mikhail Bakhtin's "democratic myth" of heterology and heteroglossia, tend to represent the social as a polyphonic space, stressing multiplicity, fluency, and creativity and thereby ignoring the restrictions that are imposed upon discursive production as a whole. Nevertheless, Angenot retains from Bakhtin the notion of a "generalized interaction" between genres and discourses. Thus, two fundamental notions in the analysis of Social Discourse are those of intertextuality (the circulation and transformation of "ideologemes") and interdiscursivity (the interaction and influence of axiomatics of discourse).

In order to specify the restrictions imposed by Social Discourse upon particular texts, Angenot introduces the notion of hegemony. By this term he understands the general laws of what can be said or written, and which also regulate social acceptability at a given period. This definition poses two problems: on the one hand, it merges with the very notion of Social Discourse as a "regulatory system"; on the other, it suggests the idea of society as a homogeneous whole where the disparity of discourses might be in the last instance subsumed under this regulatory unit. Unlike Gramsci's concept of hegemony as a provisional result of a process of negotiation among different social actors; in Angenot's work, hegemony appears as previous to discursive processes; that is, as a cause rather than an effect.

Régine Robin correctly points out that this definition of Social Discourse includes elements of three different natures. Firstly, the utterances, texts and discourses that are produced in a society, elements that might be placed at the surface of textual production. Secondly, the conditions of possibility of the former, the set of generic norms and structures that would account for them. Finally, elements that concern pragmatics, that is the acceptability and social effectiveness of discourses. According to Robin, these

three levels, whilst necessary to conceptualize a single problematic, should not be confused (Robin dialogue with Angenot 1988).

However, despite these difficulties, some notions proposed by Angenot can be of use to the analysis of Postdictatorship Argentine Cinema in relation to its conditions of production.

Angenot establishes as components of Social Discourse the following elements: the legitimate language (stratified according to its different uses), topics (the set of basic, irreducible, presuppositions implied in the *vraisemblable social*), fetishes and taboos (objects marked by the forms of the sacred and the untouchable), egocentrism and ethnocentrism (a legitimate enunciator in relation to which "otherness" is established), thematic (problems that are partially preconstructed and that consist not only of a repertoire of subjects but also organize a *Weltanschauung* with its own system of values) and dominant lines of *pathos* (temperaments and moods experienced in a collective manner).

Among these, the concept of topics and its relation to the notion of the *vraisemblable social* as a collective presupposition behind discourses is particularly relevant for our analysis. According to Angenot, the repertoire of topics, the *topica*, produces social consent regarding truth, which is a condition for the production of discourses. The *topica* constitutes the *doxa*, which is stratified according to the knowledge and presuppositions proper to a certain social formation at a given period in time.

If one returns to Philip Hamon's definition of verisimilitude and relates it to Angenot's propositions, the *vraisemblable social* can be defined as an institutionalised system of values that takes the place of the real (Hamon) and therefore establishes, at any given moment in time (and for a given group, one might add), what is credible, likely or

possible. It thus constitutes through consent the order of truth, which is a precondition for discursivity (Angenot 1989).

As an "institutionalised system of values" one could think of certain institutions that regulate the production of truth — a subject that has interested Michel Foucault and which he develops at length in *The Order of Discourse*. Insofar as this system "takes the place of the real", it can be defined as symbolic and therefore involving semiotic processes. Being defined and redefined at every moment in time, it is capable of historical modification. If the *vraisemblable social* establishes what is credible, likely or possible, it thus refers to an epistemic category — belief — which can be related both to the manipulative role of the enunciator (in the form of making believe) and to the interpretative role of the enunciatee (as believing). The notion finally presupposes the social construction through consent of the categories of truth and falsehood.

We can thus establish the relationship between the films and their conditions of production and recognition as that between the cinematographic texts and the Social Discourse they participate in, either exhibiting — the films as sources — or producing — the films as agents — the reaffirmation or modification of the *vraisemblable social* in relation to the appraisal of the action of the military during the dictatorship.

3. Cinema and Social Discourses

Unlike Angenot, Eliseo Verón prefers the term social discourses — in the plural — to approach what he names the "social semiosis". Verón's starting-point is the consideration of meaning processes as an investment in conglomerates of symbolic material. For Verón, meaning does not exist at an abstract level, but is instead the result of a process of production. It is therefore possible to analyse it, like any other product, in terms of three moments: production, circulation and consumption. As has already been mentioned, Verón substitutes this last notion for that of recognition, insofar as meaning processes are not, strictly speaking, consumed, but received, recognized. The restrictions

imposed upon texts by their system of production make it possible to relate them to the basic mechanisms of social functioning. Insofar as meaning appears as a result of any social activity, it is always engendered by social practices.

The social activity of investment of meaning into signifying materials can, according to Verón, be reconstructed — at least partially — from the traces of the system of production that subsist in the product. These traces allow the critic to construct what Verón terms "grammars" — a limited number of rules that regulate a production of meaning that is in itself unlimited — both of production and of recognition. Inasmuch as circulation acts only as a mediating instance between the other two moments there cannot be, strictly speaking, traces of it and therefore neither can a grammar be reconstructed. Grammars do not express properties of the texts but represent the relationship between them and an exteriority, the social and historical system of production. Conceiving of production and reception as grammars, that is, as fields of possible determinants — in relation to grammars of production — or effects — in relation to grammars of recognition — allows Verón to go beyond certain theories of communication, which postulate a single trajectory from sender to receiver.

Verón combines this approach — which one might call Marxist — with Charles Sanders Peirce's concept of infinite semiosis in order to construct what he calls "social semiosis". This constitutes "an infinite signifying net both from a synchronic and a diachronic point of view" that "has the form of a multiple links structure" (Verón 1980: 151; my translation). The different systems of production of particular texts are interwoven in this net, through the relationship between grammars of production and recognition, given that any grammar of production can be seen as a result of certain conditions of recognition of former texts, whilst any grammar of recognition can only be perceived in the production of new texts. Thus, the necessary reference to other texts, which has been pointed out with regard to Ferro's arguments about films as sources or agents of history.

Verón represents this social and historical web as follows:

```
┌─────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ production  │   │   recognition    │
└             └   └

operations      DISCOURSE      representations

   │                                  ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
   │      circulation      operations │ DISCOURSE │   representations
   │                                  └           └               │
   └──────────────────────────────────┐                          │
                                       │                      operations
                                       │      circulation         │
                                       └──────────────────────────┘
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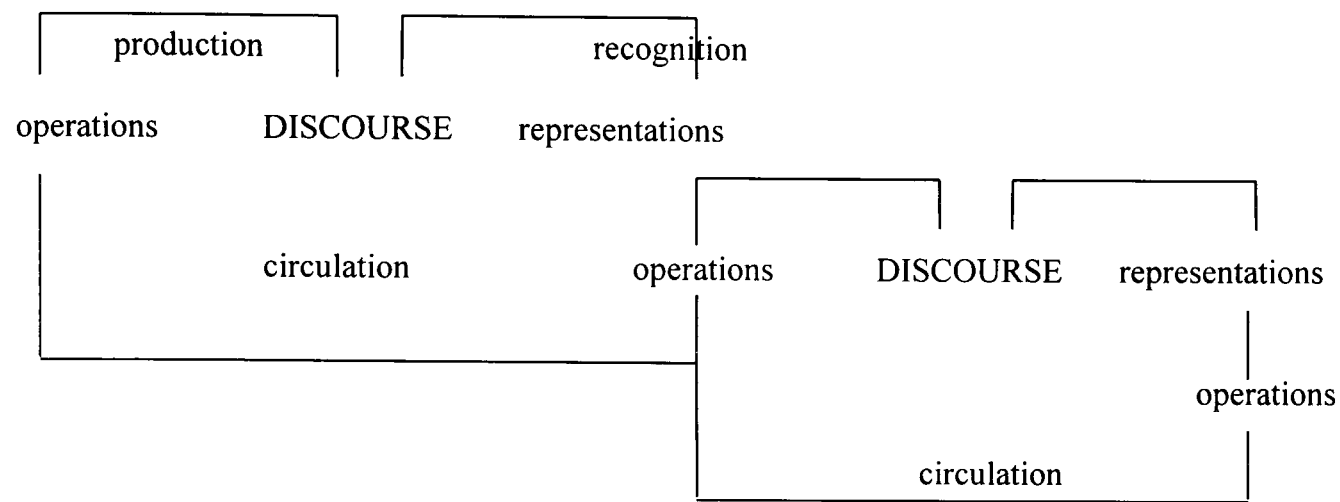
The triad "operations - discourses - representations" can be referred to the ternary model of the sign proposed by Peirce "interpretant - sign - object", in which the interpretant, as thirdness, is able to generate new interpretants in a net which, like the one constructed by Verón, is also infinite.

There are two fundamental concepts that Verón's notion of a social semiosis shares with the approaches developed above: that of the ideological and that of power. However, for this author, it is necessary to distinguish between two dimensions of these terms: a descriptive and an analytical one. In the descriptive dimension, "the ideological" refers to historical ideologies (such as Fascism, Socialism, Communism, etc.). These constitute grammars of production, or better families of grammars — insofar as the same ideology may be invested in different materials (Verón gives the example of the term "Fascist architecture"). On the other hand, power, defined in its descriptive dimension, refers to the state's institutional apparatuses; that is, to specific historical formations associated with institutional forms. Nevertheless, as has been mentioned, ideology and power are not restricted to these forms of explicit intervention but "penetrate a society from one end to another" (Verón 1980: 154). Ideology and power can be found everywhere as "intelligibility schemes of the social

field" (Verón quoting Foucault). They constitute two different dimensions in the analysis of the processes of production of meaning.

In this respect the ideological is "the name given to the system of relationships between a signifying set and its social conditions of production" (Verón 1980: 155). The ideological does not therefore refer to a certain signifying set (that would imply that one could find ideological and non-ideological discourses). It does not consist of a repertoire of contents. Neither does it imply the distortion or concealing of a reality. It is, on the contrary, an analytical dimension of any social discourse, insofar as any discourse shows traces of the conditions of production that engender it. The Sociology of Knowledge had made some advances in this direction, admitting that not only errors or lies were socially conditioned, but also the production of truth. Verón takes this argument further, suggesting that any social practice can be read as discourse and therefore be related to its conditions of production. Any social practice can thus be considered ideological.

On the other hand, if one considers the production of meaning, not from the point of view of its production but in recognition, one encounters the problematic of power. In this analytical dimension, "the notion of power designates the effects of a discourse over a certain net (texture) of social relations [...] these effects have necessarily the form of a new production of meaning" (Verón 1980: 156). Power is thus a relational concept, insofar as the power of a certain discourse — as has been mentioned regarding Ferro's approach — can only be perceived as an effect upon another discourse.

The distinction between these two dimensions — descriptive and analytical — and between both problematics — ideology and power, in production and recognition, respectively — allows Verón to question certain traditional readings of the left which confuse either both dimensions — conceiving the power of a discourse as a consequence of the power of the institutions behind it — or both problematics — believing that in order to infer the power of a discourse it is enough to analyse its ideology.

Finally, it is useful to recall Verón's observations regarding political discourse. According to this author, among the effects a certain discourse might produce in its recognition it is possible to distinguish between a "knowledge-effect" and an "ideological-effect". The former prevails in those discourses known as scientific, in which an object is described whilst at the same time "it is made explicit that it is being described from a certain point of view". This effect is produced by those discourses that recognise themselves as being determined by certain conditions of production. On the contrary, ideological effects predominate in discourses which propose "such description as the only possible one" (Verón 1978: 92; my translation). The clearest example of these absolute discourses might be found in religion.

Both types of discourses cannot avoid being involved with power. However, their effects are very different: the effect of knowledge is the precondition for the production of knowledge; whilst the ideological effect acts upon belief. This distinction, Verón points out, should not be confused with the Althussserian distinction between science and ideology, given that, at the level of production, all discourses are ideological — they are always produced under certain conditions — whilst, at the level of recognition, all discourses produce effects — they all involve power. Knowledge and belief are discursive effects and not types of discourses. The same discourse might produce an effect of knowledge in a certain layer of society and of belief in another.

Following on from this, Verón defines the specificity of political discourse as a certain ambiguity or tension between these two effects. Political discourse explicitly exhibits its polemical character, recognising the existence of different interpretations proposed by similar discourses — as effect of knowledge. However, whilst recognizing its existence, it needs to show those other discourses as false, presenting itself as absolute — ideological effect. The constitution of political discourse results from this paradox: on the one hand, it requires the existence of the "other" without which it would have no reason to exist; on the other, this "other" needs to be disqualified, annulled, silenced. One

of the main tasks of political discourse resides in this "annihilation" of those discourses

defined as different, as "other" (Verón 1978: 96). The recourse to the word annihilation

should not be read as a metaphor, given that, for Verón:

> El esfuerzo permanente del discurso político no puede ser otro que la neutralización, la descalificación del discurso del Otro. ¿Qué mejor modo de neutralización de ese discurso Otro, que amenaza permanentemente la pretensión de absoluto, que la reducción a silencio del Otro? Desde este punto de vista el discurso político es portador de muerte.

> [...] Esta tendencia profunda sólo se manifiesta de manera explícita en situaciones límites: el nazismo y el fascismo fueron algunas de ellas. Es evidente que estos fenómenos (del mismo modo que otros, radicalmente distintos en sus fundamentos políticos, pero igualmente asociados a la institucionalización colectiva de la muerte, como el caso del peronismo en la Argentina a partir de 1972) no son meras "aberraciones" o accidentes en la sinuosa historia de la implantación del capitalismo en el mundo contemporáneo. En situación "normal" de democracia pluralista y de "juego parlamentario", el discurso político olvida fácilmente (y nos hace fácilmente olvidar) que si es verdad que "las palabras son un arma", la verdad de esa expresión reposa en la verdad de la expresión inversa: el único método seguro de "tener la última palabra" es reducir al enemigo al silencio. (Verón 1978: 97)

The series of films which we have assembled from the whole cinematic field of

Postdictatorship Argentine Cinema — that is, films that thematize the period of the

military dictatorship — postulates, from the very texts, the connexion between

cinematographic and political discourse. In fact, in a traditional definition of

cinematographic genres, it would be designated as political cinema. The series could thus

be read as constituted by discourses whose conditions of production involve the

recognition of prior politico-institutional discourses: those of the Military Juntas, but

also, those of the democratic government regarding the former (the trials of the Generals,

the foundation of CONADEP, the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida*, the

Presidential Pardons), the discourses of Human Rights organizations (such as *Madres de*

Plaza de Mayo, *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*, H.I.J.O.S.) and other discourses that might be

said to circulate at a more general level in society — what Angenot might define as *doxa*.

These discourses, as conditions of production, leave traces in different ways upon the

cinematographic texts. In this respect, they can be seen as functioning as, in Ferro's

terms, "documents" or "sources". At the same time, the films produce different effects

that can be read in, among other places, the constitution of the series itself.

In between the conditions of production and recognition, it is necessary to acknowledge the mediation of the subject. However, this does not imply the return to the idea of a conscious subject, source and owner of the text's meanings, but instead of a "semioticized subject", understood as "the necessary mediation between conditions of production and processes of production, and between conditions and processes of recognition" (Verón 1980: 162). In this respect the concept of enunciation might be conceived of as essential to the understanding of the articulation between the textual and the social spheres; and we shall therefore focus on this notion in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

CINEMATOGRAPHIC ENUNCIATION

The previous chapter surveyed different ways of posing the relationship between representation and that which is represented, that is, between discourse — in this case cinematographic discourse — and reality or, in slightly different terms, between sign and referent. This possibility, denied at first by a strict semiotic approach, needs to be recovered not in order to reestablish a certain lost transparency which language would have had, but instead to analyse the mechanism through which this relationship comes to be postulated by the texts and to be accepted in its reception. Thus, even if the analysis focuses on a limited corpus of cinematographic texts, the problems approached exceed it, and can be extended to any discourse — historical, political, journalistic, etc. — that presents itself (in one way or another) as representation of an extradiscursive reality.

In this context, alongside the notion of genre, and — closely related to it, as will be examined — the instance of enunciation serves as articulation between what might be considered two different systems: the textual and the social. This chapter intends to analyse some of the ways in which such an articulation might be conceptualized.

I. THE ARTICULATION BETWEEN THE TEXTUAL AND THE SOCIAL

Beginning with Emile Benveniste's works on linguistics, the instance of the enunciation has been definitively incorporated into literary theory, even though the scope of this concept often differs from one author to another. For Benveniste, the act of enunciation constitutes "the setting into motion of language through an individual act of use" (Benveniste 1970: 12, in Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1986: 39). According to this definition, the term might be related to the pragmatic situation of communication in which an utterance (énoncé) is produced. This involves a sender and a receiver, whose designations vary according to the type of discourse

that is being dealt with: speaker / listener in the case of oral communication, writer / reader in literature, filmmaker / spectator in the case of cinema. However, as Kerbrat-Orecchioni observes, following Anscombre and Ducrot, enunciation thus conceived constitutes a historical event — unique and particular — and therefore could not be considered as an object of study. This impossibility gives origin to two tendencies:

The first of these, represented by Kerbrat, considers the enunciation as an act that, involving pragmatic subjects (Kerbrat speaks of "speaker" or "sender"), leaves traces in the utterance so that:

> [...] no pudiendo estudiar directamente el acto de producción, [se tratará] de identificar y de describir *las huellas del acto en el producto*, es decir, los lugares de inscripción en la trama enunciativa de los diferentes constituyentes del marco enunciativo. (Kerbrat 1986: 41, underlined in the original)

This option presupposes the existence — prior to the utterance — of the constituents of the enunciative frame: the protagonists of discourse and the communicative situation. This tendency, which will be adopted mainly in the study of conversation, poses several problems when transposed to the analysis of discourses in which the communicative situation is mediated, either by a certain period of time between production and reception — as is the case with written discourse (in any of its forms) — or by technical intervention — as happens with audiovisual media. Kerbrat foresees these problems but does not seem interested in solving them. She merely points out the "thorny case" of literary discourse — in which "these instances are doubled (author / narrator, on the one hand; reader / narratee, on the other)" — and the difficulties for analysing the multiple enunciational instances of theatre (director, set decorator, light technicians, actors, etc.) (Kerbrat 1986: 31-32). However, this "thorny case" is that of any written discourse and not only of literature, insofar as political discourse, history, journalism, among other discursive genres do also construct an image of an enunciator akin to that of the narrator in literature. Moreover, the chain of senders that can be observed in theatre also appears in other media such as television or cinema, or even in certain written texts, such as advertising (a case that Kerbrat hints at).

The second option regarding enunciation, instead of assuming the existence of a producer preexisting the utterance, sees the former as a logical presupposition of the latter. In this case, enunciation is conceived of as "a linguistic instance, logically presupposed by the very existence of the utterance" (Greimas and Courtés 1979: 144). In the first case, the enunciation refers to the empirical subjects involved in the production of a text; in the second one, they refer to the textual figures that are constructed in and by the text; simulacra of the former, but constructed as an effect of the text and not previous to it. The difference between the two positions might seem insignificant but it is not; it involves the whole of the semiotic edifice.

In a lecture given in 1974, but translated into Spanish in 1996, "La enunciación: una postura epistemológica", Greimas is adamant when pointing out this difference:

> Toda la confusión viene del hecho de que el sujeto de la enunciación que es un sujeto lógico, es considerado por los lingüistas y sobre todo por los literatos y filósofos, como un sujeto ontológico. La confusión es simple. Porque si yo estoy aquí hecho de carne y hueso, como un ser existente, y yo digo: *la tierra es redonda*, entonces, se diría que es Greimas el que es sujeto de la enunciación de este enunciado *la tierra es redonda*. Pero, lingüísticamente, postular la existencia de Greimas, significa postular la existencia de un referente exterior al lenguaje. Esto es antisaussuriano y toda la semiótica se derrumba. (Greimas 1996: 8-9)

In this case, there is also a possibility of relating both systems. However, this is done in the opposite direction to that proposed by Kerbrat. Kerbrat takes as a starting-point the analysis of oral communicative processes — which one might call social — in order to approach other discourses. Greimas, instead, suggests that it is possible to begin with narratives to analyse social situations:

> [...] si el relato es el simulacro de situaciones sociales, finalmente las formulaciones sociales y las formulaciones del relato pueden ser transpuestas en la misma vida social y poseer el mismo juego que se juega entre nosotros que estamos más o menos enmascarados y que actuamos papeles, que queremos persuadir, persuadir que es verdadero, persuadir que es falso, fingir que es mentira, que hay cosas que se ocultan detrás de cosas. [...] Hay ahí una suerte de transición que podemos aprovechar, hablando de la enunciación, entre lo que está presente en los textos como simulacro de comunicación social y lo que ésta es en sí misma. No hay finalmente ruptura, solución, el lenguaje está en el fondo. El relato, el discurso, es incluso un lugar privilegiado donde uno puede estudiar esta gramática sociosemiótica y viceversa. (Greimas 1996: 21-22)

In this lecture Greimas concludes categorically in favour of this last option:

> [...] lo que quiero destacar es que existe esta problemática de la enunciación y que es interesante en los límites que le he prescripto, es decir, con la condición de que sea una problemática situada en el texto, extrapolada (presupuesta lógicamente a partir del texto) siguiendo los presupuestos lógicos a partir del texto. Pues de otro modo está la vía peligrosa en la cual uno se puede aventurar y es la recuperación de toda la semiótica por la ideología ¿Qué pasaría finalmente? [...] Lo que se trata de hacer ahora es abrir el paréntesis e introducir al sujeto. Mientras que permanece como sujeto lógico, presupuesto, todo va bien, pero cuando uno pasa hacia el sujeto psicológico, al sujeto ontológico, al sujeto trascendental, entonces, se abren los grifos de algo incontrolable. La semiótica será entonces destruida. [...] Fuera del texto no hay salvación. Únicamente el texto, nada más que el texto y nada fuera del texto. (Greimas 1996: 24-25)

These two conceptions of the term structure the main conflict encountered when approaching the instance of enunciation as an articulation between the textual and the social. Either of the two options appears to solve the problem and, at the same time, neither of them does, given that the solution in any case entails leaving aside one or the other of the two systems involved.

An attempt at reconciling both positions has been put forward by Patrick Charaudeau. According to this author, it is necessary to consider four agents and not just two, in any communicative situation: on the one hand, the empirical subjects; on the other, the textual figures. The relationship between these four figures is operated through the communicative project of an empirical sender, whose strategies will define the construction of the textual figures. In its turn, the acceptance or rejection of the communicative contract will depend on the identification of the empirical receiver with the textual subject proposed to him by the text. In this case, whilst postulating the pre-existence of the empirical subjects, the unfolding of these categories allows the division of the analysis. Thus, in a first moment, the focus upon textual figures justifies a semiotic approach — without attacking Saussure; the reference to the empirical subjects, in a second moment, allows the relationship of the former to the social. It is true that these "empirical" subjects will necessarily be constructions, in any case sustained by other discourses but, for this very reason, of a different kind. To consider a traditional example: stating that Daniel Defoe is a social construction and that so is Robinson Crusoe, does not prevent us establishing a difference between them.

This position, conciliatory of the former, can also be read in Eliseo Verón "Cuando leer es hacer. La enunciación en el discurso de la prensa escrita", given his remark that:

> Hay que distinguir bien al emisor "real" del enunciador y al receptor "real" del destinatario. Enunciador y destinatario son entidades discursivas. Esta doble distinción es fundamental: un mismo emisor podrá en un discurso diferente, construir enunciadores diferentes según, por ej., el auditorio, al mismo tiempo cada vez construirá diferentemente a su destinatario. (Verón: 3)

Although in a less explicit manner than that of Charaudeau, Verón relates the enunciational *dispositif* (between textual figures) to the reading contract that can be presupposed between empirical subjects. Verón suggests that the analysis of the former could supplement socio-demographic information about the public and consequently allow us to distinguish between relatively homogeneous reader's universes (as is the case with the woman's magazines that he studies).

In short: if the instance of enunciation can allow for the articulation of the textual with the social system, it is only at the cost of maintaining the constitutive ambiguity of the term. That is: maintaining the distinction between the subject that produces the text and the one produced by the text, between the I that speaks and the I that is spoken, whilst at the same time recognising a certain continuity between them. It is true that, in this recovering of the empirical subjects, one could read something of a naive conception of language, according to which it would be possible for a subject to speak "himself" or to speak "the real" with total transparency. This is not our intention. On the contrary, preserving the distinction between empirical and textual figures, shows the necessary alienation of the subject in language. However, if we are condemned not only to speak but also to know in and through language, why should we deny the possibility of aiming at reality, even knowing that this is also a construction. Accepting this limit as an impossibility, would that not be the true prison-house of language?

II. CINEMATOGRAPHIC ENUNCIATION

1. The notion of a cinematographic enunciator

Even with differences regarding its domain, the existence of the enunciation — and therefore the existence of the subjects implied at this level — is extensively accepted in literature. In cinema, however, this notion brings about several problems. The first of these concerns the existence of a cinematographic equivalent of the literary enunciator and the textual marks by which it would be recognised. For some authors the basic premise behind the concept of a cinematographic enunciator (that for many of them can be assimilated to the traditional concept of literary narrator) should be questioned, given that cinema would not expose a subject as source of the narration but, instead, just a series of events that present themselves. It would thus be a case of a mimetic, direct representation (closer to theatre) rather than of a diegetic (literary) one.

The strength of this argument lies deep in literary theory. As Gérard Genette points out, the distinction between mimetic and diegetic representation was first formulated by Plato in order to distinguish two forms of what he calls *lexis*, that is, "ways of saying". These are the "simple narrative" (or *diegesis*), in which the poet speaks "in his own person", without trying "to persuade us that the speaker is anyone but himself"; and imitation (*mimesis*) in which he intends to give the illusion that it is not him who is speaking, but one of his characters (Genette 1982: 128). The distinction between *diegesis* and *mimesis* is reformulated by Aristotle who takes the opposition between them even further, assimilating the dramatic genre with the imitative mode and the epic genre with the pure narrative mode.

According to Genette this distinction, forgotten by classical tradition, was recovered in the United States and England at the end of the 19th Century, in the opposition of the terms "showing" versus "telling". If one accepts this distinction

it is necessary to admit that enunciation, as the mediation of a subject — whether textual or social —, can only be attributed to the latter[1].

André Gaudreault also recovers this Platonic opposition and, like Genette, refers it to two modes of representation: "narration" and "mostration". The former would be the basic form of literature; the latter of theatre and cinema. However, the position of cinema in this opposition is ambiguous. Gaudreault, after pointing out the similarities between theatre and cinema goes on to show their differences. On the one hand, cinema operates upon a double temporality, that of the filming and that of the showing, which implies an important difference with respect to the simultaneous mostration of theatre. On the other hand, the category of mimesis or mostration could not be applied strictly except to the first cinematographic productions, or to a few shots today, in which camera work is limited to the recording of events that take place in front of it. With the development of the medium and the technical manipulation implied by it — of the profilmic elements (setting, make-up, lighting, etc.) as well as of the filmic material (mainly through editing) — the intervention of a subject is much more evident. In cinema as we know it, the camera does not present to the spectator's look an anterior "objective" reality, but constitutes itself as a look that guides that of the spectator. This look can be referred to a visual enunciative instance (Gaudreault 1988, in Gaudreault and Jost 1995: 33 & ss.) which has been recognised under different names by many theorists: "invisible narrator" (Ropars Wuilleumier 1972), "enunciator" (Bettetini 1984, Casetti 1989), "implicit narrator" or "great imaginer" (Jost in Jost and Gaudreault 1990), "meganarrator" (Gaudreault 1988).

In the opposite position, radically rejecting the idea of a cinematographic enunciator, is David Bordwell. In *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1995), Bordwell insists on avoiding the proliferation of unnecessary theoretical entities. Bordwell

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[1] Thus, theatrical representation would not imply, strictly speaking, an enunciator, although each actor might be considered an enunciator of his own lines. On the contrary, written theatre exposes the presence of such a figure through the titles, the division of the play into acts or scenes and mainly through the author's observations on movements, dressing, gestures, etc. In this respect, each theatrical performance can be considered unique and therefore could not be the object of discursive analysis unless registered in some way or another, in which case it would cease to be theatre.

strongly rejects Metz's rewriting of Benveniste, from which all problems seem for him to start. According to this author:

> Enunciation theory has provided a major impetus for the dissection of film style, and it has set cinephiles thinking about narration in more sophisticated ways. Yet because a film lacks equivalents for the most basic aspects of verbal activity, I suggest that we abandon the enunciation account. We need a theory of narration that is not bound to vague or atomistic analogies among representational systems, that does not privilege certain techniques, and that is broad enough to cover many cases but supple enough to discriminate among types, levels and historical manifestations of narration. (Bordwell 1985:26)

Almost in an intermediate position, one could inscribe Metz's arguments in "L'Enonciation Impersonelle ou le Site du Film". This article, first published in 1988, was included in a book of the same title in 1991. In this work, Metz considers that, although it is true that there is an instance of production, traces of which might be found in a text, there is no need to refer this to an anthropomorphic subject exterior to it. Enunciation would thus be "the semiological act through which certain parts of a text speak of this text as an act" (Metz 1988: 22). The subject of this act is the film itself, and not an instance outside of it. This option, which in many aspects resembles that of Greimas, has the advantage of limiting the problem to a single object (the film) whilst at the same time it runs the risk of falling into the trap of immanentism.

Likewise, although located on the side of reception, François Jost, in the text written in collaboration with Gaudreault, recuperates Pierre Sorlin's (1984) definition of cinematographic enunciation:

> He aquí, pues, lo que sería la enunciación cinematográfica: ese momento en que el espectador, escapándose del efecto-ficción, tuviese la convicción de estar en presencia del lenguaje cinematográfico como tal, de "soy cine", afirmado por los procedimientos de "estoy en el cine". (Gaudreault & Jost 1995: 52, on Sorlin 1984)

However, Jost's position is ambiguous. On the one hand, he seems to conceive of the "great imaginer" as a textual figure, completely independent of the empirical subjects that take part in cinematographic production, insofar as it "narrates through images" and is an "implicit, extradiegetic and invisible" entity. On the other hand, Jost distinguishes fiction — "regarding fiction we shall say that this organizing instance is an implicit narrator" — from documentary or interviews in which case, for Jost the image of the enunciator "would be a documentarist or a

journalist" (Jost & Gaudreault 1990: 56). Enunciation would thus imply a textual construction only in the case of fiction, whereas non-fictional genres would refer this function to the empirical subject producing the text.

This ambiguity is not unusual in the analysis of enunciation, both regarding natural languages and cinematographic language. Even among those works that recognize the existence of cinematographic enunciation, there is no consensus surrounding the character of the subjects involved. Thus, some theoreticians see the enunciator as an anthropomorphic instance that refers to the empirical subject responsible for the production of a film, although once again it is not clear who this might be (the author? the producer? the scriptwriter?). In other cases, the subjects of the enunciation are conceived exclusively as textual constructions. Finally, some authors would attribute the existence of these subjects to an act of inference on the part of the spectator. This confusion is correctly pointed out by Bordwell:

> Indeed, critics have blurred important distinctions: Ropars equates the narrator with the "implied author", while Bellour talks as if the enunciator in Hitchcock's films is not a critical construct but a certain corpulent Englishman ("the director, the man with the movie camera"). (Bordwell 1985: 25)

However, whilst Bordwell opts for discarding the notion of enunciation altogether, the purpose of this chapter — and also of the rest of this work — is to visualize the potentialities such a concept might have for the analysis of films in the historical context of their production.

2. Marks of enunciation in cinema

The main reason for objecting to the idea of a cinematographic enunciator lies in the impossibility of establishing a cinematographic equivalent to linguistic shifters, that is those terms that act as explicit marks of the inscription of the subject in his/her discourse. For Benveniste, these categories constitute empty forms that are filled in each act of enunciation by the subject speaking. Whilst natural languages have a set of categories that explicitly refer to the subjects of the enunciation — such as personal pronouns and adverbs of time and space — in

cinema, the very existence of these forms is called into question. There is also little agreement, among the authors who accept this possibility, about which would be the elements that assume such a function.

In the text already mentioned, François Jost, considers as deictics mainly certain options regarding framing: close-up shots, the descent of point of view below the line of vision, the representation of a part of the body in a close-up shot, the shadow of a character, images seen through vision devices such as keyholes, lenses or binoculars, the intermittent movement of the camera suggesting the filmic process. However, the instance of enunciation would not only be restricted, according to Jost, to these marks of an explicit look, but also by all the other, less obvious, options: lighting, make-up, editing, punctuation, etc.

According to this author, the perception of these elements as marks of the enunciation is not universal but instead varies according to the spectator, his or her knowledge of the cinematographic language and also the historical period in question. For example, the look of a character into the camera, in the origins of cinema would not have been perceived as a mark of a cinematographic enunciator, given that it was part of the conventions of the medium at that time. It was not until the development of the medium tried to erase the marks of the enunciation that the look into the camera started to be perceived as a marked term, pointing out precisely this intervention. Jost also establishes an important distinction — as do other authors — between the "implicit narrator" (that "speaks" cinema through images and sounds) and the "explicit narrator" (that narrates with words) (Gaudreault & Jost 1995: 52).

Francesco Casetti (1989) considers two possible forms of cinematographic enunciation. The first would be that of an "enunciated enunciation", that is, a mechanism whereby the enunciation manifests itself as such, as would be the case of metafilms (films about the making of a film) and reflexivity in general. The second type of film, on the contrary, tries to hide the mechanisms of its production, and can therefore be considered as showing a "receding enunciation". In this case, although not explicit, the enunciation can be traced through the marks

mentioned above regarding point of view but also through what Casetti considers the equivalent of deictics: credits, technical features, steps of the enunciation represented in the *énoncé*, and also certain figures and themes — such as the presence of eyes, the staging of shows, characters of voyeurs and spies, ghosts and doubles, etc.

These marks allow Casetti to establish four basic enunciational configurations through which the presence of an enunciator (I) and of an enunciatee (you) manifest themselves in relation to the *énoncé* (it) or the characters depicted in it (s/he).

- OBJECTIVE CAMERA: This configuration presents an equilibrium between enunciator (I) and enunciatee (you), in a position of equality in front of a s/he (of the *énoncé*). In this configuration, the enunciatee assumes the role of witness.

- INTERPELLATION: This form implies the rupture of the symmetry of the former: the first and third person look at the second person. A syncretism is produced between the enunciator and the *énoncé* facing the enunciatee.

- SUBJECTIVE CAMERA: Contrary to the former, the subjective shot operates a syncretism between the character (s/he) and the enunciatee (you). The latter assumes the point of view and therefore the position of the former.

- UNREAL OBJECTIVE CAMERA: At a structural level, this configuration corresponds to the first one. However, the axis of the shot positions a certain look, and thus suggests the presence of a subject, which can be related to the figure of the enunciator (Casetti 1989).

Coinciding with Jost, Casetti also distinguishes two different instances: enunciator / enunciatee, on the one hand; and narrator / narratee, on the other (corresponding to implicit and explicit narrator). This distinction is essential, given that, in the analysis of audiovisual media, it is often the case that these two levels get confused, thus considering certain subjects of the *énoncé* (characters, narrators) as subjects of the enunciation. In the analysis of television programmes, for example, TV presenters or journalists are usually assigned the role of enunciators. However,

these subjects, represented in the *énoncé*, belong to a different level — insofar as someone or something shows them to us. They might be considered as secondary intradiegetic enunciators — in the same way the characters of a novel can be considered enunciators of their own speeches in the dialogues — but they should not be confused with the cinematographic or televisual enunciator that pertains to a different level of analysis.

3. The body of the subjects of enunciation

In the context outlined above, Gianfranco Bettetini's approach (1984) to the question of enunciation becomes particularly interesting. According to this author, audiovisual discourse constitutes a potential conversation, insofar as the dialogue with the screen can be considered an authentic symbolic interaction. The characteristic common to all the subjects taking part in this interaction is that they lack a body: the body of the actors are only pretexts for the configuration of their images, their ghosts; the body of the film as celluloid needs to be nullified as it runs in order for the film as projection to acquire life; the body of the devices employed both in the process of production (the camera) and in the process of projection (the projector) are either missing or hidden, in order to produce the game of light and shadow we call cinema. Thus, according to Bettetini:

> [...] el cine (los medios audiovisuales) puede ser definido como un aparato de significación y de comunicación que excluye la corporeidad de la materia significante exhibida a los ojos del espectador. Todos los cuerpos usados en el proceso productivo desaparecen [...] dejando huellas cuya materialidad se reduce siempre más, hasta generar un conjunto concluyente de elementos incorpóreos sobre la pantalla en la fase de proyección. (Bettetini 1984: 22)

Bettetini is especially interested in the body of the subjects of enunciation. Like the authors considered above, he distinguishes between the empirical subjects that produce the text and the textual subjects that are produced by it. However, he incorporates a third element, that of the model or implied author. This is a construction produced by the destinatee (the spectator) and not by the text from the traces left by the enunciator. There are thus two simultaneous subjects on the

side of production, which do not coincide: one objectively observed in the analysis of the text and another produced subjectively by the destinatee.

But the fundamental point about these two subjects is that both of them lack a body: the body of the enunciator (the textual figure) is nothing other than "a project of speaking"; the body of the model-author is only "the confirmation of a speech". These two subjects are faced by an empirical subject, who does possess a body and who therefore needs to find a way of gaining access to that world of images if s/he is to take part in the communicative exchange proposed. The spectator thus needs his body to undergo a symbolic transformation; s/he needs to forge for him/herself a "truly and authentic symbolic prothesis" that can interact with the simulacrum of the enunciator.

However, this is not a completely free construction, insofar as the text provides certain parameters in the form of an enunciatee, who represents in the text the roles proposed to the empirical subject:

> El espectador está empujado a identificarse con el sujeto de la enunciación, a sentirse él mismo sujeto, a cargar con la responsabilidad de una mirada primigenia y original. Pero esta mirada está ya construida y guiada; el espectador es el lugar de una ausencia y obra en un estado de "sujeto vacío, de pura capacidad de ver" (Metz 1977: 119). Algún otro ha visto ya en lugar suyo y le hace creer que es el sujeto de la visión, lo coloca en el orden de un discurso en el que todos los papeles, todas las articulaciones, todas las progresiones y, sobre todo, todas las modalidades están programadas (Bettetini 1984: 32)

The text presents on the screen a symbolic exchange between textual subjects, which needs to be referred to the empirical subjects. The spectator is strongly conditioned to occupy the place constructed for him/her in the image of the enunciatee, assuming the roles pre-established by the text. Nevertheless, s/he does obviously retain a certain margin of autonomy: s/he can always chose to step out of the game proposed by the text walking out of the cinema or turning the television off. But also, the spectator is free to read a film "against the grain", laughing at a drama, ignoring suspense in a thriller, or feeling moved by a comedy.

4. The eye of the camera

In the passage quoted above, Bettetini proposes the construction of the enunciatee as an empty space to be occupied by the spectator. This space presupposes the realization of certain narrative programmes (the "roles, articulations, progressions and modalities"). This can only be operated upon one of the central aspects of visual enunciation: the coincidence of enunciator and enunciatee in a common look objectified by the frame. This coincidence of both instances in what might be called a "shared eye of the camera" has been pursued with particular interest by psychoanalytical film theory and criticism in several aspects. Some of these are: the analysis of the mechanisms of identification of the spectator with the look proposed by the camera (Metz 1975), the forms it acquires in relation to the scopic function (Heath 1981), in terms of gender (Mulvey 1975), the study of the mechanisms of appropriation of the subject's look in relation to the imaginary completion of lack (Oudart 1969).

The first one to engage with these questions was Christian Metz. In the article "The imaginary signifier" published in an issue of *Communications* that dealt specifically with the relationship between Cinema and Psychoanalysis[2]. Metz describes cinema as "the most perceptual art" — if one considers the number of senses involved — and at the same time the "least perceptual" — if one evaluates the quality and not the quantity of the senses involved. If on the one hand, cinema offers — as theatre or opera — the possibility of seeing moving images and of simultaneously hearing dialogues, sounds and music, all these sensations turn out to be false. The perception is real — Metz points out that cinema itself is not the phantom — but what is perceived "is not really the object, it is its shadow, its phantom, its double, its *replica* in a new kind of mirror" (Metz 1982: 45).

The novelty of this "new kind of mirror" — in Lacanian terms — lies in the fact that, in contrast to the former, the screen does not reflect the subject's own image but that of the objects. Lacking the image of his own body to relate to, and

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[2] This article was later included in the book of the same title.

before identifying with the characters of the plot, the spectator perceives himself as a pure act of perception, as the all-perceptive subject, "a great eye and ear without which the perceived would have no one to perceive it" (Metz 1974: 48). The act of perception is directed by the look that the camera offers: the eye of the spectator blends with that of the camera; his/her ear, with that of the sound track. This process of identification of the spectator with the camera is called by Metz "primary identification". Following this, secondary identification — that is, identification with the characters — can be constructed[3].

This aspect of cinematographic enunciation is particularly interesting but, as can be observed, it opens up a new range of problems that go far beyond the concept of enunciation itself. Some of these will be developed in the following chapters. The main objective of introducing Metz's work at this stage, consists in the possibility of analysing the figures of the enunciator and of the enunciatee under a common denominator, the camera, or rather "the eye of the camera". It is necessary to insist that, by using this term, we are not referring to the technical device but instead to the frame that is presented both as a look for the spectator to identify with (the enunciatee) and as the presupposed source of such a look (the enunciator).

5. The multiple dimensions of cinematographic enunciation

In the survey of the various theorizations regarding cinematographic enunciation one can perceive a certain confusion between three different, albeit closely related, categories: enunciation, narration and point of view. As a matter of fact, many of the texts dealing with these categories do so in different chapters, thus considering them as completely separate problems.

The confusion seems to have its origin in the attempt to transpose the classification proposed by Gérard Genette in *Figures III* (1972) directly from literary discourse to filmic discourse. As with verbal categories, Genette

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[3] Despite criticisms (cf. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "A note on History / Discourse"), Metz's theory has been of significant value as can be seen in the number of works and debates it has generated.

distinguishes in literary narratives: time (the relationship between story and narrative, regarding matters of order, duration and frequency); mode (the distance and the perspective from which a story is told, and which can be conceived as an answer to the question "who sees?"); and voice (the relationship between narration and narrative, which responds to the questions "who speaks?") (Genette 1972).

However, when transposing the latter to the analysis of cinema, it is necessary to unfold them into four categories according to the different aspects each of them imply :

mode	voice
Who sees?(ocularization)	Who speaks (with words)? (narration)
Who knows? (focalization)	Who tells / narrates (through images)? (enunciation)

Thus, in cinema, one should consider four instances instead of two:

- ENUNCIATION: That is, the instance that can be perceived as producing the discourse and therefore as leaving its trace in the *énoncé* in different places, from the framing of a shot to the general organization of the film in sequences and episodes. It thus encompasses the other three categories.

- NARRATION: This term recuperates Jost's and Casetti's distinction between implicit and explicit narrator or enunciator and narrator. It therefore refers to the instance, not always present, of a voice that assumes the verbal narration — either simultaneously or framing the plot — in the form of a voice over, voice off, narrative frame, etc.

- FOCALIZATION: This category alludes to the cognitive perspective of the point of view, that is, the character or group of characters through which information is channelled. It takes the form of an answer to the question "who knows?"

- OCULARIZATION: This term, introduced by François Jost, serves to differentiate the optical point of view (the answer to the question "who sees?") from the former category ("who knows?"). This needs to be complemented by the category — also advanced by Jost — of AURICULARIZATION, that is, the instance of auditive perception. Despite the fact that, in the majority of narrative cinema, the sound track is strongly articulated upon the images, it is

not unusual to find certain scenes in which the spectator hears something characters do not — the most frequent case would be that of the reflections or recollections, in the form of an interior monologue, of a focalising character.

The subject of the enunciation (the first category) would thus be constructed by accumulation of the other four aspects. Each of these refer to different capacities, which, when summed up, define the figure of the subject of the enunciation: the subject of narration is defined by the use of oral language, it is a *subject of speech*; the character in charge of focalization is a *subject of knowledge*, a subject lacking, possessing or achieving a certain knowledge; the subject of *ocularization* is a *subject of a look*, whilst the subject of auricularization is a *subject of hearing*.

Along with these capacities, the subject in charge of the enunciation at a general, extradiegetic, level — which we shall call the cinematographic enunciator in order not to confuse it with the other theorizations — is premised upon a certain intentionality. The project of transmitting a certain knowledge defines the main narrative programme in which it participates and therefore constitutes it as *a subject of an intentionality*. We are aware of the problems that might arise from the use of the term intentionality to refer to a certain organizational principle. In this regard, it is worth summoning Greimas's explanation of this term in the dictionary:

> El mecanismo de la enunciación [...] corre peligro de quedarse inoperante, si no se inscribe en él lo esencial, lo que lo pone en marcha, lo que hace que la enunciación sea un acto entre otros, a saber, la intencionalidad. Reticentes al concepto de intención [...], aunque sólo sea porque reduce la comunicación a una dimensión consciente [...], preferimos el de intencionalidad que interpretamos como una "concepción del mundo", como una relación orientada, transitiva, gracias a la cual el sujeto construye el mundo en cuanto objeto, a la vez que se construye a sí mismo. (Greimas & Courtés 1979: 145)

In the case of cinema, intentionality attributed to a cinematographic enunciator constitutes the principle of organization through which the series of images and sounds presented on screen can be organized as a totality: the film. A clear example of this is the contrast between, say, certain films from the French New Wave — in which coherence between one scene and another depends almost exclusively on the attribution of an intentionality to a subject producing them — and the sequence of images in television advertisement.

In this respect, one can relate the figure of the cinematographic enunciator to Foucault's definition of an author in "The Order of Discourse". The term author could easily lead one to think of the empirical subject. However, Foucault, makes it clear that he is speaking of:

> L'auteur, non pas entendu, bien sûr, comme l'individu parlant qui a prononcé ou écrit un texte, mais l'auteur comme principe de groupement du discours, comme unité et origine de leurs significations, comme foyer de leur cohérence. (Foucault 1971: 28)

The author thus constitutes for Foucault — as the cinematographic enunciator for us — a control procedure that limits the dispersion of meaning "by ways of the play of an identity that has the form of individuality and of the I" (Foucault 1971: 31). Nevertheless, the notion of "author" as an internal control principle of discourse expounded by Foucault in this text —akin to the "author-function" in the article "What Is an Author?" — has other implications that will be developed in the following section.

III. THE DEATH AND RETURN OF THE AUTHOR

In a text of 1968 (in between "The Structural Analysis of Narratives" and *S/Z*) Roland Barthes announced the death of the author (that is, in fact, the title of his article). After this death, the question of who speaks, at least in what concerns fiction, will lose all relevance, given that:

> [...] writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing. [...] As soon as a fact is narrated no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, the disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writings begins. (Barthes 1968: 168)[4]

However, this death implies a recovery at another level: in Barthes's work, the notion of the author will be substituted by that of the *scriptor* — a shift that parallels another one: from the notion of style to that of writing. The author, considered as an instance prior to his work, source and origins of its meanings,

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[4] Barthes's and Foucault's texts have been taken from the anthology edited by David Lodge. Page numbers correspond to that edition. However, in order to simplify the reading, I shall avoid repeating the complete reference.

now makes room for the "*scriptor*" whose role is "to mix writings, to encounter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them". Thus if "book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and *after*", "the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text [...] and every text is eternally written *here* and *now*" (Barthes 1968: 169-170, underlined in the original).

The death of the author leaves writing without a subject. Confronted by the multiple voices that interweave in a text, it will be the reader who will be in charge of organizing them:

> [...] a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. [...] Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that "someone" who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. [...] the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author. (Barthes 1968: 171-172)

Nevertheless, the reader as the space of organization of these multiple voices does not confront all of them with the same attitude for they are not all in the same conditions in relation to truth. Against Barthes, it is necessary to admit that some voices impose upon others insofar as they can be referred to an author.

In this respect, Foucault's text "What Is an Author?" (1969) — from which some observations will be taken up later, as has been pointed out, in *The Order of Discourse* (1970) — could be considered a reply to the debate introduced by Barthes. In many senses, Foucault's work posits a continuity with that of Barthes: for both of them, the role of the author can be historically traced to the 17th Century, whilst in the Middle Ages, literary discourse (unlike science) circulated in a relatively anonymous manner. According to Barthes, it is English empiricism, French rationalism and the faith of the Restoration that discover the prestige of the individual. For Foucault the need for the assignation of a work to an author in literature responds instead to a penal appropriation: it is only as long as works can be transgressive and therefore the subjects that produced them can be punished. that texts begin to have authors. As they coincide in the moment when the notion of authorship starts functioning. so they agree on the moment in

which it is put into question — they both refer this moment to Mallarmé. Both "authors" also accord on the importance of linguistics in this development.

However, Foucault's work is more critical and, at the same time, less categorical than that of Barthes. For him, it is not enough to proclaim the death of the author, it is also necessary to "locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers" (Foucault 1969: 200). In a presumed reference to Barthes's text, Foucault states:

> None of this is recent; criticism and philosophy took note of the disappearance — of the author some time ago. But the consequences of it have not been sufficiently examined, nor has its import been accurately measure. A certain number of notions that are intended to replace the privileged position of the author actually seem to preserve that privilege and suppress the real meaning of his disappearance. (Foucault 1969: 198)

From this number of notions, Foucault focuses on two: the idea of the work, which finds its unity in the figure of the author, and the notion of writing, which for him "seems to transpose the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity" (Foucault 1969: 199). To us, it is in these aspects that the difference between Foucault's and Barthes's projects lies: the interest in analysing the function of the notion of author before dismissing it, and the rejection of an easy way out by recourse to the notion of "writing". In this respect, the answer to Foucault's question, "who speaks?" — with which he, as Barthes, begins his text — has a different tone. If it might be irrelevant to know who the subject actually speaking is, instead the consideration of the way this question comes to be formulated is of importance, both for theoretical and ideological reasons.

Among the former, one might encounter the possibility of a typology of discourses that would not only consider their formal characteristics, but also the way in which discourses circulate, are valued, attributed and appropriated. Such an approach would introduce the possibility of a historical analysis of discourse. This type of research would also allow for the re-examination of the privileges attributed to the subject. One should, therefore "return to this question, not in order to re-establish the theme of an originating subject, but to grasp the subject's

points of insertion, modes of functioning, and system of dependencies" (Foucault 1969: 209).

The ideological reasons are close to what Foucault will develop in his *Inaugural Lesson* a year later: the author as one of the mechanisms of control of "the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations within a world where one is thrifty not only with one's resources and riches, but also with one's discourses and their significations" (Foucault 1969: 209). The return to the notion of author is thus important, even if it is only to recognize its silhouette round the empty space left by its absence.

IV. THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC PRODUCTION

Coinciding with the series of subjects one encounters in cinematographic enunciation — whereas in literature there is only one — the same thing happens regarding the extratextual subjects to whom the production of a film might be attributed. Thus, authorship in cinema constitutes a new problem which one should face. Indeed, who is the author of a film?, or in Foucault's terms, to which instance of production should the author-function be assigned? Is it the producer? The director? The scriptwriter?

At first, it would seem necessary to accept that the existence of several instances of cinematographic enunciation (enunciator, narrator, focalizer, oculariser, auriculizer) runs in parallel to the diversity of social subjects implied in the system of production of a film (producer, director, scriptwriter, among the main ones). However, as has been pointed out, faced with a filmic text, one tends to attribute its unity and coherence to a single figure that would subsume the rest and to which one would assign a certain intentionality.

This figure, which we call the cinematographic enunciator, although clearly different from the social subject, is also correlative to it. However, whilst the former exists only in a certain text, never appearing twice in the same form, the figure to which the production of the text is attributed, the author, repeats itself in a series of texts. Thus, despite Bordwell's warning against the proliferation of

theoretical categories, it is necessary to add a new one: that of the model or implied author. This category acts as mediation between the enunciator, constructed differently in each text, and the empirical subjects. It is this figure, and not the empirical subject (multiple insofar as it involves a whole team and not only the producer, the director or the scriptwriter) that fulfils the author-function.

In Postdictatorship Argentine Cinema, given that it might be considered an *auteur cinema* (and this designation is not accidental either) this function is met by the director. The director either writes the script or chooses to buy one, s/he finds the means to finance the film, and finally, s/he makes the final decisions upon the text (directs the actors or chooses a stage director, selects the photographer, has the final decision upon editing, etc.). It is clear that each particular case will require a careful consideration of the system of restrictions imposed, no longer by the order of discourse, but by that of production, according to the specificities of the cinematographic field in a particular moment in time.

The figure that can be analysed as social actor is thus the model-author and not the empirical one. This is constructed through several texts — his or her films but also books, interviews, studies, biography, etc. S/he occupies a certain position in a system of restrictions proper to the field in which s/he produces his or her work. As explained with regards to Bettetini's proposal, the model-author is constructed by the destinatee — not by the text — from the traces of the subject of enunciation. However, this construction is sustained in the existence of an empirical subject to whom it can be referred.

Foucault also observed this interplay between three subjects instead of two, when pointing out that:

> It would be just as wrong to equate the author with the real writer as to equate him with the fictitious speaker; the author-function is carried out and operates in the scission itself, in this division and this distance. (Foucault 1969: 205)

We are thus faced with a scheme in which a series of empirical subjects (whose existence needs to be reckoned with even though it might not be possible to analyse it) that supports two systems. On the one hand, a social actor operating within the system of what might be called material production, a specific field (the

cinematographic field) in which s/he produces a material object, with all the restrictions implied (the film object). This object (but, is it the same one?) in its projection (the film as semiotic artefact) constructs an enunciator that, through the attribution of an intentionality, warrants meaning to that particular film. Based on this and other enunciators — from other filmic and non-filmic texts — the spectator is able to forge the figure of the model-author (with his/her particular style of writing — as there is also a cinematographic writing —, his/her obsession with certain themes, his/her fetish actors and actresses, his/her tics, etc.). And once again, it is the existence of an empirical subject that supports this figure; granting his/her body and signature in interviews, conferences, writings, etc. to give consistency to such a construction.

The circle thus closes upon itself. It is clear that nothing can be said of the empirical subject that supports the author-function except that it does so. Nothing can be said of his/her self, interiority, life or whatever is implied in its constitution as existing person. However, as has been mentioned, it is necessary to recognize its existence as a condition of possibility of the whole system through which films — and also other semiotic artefacts — are produced, circulate and are consumed in our societies.

A final reflection is necessary. The last paragraphs of "What is an Author?" speculate about the possibility that, as society changes, the system of restrictions based on the author-function might also change:

> I think that, as our society changes, at the very moment when it is in the process of changing, the author-function will disappear, and in such a manner that fiction and its polysemic texts will once again function according to another mode, but still with a system of constraint — one which will no longer be the author, but which will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced. (Foucault 1969: 210).

In the circuit of filmic distribution and consumption, this operation is already taking place, or has been taking place for a while, insofar as the majority of commercial film-making is defined not by its director (therefore allowing for the expression *auteur-cinema* to be a marked term) but instead by the genre it can be ascribed to. It might be the case that the system of control destined to occupy the place of the author in the cinematographic field, is that of genre.

In the case of Argentine Cinema, even if the films of the corpus might be consider part of an *auteur-cinema*, genre plays an equally important role. As analysed in the following chapter, genre can be seen as establishing the reading contract between the empirical subjects involved, whilst at the same time revealing it in the simulacrum of enunciation between the textual subjects. For this reason, we shall not focus on individual social actors but on the processes they participate in.

CHAPTER 3

CINEMATOGRAPHIC GENRES AND ENUNCIATION

The recurrences and repetitions of different elements encountered in the analysis of the films produced immediately after the democratic transition (1984-86) reveal a generic architext which would be conditioned by, whilst at the same time being constructed through the production of individual texts. This first observation led us to consider the similarities found in the analysis of the films as manifestations of a genre which, although exceeding the corpus, can be described by it.

This chapter develops some theoretical considerations regarding the concept of genre. This notion, insofar as it might be seen as a mediating instance between production and public, allows, on the one hand, for the reformulation of the corpus in terms of genre; and on the other, for the establishing of a relationship between the texts and their conditions of production and recognition. The first part of the chapter develops these theoretical considerations. The second part, taking as its starting-point the traditional definition of cinematographic genres, proposes a redefinition of these categories from a theoretical perspective based on recent developments in Greimasian semiotics, specifically the discipline known as the Semiotics of Passions. In *L'Ecole de Paris*'s conception, the problematic of passions is closely related to the instance of enunciation. This allows us to relate the enunciational *dispositifs* of the different texts to the reading contract established by the genre.

I.   GENRE AND ITS LIMITS

1.   Genre as articulation

One can establish an interesting parallel between the development of what has been called the New Argentine Cinema and other cinematographies also concerned with the representation of certain historical events: such as Nazism in

Post-war German Cinema, World War II in the Classic American Cinema, the Vietnam War in American Cinema of the eighties, or the Civil War in Spanish Cinema.

The German language has the word *Vergangenheitsbewltingungsfilme*, whose translation would approximately be "the elaboration of the past through cinema", to refer to the body of films that thematizes World War II. However, this term also entails a certain conception regarding the cinematographic institution. Robert and Carol Reimer prefer to speak of *Nazi-retro*, a term that for them would define the genre both in its positive connotations (the interest for revising and explaining the past) and in its negative ones (the commercial exploitation and trivialization of suffering caused by Nazism, the interest in overcoming differences at the cost of historical truth, etc.). The prefix *retro* has, according to these authors, the advantage of simultaneously referring to the necessary retrospection needed after certain historical events, and, at the same time, to a certain reactionary attitude, that would seek to close, without questioning, a Technicolor version of it.

Within the general category of the *Nazi-retro*, Reimer and Reimer establish three moments. The first comprises the two years following the war (1946-48), in which film production tends to concentrate on *Trümmerfilme* (rubble films), that is: films that depict a destroyed world — much of it from the actual locations — and pose the question of how such devastation could have taken place. Disassociating German people from the Nazis, the films do not deal with questions of responsibility or guilt. The second cinematographic discourse that one can envision in the *Nazi-retro*, prevails in the fifties and sixties, and is closer to entertainment than to the testimonial attitude of the *Trümmerfilme*. Production consists basically of battlefront movies that exalt bravery, patriotism and comradeship. It is not until the beginning of the seventies that, according to Reimer and Reimer, films can raise questions about guilt and responsibility for the past. These constitute the third form of the *Nazi-retro* (Reimer and Reimer 1992).

In the same line, but with a stronger emphasis on theoretical reflection, is the work of Jeanine Basinger on films about the Second World War (Basinger

1986). This author surveys approximately 200 films in order to establish the common characteristics that would allow for the definition of the genre she calls "World War II Combat Film". Basinger analyses the development of such a genre and observes the modifications produced by its intermingling with others. The basic hypothesis of her argument is that World War II gave rise to a new cinematic structure which did not exist before — although some of its elements might have existed — and which can be recognized as "Combat Genre", whether the action takes place in World War II, Korea or Vietnam.

Despite the difficulties one encounters when examining the concept of genre — some of which will be developed below — it is interesting to observe how these works take as their starting-point — though without acknowledgement — the notion of genre as articulation between cinema and history. The concept of genre thus serves the purpose of filling an important gap in some studies with a sociological pretension, in which the prevailing norm has been to establish direct correlations between the actions depicted in the plot and certain historical events. In relation to our corpus this notion can also help to avoid the risk of excessive generalization and homogenization when approaching, as is the case, an extensive period of cinematographic production.

2. The law of genre

In the works considered above, the relationship between particular texts and the genre which they can be referred to does not appear to pose any problems. However, as soon as one penetrates deeper into the theoretical implications of such a notion, the relationship between texts and the generic architext turns out to be a less simple one than that of mere inclusion.

In the case of Argentine Cinema, from the point of view of traditional criticism and its categories (those one might find in a video store or a catalogue for example), the films from the corpus could be included in different genres: thriller, historical, political, testimonial. Nevertheless, both in the analysis as in a first intuitive consideration of the films, it would seem clear that, despite their

different categorization, they share some common characteristics. Critics and theoreticians have defined these in different ways: a common political project (Foster 1992), a symbolic intertext (Marvin D'Lugo 1994), the focus on recent history (King 1990), democracy as a basic condition of its production (España 1995). All these authors coincide in relating what the films might share to the general discussion — reviewed in chapter 1 — about the relationship between cinema and an extracinematographic discourse, such as politics, history or society. However, these observations require, as has been mentioned, a principle of limitation (to a certain group of films, a genre, a series) if one is to avoid totalizing observations.

In between the different traditional generic categories (testimonial films, historical films, political films) and this other common characteristic, the corpus points out the instability of such categories and of the notion of genre in general. This instability is not an exception but, on the contrary, is constitutive of the concept of genre itself. And this because, as Jacques Derrida explains, the "law" governing "the law of genre":

> [...] is precisely a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy. In the code of set theories, if I may use it at least figuratively, I would speak of a sort of participation without belonging — a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set. (Derrida 1979: 206)

This principle of "participation without belonging" is, according to Derrida, the consequence of a fundamental paradox: the mark of belonging to a genre does not itself belong. That is, for a text to be assigned to a genre a mark is necessary. This is what enables one to refer a given individual to a class, a given text to a genre. The "mark of genre" might assume different forms: from a reference under the title of a book specifying whether it is a novel, drama, narrative, etc. to the development of a certain thematic. The paradox lies in the fact that this mark itself is not part of the work, it does not pertain to the corpus. The designation is not part of the "novel"; neither does the indication "short stories" under a title of a book form part of any of the stories included in it.

In order to explain this paradox, Derrida establishes an analogy with the blinking of the eye:

The eyelid closes, but barely, an instant among instants, and what it closes is verily the eye, the view, the light of day. But without such respite, nothing would come to light. (Derrida 1979: 212)

Participating without belonging, inside and outside of the text, the paradox of the mark simultaneously displays an inclusion and an exclusion:

It gathers together the corpus and, at the same time, in the same blinking of an eye, keeps it from closing, from identifying itself with itself. This axiom of non-closure or non-fulfilment unfolds within itself the condition for the possibility and the impossibility of taxonomy. (Derrida 1979: 212)

Inclusion and exclusion: the law of genre declassifies, in the same movement, that which it allows to be classified. Genre establishes the law and, simultaneously, its transgression. Regarding our corpus, the texts that constitute it, participating in other genres, also share a common mark that allows for their grouping while at the same time exceeding them. The objective of the following chapters is to isolate and observe the play of this mark that can be said to define the corpus.

II.   THE TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC GENRES

Almost from the beginning of cinema, genre served the purpose of classifying films in order to orientate possible spectators. As early as 1902, the Biograph Company advertised the films for sale as: Comedy Views, Sports and Pastimes Views, Military Views, Railroad Views, Scenic Views, Views of Notable Personages, Miscellaneous Views, Trick Pictures, Marine Views, Children's Pictures, Fire and Patrol Views, Pan American Expositions Views, Vaudeville Views, Parade Pictures (Niver 1971 in Neale 1995). In September 1939's edition of the magazine *Photoplay*, in the column entitled "Brief Reviews" one can already discern most of the designations used today: social message picture, western, madcap comedy, gangsters, musical fantasy, mystery, propaganda (Basinger 1986).

Apart from calling into question our taxonomic eagerness, much in the way of Borges's *Chinese Encyclopaedia*, these examples illustrate a fundamental fact regarding cinematographic genres: their origin in the social circulation of the industry's products. Functioning at first as useful labels for the differentiation of

the filmic offer, it was not until the commercial circuit was established that critics observed the phenomenon and approached its study. This might explain why most of the theoretical reflection has centred on the description of genres as they had already been established by the industry, rather than concentrating on the analysis or reformulation of generic categories themselves.

The first works in this field constitute, indeed, analysis on genres long established within American cinema, such as the western or the gangster film. This is the case of Robert Warshow's (1948) and André Bazin's works (1954). These articles, as Barry Keith Grant points out, reveal the tendencies that would dominate the future development of research on cinematographic genres: the impressionistic approach to the films considered and the prescriptive attitude towards genre (Grant 1995: XVI).

The category of genre would indeed seem to pose more problems than those it purports to solve. Firstly, one is faced with the problem of selecting a corpus upon which to study a particular genre, without falling into a tautological definition of it. That is, the necessity of choosing a group of texts, intuitively perceived as pertaining to a genre, in order to determine, after their analysis, the definition of such a genre. Secondly, the emphasis on systematization has encouraged a synchronic approach to genres, taking them as ahistorical, unalterable entities fixed once and for all in a set of norms to be described. A different kind of problem arises in those works that criticise "genre films" as a mechanism for the manipulation of the industry, the conservative aspect of the structures that are reproduced or the creation of myths. This excessively simplistic attitude rejects any possibility of analysis, reducing genres to mere formulas through which the dominant ideology would be imposed. Finally, by taking the concepts broached by the industry, attention has been directed mainly towards description rather than analysis, considering the texts as mere realizations of an original, authentic matrix established by genre.

However, the main consequence of retaining the terms proposed by the industry is that the defining criteria used are not homogeneous and therefore of little or no contrastive value. The criterion used for the definition of the western

consists of a certain spatial and temporal location (the American west between 1840 and 1900); in gangster movies it refers to characters rather than space or time (protagonists in that "profession"); the definition of the musical rests upon a formal distinction (the incorporation of musical scenes into the plot); action movies are defined by a certain dynamism of their narrative structure; the designation of films as horror films or thrillers refers explicitly to a certain reaction expected from the audience, etc.

Furthermore, the use of the term genre, in different ways, by different authors and from different perspectives, generates confusion when approaching this category. As Edward Buscombe points out:

> Genre is a term much employed in film criticism at the moment, yet, there is little agreement on what exactly it means or whether the term has any use at all. (In Grant 1995:11)

In general, the different approaches to cinematographic genres could be framed in three main tendencies. The first one operates with a broad notion of this category as a set of conventions (regarding themes, characters, settings, etc.) which, known beforehand, produce diverse expectations in the audience. Despite considering various conventions, a fundamental part of research centred on the study of iconography — a term used in a general sense to refer to visual conventions. Given that this is the area of aesthetics concerned with the role of the visual, it was considered that it should have priority in the analysis of cinema. Buscombe, author of one of the main works in this field, justifies this approach in the following terms: "since we are dealing with a visual medium we ought surely to look for our defining criteria at what we actually see on the screen" (in Grant 1995:14). From this perspective, the elements that define a genre could be found in the recurrence of certain images: *mise-en-scène*, costumes, gestures, objects, etc.

However, it is evident that, considered in isolation, these characteristics are not enough to constitute a classifying criterion, for their value does not rest on the images themselves but on the use given to them on other levels. Iconography thus has a limited value in the frame of a broader analysis. This is Thomas

Schatz's approach to the description of genres. Although Schatz finally reduces the function of genre to the reproduction of myths, his analysis of Hollywood's genres is of interest for the aspects its considers: iconography, characters and setting, plot structure, narrative strategy, social function and generic evolution (Schatz 1981). In this list, one can perceive the tendency to incorporate syntactic criteria to the consideration of semantic elements.

Finally, a third trend emphasises the context rather than the films themselves. From this perspective, genre constitutes the space of negotiation between the system of production and the public to which it addresses its products. However, whilst it is true that genres have a social function (acting as mediating instances between production and audience) and might thus be useful for cinematographic criticism, their scant descriptive value and the many problems involved in their definition limit their effectiveness for the theoretical study of cinema.

Moreover, although genre might serve to establish a connection between the film as a semiotic artifact and the film as an object of consumption, it remains to be seen what the links are that would allow the movement from the text — the mark of participation of a film in a certain genre — to the extratext — the spectator's attitudes. An answer to this question might be found in the reformulation of generic categories from the perspective of the Semiotics of Passions. This perspective, up to now ignored in the field of Film Studies, can provide a new frame in which to conceptualize the problems arising from the notion of cinematographic genre and the categories used to define it.

III.   GENRE AND ITS RELATION TO THE APPARATUSES OF ENUNCIATION

1. Genres and subject-positions

In the previous chapter a brief reference was made to Christian Metz's work on psychoanalysis and cinema, regarding the way the spectator's look is appropriated by the camera. Despite the fact that the present research follows a different theoretical line, it is interesting to review some of the developments that, from a

psychoanalytical perspective, consider the place assigned to the spectator in the texts.

Metz's founding work focuses on the processes in which the spectator finds him/herself involved in terms of scopophilia, exhibitionism and fetishism. Taking Metz's theory as a starting-point, other authors have developed, discussed and reformulated it. One of the most interesting of these works is Laura Mulvey's analysis of the cinematic gaze as gendered and the consequences of this for a female audience. It is not our purpose to survey these developments, which are, in any case, well known. Instead we would like to examine certain contributions that psychoanalysis has made to the study of cinematographic genres and, in particular, to the subject-positions these involve.

In this respect, a fundamental contribution is the notion of suture formulated by Pierre Oudart in an article published in *Cahiers du Cinema* in 1969. Its main purpose is to describe a certain functioning of the cinematographic apparatus and the places assigned to subjects within it. However, from its inception, this notion generated both interest and controversy in film studies.

In the context of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the notion of suture has been developed, from Lacan's original remarks, by Jacques Alain Miller, and is used to refer to the point of inscription of a subject in the signifying chain of his/her discourse:

> Suture names the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse: we shall see that it figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in. For, while there lacking, it is not purely and simply absent. (Miller 1977-78: 25-26[1])

To explain this notion, Miller resorts to Gottlob Frege's Arithmetic. After a long and difficult analysis of the place of the zero in the series of whole natural numbers, Miller concludes that:

> If the series of numbers, metonymy of the zero, begins with its metaphor, if the 0 member of the series as number is only the standing-in-place suturing the absence (of the absolute zero) which moves beneath the chain according to the alternation of a representation and an exclusion — then what is there to stop us from seeing in the restored relation of the zero to the series of numbers the most elementary articulation of the subject's relation to the signifying chain? (Miller 1977-78: 32)

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[1] The quotes from both Miller's and Oudart's texts are taken for their English versions published in *Screen* vol. 18; number 4 (Winter 1977-78).

This logic — which Miller terms "the logic of the signifier" — governs the very origin of the other logic — the "logician's logic" — given that "the logician, like the linguist, also sutures at his particular level. And, quite as much anyone who says *I*' [sic] (Miller 1977-78: 26). This last sentence from Miller's work takes as back to what has been developed in the previous chapter: the use of the pronoun I and the necessary alienation implied by it. Insofar as the I of the utterance is different from the I of the enunciation, the pronoun simultaneously names the lack and its imaginary overcoming.

Oudart borrows the concept of suture from Lacanian theory and uses it to describe the functioning of cinema in relation to the subjects in front of the screen. Although Oudart's observations refer almost exclusively to the Bresson's film *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, many of his observations can and have been used to analyse the functioning of the medium in general. In fact, Oudart himself suggests this possibility. For this author:

> Suture represents the closure of the cinematic *énoncé* in line with its relationship with its subject (the filmic subject or rather the cinematic subject), which is recognised, and then put in its place as the spectator — thus distinguishing the suture [Bresson's film] from all other types of cinema, particularly the so-called subjective cinema, where the suture did exist, but undefined theoretically. (Oudart 1977-78: 35)

According to Oudart suture refers to the ways in the spectator's imaginary is involved in the reading of a film. The filmic field is "echoed by another field", in the place of the fourth wall, built in as an absence — as that element which "while there lacking [...] is not purely and simply absent" (Miller).

> Every filmic field is echoed by an absent field, the place of a character who is put there by the viewer's imaginary, and which we shall call the Absent One. At a certain moment of the reading all the objects of the filmic field combine together to form the signifier of its absence. At this key-moment the image enters the order of the signifier of its absence. (Oudart 1977-78: 36)

Cinema is able to "screen" (both as to conceal and to project) lack in the order of narrative as well as in relation to the medium and in a more general level regarding the necessary "incompletion" of the subject[2]. According to Oudart, it is

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[2] As is known, Lacanian theory postulates lack as constitutive of the subject. The infant gains access to the condition of subject through several instances of alienation: firstly in the mirror stage (through the imaginary identification with his/her image); secondly, in language (through the symbolic association of the I of the enunciation with the I of the *énoncé*). These developments are

this particular relation of cinema to lack — finely explored in Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* — which differentiates cinema from other discourses:

> The oscillation of the signifier itself, alternately sign and letter frozen in its literalness only to evoke the absence of anyone, makes the cinema a unique form of speech, one which speaks itself, and sometimes speaks only of itself, whose fate rests with the Absent One; for the Absent One, whose nature is to vanish upon being named, disappears when someone, or indeed something, is introduced into its field. (Oudart 1977-78: 43)

Despite the numerous critiques that can be made of this model, its interest lies not so much in the answers it provides, as in the questions it poses regarding the way in which the spectator's desire is implicated in the cinematographic apparatus. Oudart's thesis can be summarized, in Stephen Heaths terms, as follows:

> The realization of cinema as discourse is the production at every moment through the film of a subject-address, the signification of the play of incompleteness-completion. (Heath 1981: 107)

The diverse forms in which the spectator's desire and *jouissance* can be involved by the cinematographic medium could thus serve as criteria for the definition of cinematographic genres. This thesis has been briefly outlined by Steve Neale in a booklet published by the British Film Institute in 1980. Although Neale pays little attention to the different theoretical frameworks that sustain each of the chapters of his book, his approach to cinematographic genres according to the different subject-positions proposed by them is very interesting for our present study.

According to Neale, each genre makes a particular use of the tension between equilibrium and disruption that is characteristic of all narrative discourse. This tension also sustains the notion of suture (which Neale does not explore). In the western, the gangster and the detective film, disruption appears as physical violence, whilst equilibrium is achieved through the restoration of law and order. To establish this relationship the three genres rely on discourses about crime, law, justice, social order, etc. However the weight given to them is different in each case. Horror movies, can also be distinguished by violence; but, in this case, it is articulated upon the axis of the monstrous. The opposition human/natural or natural/supernatural replaces that of order/disorder that characterized the former.

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well known and there is abundant secondary bibliography regarding Lacan's theory. Thus, we shall not dwell on it any longer.

In the musical and the melodrama, rupture is installed by the irruption of heterosexual desire within a rigid social order.

Following these different uses of narrative tension, Neale analyses the different subject-positions constructed by each genre. His main argument is that:

> Different modes of signification produce different functionings of subjectivity, moving the subject differently in their various semiotic processes, producing distinct modes of address. Mainstream narrative is a mode of signification which works constantly to produce coherence in the subject through and across the heterogeneity of the effects that it mobilises and structures. [...]
>
> Fundamental, then, to the economy of the subject in mainstream narrative, to the economy of its mode of address, is the achievement of the maintenance of a coherent balance between process (enunciation) on the one hand, and position (enounced) on the other. But this economy can be structured in a variety of ways. Genres represent systematisations of that variety. Each genre has, to some extent at least, its own system of narrative address, its own version of the articulation of the balance. Each genre also, therefore, engages and structures differently the two basic subjective mechanisms which any form of the balance involves: the want for the pleasure of process, and the want for the pleasure of its closure. (Neale 1980: 25-26)

According to Neale, this characteristic form of interpellating the spectator in the detective or gangster movie, as well as in the thriller, is suspense. In comedy, the principal affect at stake is laughter, whilst melodrama constitutes the staging of desire as such.

Neale's work is useful inasmuch as it relates the specificity of each genre to the enunciational *dispositifs* of the texts, and, in particular, to the position assigned within them to the spectator. However, the limits of his proposal are set by his lack of interest in other theoretical developments. Thus, despite naming the processes that might serve to define genres (suspense, laughter, desire) he is not able to go any further in their analysis. This possibility might be obtained from a different perspective.

2.   Genre from a semiotic perspective

The question of (literary) genre was initially left aside by traditional semiotics (that is the, clearly immanentist semiotics of the sixties) as it was not considered pertinent to the analyses of the texts themselves, but a sociological problem instead. Thus in the corresponding entry, Greimas and Courtés's dictionary states:

> Con el término género designamos una clase de discurso, identificable merced a criterios de naturaleza sociolectal. Estos pueden provenir de una clasificación implícita que descansa — en las sociedades de tradición oral — en una categorización particular del mundo, ya de una "teoría de los géneros" que, para muchas sociedades, se presenta en forma de una taxonomía explícita, de carácter no científico. Dicha teoría, que resulta de un relativismo cultural evidente y se basa en postulados ideológicos implícitos, no tiene nada que ver con una tipología de los discursos que trata de constituirse a partir del reconocimiento de sus propiedades formales específicas. El estudio de la teoría de los géneros, característica de una cultura (o de un área cultural) dada, no tiene interés sino en la medida en que permite poner en evidencia la axiología subyacente a la clasificación; se la puede comparar a la descripción de otras etno- o sociotaxonomías. (Greimas & Courtés 1982: 197)

Our analysis could well be framed within what Greimas and Courtés call a typology of discourse. However, we still consider pertinent the notion of genre insofar as it allows us to relate a particular film to the expectations that, through its description in certain paratexts (posters, commentaries, reviews, etc.), it might generate in the spectator. Thus, in this process, genre could be seen as serving as articulation between the text and its conditions of production and recognition (Verón).

In turn, although *L'Ecole de Paris* opted at first for leaving aside this concept, the Semiotics of Production (Kristeva, Verón) recognize an important antecedent in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin and his circle. Bakhtin was particularly concerned with this notion. Surmounting the distinction between genre as a textual or a social category, he proposes that "the true Poetics of genre cannot but be a sociology of genre" (Todorov 1991: 164-165). And in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, questioning the way in which the formalists had dealt with the problem of genre — considering it just an specific grouping of devices — Bakhtin asserts that:

> Poetics should really begin with genre, not end with it. For genre is the typical form of the whole work, the whole utterance. A work is only real in the form of a definite genre. Each element's constructive meaning can only be understood in connection with genre. If the problem of genre, as the problem of the artistic whole, had been formulated at the right time, it would have been impossible for the formalists to ascribe independent constructive significance to abstract elements of language. (Medvedev/Bakhtin 1978: 129)

As is known, Bakhtin's main preoccupation is the study of utterances; that is, language not as an abstract system (he accuses Saussure of founding an erroneous abstract objectivism) but in its concrete uses. In the context of a theory of utterances, the notion of discursive genre allows for the surmounting of the

distinction between the system (language) and individual use (speech). In between these two, lies the importance of discursive genres, given that:

> Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres. (Bakhtin 1986: 60)

These genres found and rooted in everyday use of language, are called by Bakhtin, primary genres. Upon these, secondary genres (such as the different literary genres) are built. Thus, genre does not only refer to an aesthetic category but instead designates different ways in which language functions in the social sphere. Bakhtin explains the relationship between primary and secondary genres in the following terms:

> The extreme heterogeneity of speech genres and the attendant difficulty of determining the general nature of the utterance should in no way be underestimated. It is especially important here to draw attention to the very significant difference between primary (simple) and secondary (complex) speech genres (understood not as a functional difference). Secondary (complex) speech genres — novels, drama, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth — arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organised cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, socio-political and so on. During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. (Bakhtin 1986: 61-62)

As can be easily deduced from the above, and as Todorov has pointed out, there are two methodological options constant in Bakhtin's work: the indissolubility of form and content and the preponderance of the social over the individual. In this context, Bakhtin's interest in the notion of genre can be easily explained. According to Todorov, the privileged position assigned to this notion within Bakhtinian thought is precisely grounded on the mediating function between "the history of society and the history of language" (Todorov 1991: 166). Todorov adds: "Genre is an entity more socio-historical than formal. The transformations of genre can be related to social changes" (Todorov 1991: 165). For us also the notion of genre shall be of interest only insofar as it can be seen as a articulatory instance between the history of society and certain cinematographic forms.

3. Enunciation, modalities and passions

As has been mentioned in the introduction, the first semiotic research of *L'Ecole de Paris* focussed on the concept of transformation, as a transition from one state to another, realized by a subject that was defined only by its action. This was known as the Semiotics of Action. Nevertheless, the theoretical development gave way to the Theory of Modalities, and therefore to the analysis of the modal competence of the subject prior to the action. In its turn, work upon modalities opened the way for the incorporation of processes previously disregarded as psychological or subjective, such as those involving passions, in what is known today as the Semiotics of Passion[3].

In the introduction to the book *The Semiotics of Passion*, Algirdas Greimas and Jacques Fontanille draw this trajectory whilst at the same time setting the epistemological grounds for the development of this new field. According to these authors the Semiotics of Action, by conceiving a subject stripped of all its psychological attributes and defined only by its action, refers to a classic epistemological model that confronts a knowing subject in front of an object to be known. However, the very notion of transformation as the action of a subject imposes the question about the conditions prior to this action. This constitutes the modal competence of the subject which, as a prior condition, must exist at least in the form of a potentiality. Thus, Greimas and Fontanille define the objective of their book:

> La instalación de un sujeto operador, capaz de producir las primeras articulaciones de la significación, es un paso inicial para establecer la teoría de la significación como una economía que administra las condiciones de producción y de aprehensión de la significación. Se trata ahora de concebir y de instalar un esbozo de las precondiciones previas al surgimiento de las condiciones propiamente dichas. (Greimas & Fontanille 1994: 16)

In the article "El giro modal en semiótica" part of the *Seminario de Puebla* puiblished in *Morphé*, Jacques Fontanille develops in detail the consequences of this shift of emphasis from action to modalization. He begins by pointing out the possibility of considering the modal transformations as an autonomous trajectory

independently of the action of the subjects in their search for objects. Thus, when the main isotopy of a discourse is constructed upon the search for objects, competence has only a secondary role (as an instrumental narrative programme). This would be the case of a character that seeks to obtain a certain competence in order to operate some other action as is the case in folktales. On the contrary, when the main isotopic line is constructed around the search for a recurrent modal value (knowledge, power), the objective of the subject is a certain type of "modal *dispositif*" upon which personality is defined. In the case of the search for identity, this "modal *dispositif*" takes the form of an "ideal modal image" (Fontanille 1994).

This structure can be observed in the films of the corpus produced during the first years of democracy. As we shall show later, the protagonists of these films do not pursue a certain knowledge — about the present or recent political situation — in order to realize some other action, but instead this knowledge constitutes an end in itself. The character of Alicia in *La historia oficial*, to quote just one example, does not seek knowledge as a modal competence that would allow her to produce changes in the pragmatic level (as a matter of fact, these remain in suspense) but as an object in itself. An object that would, nevertheless, define her: she wants to belong to the group of people that knows. It is thus possible to analyse Alicia's trajectory in terms of what Fontanille defines as a "modal history" of the subject, which would characterise the transformations of its discursive "being", complementary or parallel to those of her "action".

The possibility of a modal history of characters, based on a certain project of realization of being under an ideal modal image, opens the way for the analysis of passions. These could be thought of as the "perfume" of modal combinations. That is, in the same way that perfume does not emanate from the structure of matter but from the provisional combinations between molecules, passional effects do not emanate from the modal structure but out of the combinations of and between modalities. Thus, the combination of two modal values, such as, for example, wish (*vouloir*) and knowledge (*savoir*), can originate a series of

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[3] For a brief account of the developments from the Semiotics of Action to the Semiotics of Passion

passions, such as: curiosity (wishing to know, *vouloir-savoir*), indifference (not wishing to know, *ne pas vouloir savoir*) denial (wishing not to know, *vouloir ne pas savoir*), anxiety (not wishing not to know, *ne pas vouloir ne pas savoir*).

Passional dispositions, thus understood, form the broader groups of passional configurations. For Fontanille it is possible to establish a syntactical model to account for the rules of construction of such configurations. He calls this model "Canonic Pathemic Scheme" and sees it as constituted by five instances: a) constitution: of the subject as able to experiment a certain passion, that is, as a tensive sensitive subject, b) disposition: the capacity required for the rise of that passion, c) pathemization: the passional transformation itself, d) emotion: the passional consequences and e) moralization: the effects of a judgement.

In the aformentioned text, Fontanille exemplifies this model, with a short exposition of an analysis developed in detail by himself and Greimas in the *Semiotics of Passions*: the case of jealousy. This passional configuration, whilst presenting a specific modal chain proper to it, incorporates within it the scheme described above:

			a. worry / anxiety	
			b. suspicion	
(1) Exclusive	(2) Distrust	(3)	c. certainty	(4) Love/Hate
attachment			d. suffering	
			e. shame or bitterness	

Another example one might consider from Fontanille's development is that of asthma. Considered by this author as a passion (of the soul and the body), one can reconstruct the Canonic Pathemic Scheme as follows:

a) CONSTITUTION: discomfort, apprehension

b) DISPOSITION: wanting to do (*vouloir-faire*) and not being able to do (*ne-pas-pouvoir-faire*) of suffocation. It also implies not knowing (*ne-pas-savoir*) which pushes the subject to insist on not being able not to do (*ne-pas-pouvoir-ne-pas-faire*).

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see Mozejko 1994.

c) PATHEMIZATION: relief, the subject accepts not being able to (*savoir-ne-pas-pouvoir*) and gives up his wish (*ne-pas-vouloir*). This passional transformation implies a change in the modal identity of the subject: from being directed by wish (willing, brave) that gives way to not being able to (*ne-pas-pouvoir*) and not knowing (*ne-pas-savoir*), to being directed by knowledge, which allows him to regain the capacity to do (*savoir*). The modal transformation can thus be formulated as an inversion from will (not-being able to do and not-knowing how to do), to knowledge (not-wishing to do, being able to do).

d) EMOTION: tiredness as a consequence of wanting but not being able to.

e) MORALIZATION: access to knowledge that it is necessary to restrain anxiety (Fontanille 1994).

Insofar as passion manifests itself as a modal simulacrum of the subject, as an ideal image, passional discourse can be, according to Fontanille, thought of as a secondary enunciation. This explains that it can be textualized as direct or indirect speech or as interior monologue (Fontanille 1994). Conceived of as a secondary enunciation it is possible to postulate a passional enunciation in which an enunciator — configured as a passional subject — proposes certain passional trajectories to an enunciatee — also configured as a passional subject. These trajectories, inscribed in the text, would thus establish the conditions of the reading contract and the operations required from the enunciatee if s/he is to enter the dynamic proposed by the film.

IV.   GENRE AND PASSIONS

Although *L'Ecole de Paris* does not seem to have approached the subject directly, the incorporation of the theory of modalities, manipulation and passions allowed for the connexion between the text and the extratext, in such a way that genre could be constituted as an object of study. Indeed, if one considers cinematographic genres as the mediating instance between production and audience, the Semiotics of Passions could, as has been postulated, help to

understand, from a semiotic perspective, the different subject-positions offered to the spectator in each genre.

A fact that is often disregarded as obvious in the analysis of the cinema industry, is that the spectator does not acquire a material product (s/he does not buy the film) but instead the possibility of a certain enjoyment which s/he presupposes is going to be provided by the film. One could say that s/he buys with, her/his ticket, the "right to a certain passion". American director. Samuel Fuller, defines cinema precisely in those terms: "Cinema is action, sex, violence,... In one word, an emotion in movement"[4].

One could think of cinematographic genres as establishing the passion or group of passions that prevail in each generic offer. Each genre would thus propose to the spectator certain passional trajectories which, known by the public beforehand, would establish "the rules of the game" that the spectator is to follow if s/he accepts the reading contract of the film; that is, if s/he accepts to "enter the game". Horror films promise fear, alarm, panic; comedies, musicals and love movies pledge laughter, joy, satisfaction; violent emotions and excitement are involved in war and action movies; anxiety, expectation, in thrillers, etc.

This is confirmed in the analysis of the advertising posters of films. In relation to our corpus, most of them include the reference to the author, thus sustaining the notion of an *auteur-cinema* supposedly distant from commercial interest, in the formula *"un filme de..."*. A small number of adverts use a generic definition, such as *"la primera película de acción del cine argentino"* (regarding *COMODINES*). But of particular interest are those posters that explicitly refer to the passion the film intends to convey: *"El laureado realizador de LA DEUDA INTERNA nos lleva a un nuevo encuentro con la fe y la esperanza"* (regarding *LA ÚLTIMA SIEMBRA*). *"Mirta y Enrique nos harán llorar. Nos harán reir. Nos harán crecer"* (regarding *SENTIMIENTOS. MIRTA , DE LINIERS A ESTAMBUL*).

Up to now the Semiotics of Passions has focussed on the analysis of the putting into discourse of certain passions in language and in texts, mainly literary

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[4] Quoted in AAVV . *Enciclopedia del cine*: 531. My translation from the Spanish edition.

ones, at the level of the plot. However, as can be deduced from what has been said above, it is possible to postulate, in addition to the passions described in the *énoncé*, certain passional trajectories at the level of the enunciation. These are represented in the figure of the enunciatee, expecting the spectator to assume this place.

This proposal coincides with that formulated by Teresa Mozejko regarding indigenist narratives. According to this author, indigenist narratives can be defined by the presentation of a series of narrative programmes to be carried out by the enunciatee, both in the cognitive dimension (such as reading, or evaluating) and in the pragmatic dimension (insofar as the texts expect the enunciatee to constitute him/herself as agent of social transformations). This action upon the extratext is also grounded in the cognitive dimension given that the way to move the enunciatee to take action is through the production of a passional state such as indignation, compassion or anger (Mozejko 1994: 19)[5]. It is to these passional reactions proposed to the enunciatee that we refer when speaking of "passional trajectory".

Evidently, any film allows for operations that do not coincide with those proposed by the text: a horror film can produce incredulity or a melodrama move to laughter. However, these alterations in the reception of the industry's products (and also its forms in production: parody, irony, etc.) can be analysed precisely insofar as they differ from the genre's proposal. It is worth stressing that a film will, more often than not, propose more than one passional trajectory. In the majority of cases, a text will present a series of minor passional trajectories, producing diverse emotions in different moments of its plot. However, in the same way that, concerning the Semiotics of Action, one can postulate several utilitarian narrative programmes and a basic one that presupposes them, it is also feasible to

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[5] Indigenist narratives appeal to an enunciatee with power so that s/he would operate in the extratextual space the actions required to improve the Indians' situation. Given that this enunciatee is already constructed as powerful, the texts' strategies focus on the transmission of knowledge (providing information about the situation of injustice suffered by the Indians, but also letting the enunciatee know about his/her power to modify it). However, it is also necessary for the enunciatee to be willing to operate the transformations proposed to him/her. In order to achieve this willingness the texts resort to passional manipulation, in this case through the figure of compassion (see Mozejko 1994).

see a series of secondary passional trajectories (hardly recountable in their totality) subjected to a main one that brings them together under the genre's proposal.

In a recent article on the *telenovela*, Lucrecia Escudero Chauvel proposes a similar approach to ours regarding television genres. According to this author, TV genres structure the habits of consumption of mass media. Following on from this, she states that:

> Quisiera insistir sobre una dimensión que creo debe ser urgentemente estudiada en el interior de una teoría sobre los medios masivos de comunicación y sus productos emblemáticos: el hecho de que el consumo y la recepción de estos objetos implica necesariamente una actitud pasional, es decir, implica un sistema de actitudes. Es porque el contrato de los medios genera a su vez un *sistema de pasiones* que podemos hablar de *fidelidad* a una emisión, *desconfianza* hacia un periódico o *apego* a un personaje. (Escudero Chauvel 1997: 77)

In this case, the passions listed (faithfulness, distrust, attachment) as well as the objects upon which they would be held (emission, newspaper, character) refer to very different mechanisms of passional manipulation. Escudero's proposal also differs from ours in the way of approaching such passional configurations. However, it is necessary to accept Escudero's claim for the urgency of such an approach and the contributions this could entail for the analysis of mass media in general.

In her analysis of the *telenovela*, Escudero sees the "secret" as a basic "narrative motor", insofar as, on the one hand, it establishes the possibility of continuity for the plot and, on the other, it generates suspense. Thus "the secret fundamentally appears as a strategy for producing an effect: the surprise of its revelation". By simultaneously constructing characters and spectators as subjects of the search for knowledge, the secret constitutes an "interactive dimension" of the "*telenovela* format" (Escudero Chauvel 1997: 78-79).

However, it is not only the *telenovela* that has the "secret" as its narrative motor; as will be explained later, this mechanism intervenes in the films of the corpus produced during the first democratic period. The "secret" also plays an important role in several television series and films, such as those which have a hero protagonist who must remain unknown (*Superman, Spiderman, Batman* both

in television and films) or a particular situation or condition that cannot be discovered. In these cases, the plot is built around the tension between what the characters do not know and try to find out and the participation of the spectator in the protagonists's secret. The "secret" does not pursue the surprise of revelation, as Escudero suggests regarding the *telenovela*, but instead grounds the suspense which sustains the spectator's expectation.

The mechanism could be compared to that of the thriller. In this respect, let us consider a classic author, Hitchcock, who in his writings and interviews is extremely aware of cinema's potential to manipulate the spectator's reaction by working upon certain modalities, mainly knowledge. One could in fact build a complete theory of spectatorship from this filmmaker's texts. In an article published in *Good Housekeeping* in 1949, he develops the distinction between terror and suspense in terms of the difference between "surprise" and "forewarning", but also considers the implications of the former in its relation to the spectator's knowledge:

> In darkened auditoriums [people] identify themselves with fictitious characters who are experiencing fear, and experience, themselves, the same fear sensations (the quickened pulse, the alternately dry and damp palm, etc.) but without paying the price. That the price need not be paid — indeed, must not be paid — is the important factor.[...] Though knives and guns may be used on the screen, the audience is aware that no one out front is going to be shot or stabbed. But the audience must also be aware that the characters in the picture, with whom they strongly identify themselves, are not to pay the price of fear. This awareness must be entirely subconscious; the spectator must *know* that the spy ring will never succeed in pitching Madeleine Carroll off London Bridge, and the spectator must be induced to *forget* what he knows. If he didn't *know*, he would be genuinely worried; if he didn't *forget*, he would be bored. (Hitchcock 1949 in Gottlieb 1995: 117 & 120; underlined in the original)

Fear was, as Hitchcock himself stated, his special field and he theorized it — and its two forms, terror and suspense — in several texts. A much quoted example is taken from his conversation with François Truffaut:

> We are now having a very innocent little chat. Let us suppose that there is a bomb underneath this table between us. Nothing happens, and then all of a sudden, there is an explosion. The public is *surprised*, but prior to this surprise, it has been an absolutely ordinary scene, of no special consequence. Now, let us take a *suspense* situation. The bomb is underneath the table and the public *knows* it probably because they have seen the anarchist place it there. The public is *aware* that the bomb is going to explode at one o'clock and there is a clock in the décor. The public can see that it is a quarter to one. In these conditions this same innocuous conversation becomes fascinating because the public is participating in the scene. The audience is longing to warn the characters in the

screen: you shouldn't be talking about such trivial matters. There's a bomb beneath you and its about to explode!

In the first case we have given the public fifteen seconds of *surprise* at the moment of the explosion. In the second case we have provided them with fifteen minutes of *suspense*. (Hitchcock's dialogue with Truffaut in Truffaut 1967: 59-60; underlined in the original)

What is surprising about these two quotes, is not so much the attention paid by Hitchcock to the construction of the plot, as his awareness of the ways in which to anticipate and plan the spectator's reaction. One could rephrase Hitchcock's intuition regarding surprise and suspense in terms of a theory of manipulation and the Semiotics of Passion. In the first case, the textual figure that takes the place of the spectator in the film — the enunciatee — is modalized as a subject that, like the characters, does not know and therefore finds the explosion unexpected, surprising. In the second case, the enunciatee is constructed as a subject that knows but this knowledge does not imply power but its opposite. In suspense, the subject who knows (the enunciatee) is precisely the one that lacks power (who can not intervene) as opposed to the characters who can intervene but do not know. The tension proper to this genre can be seen as a consequence of this working upon knowledge. In the examples quoted above, the main passional trajectory can be easily recognized. Nevertheless, different genres offer several alternatives from which each filmic text will make a particular use.

Regarding the series of Argentine films about the dictatorship it is equally feasible to establish a reading contract upon the passional trajectories proposed to the enunciatee in the texts' simulacra of enunciation. The redefinition of the series as a genre could thus be grounded not only in certain thematic or formal repetitions at the level of the *énoncé* (as has been observed by other authors) but also at the level of enunciation. In this respect, the films considered can be seen as proposing the same or a similar reading contract, regarding both the image of the enunciator — understood in Jost's and Cassetti's terms — and of the enunciatee, through the strategies of cognitive and passional manipulation directed towards it — as suggested by Betettini. The following chapters develop the analysis of the films on both these levels.

CHAPTER 4

THE DOCUDRAMA

As has been previously mentioned, almost since the beginning of cinema, filmmakers and critics have been concerned with the relationship between history or society and the possibilities of its filmic representation. In recent television production it has become customary the use of the term "docudrama" to describe certain texts in which this relationship is either postulated or problematised.

This chapter surveys some of the theorisations surrounding such a concept and the relationship between documentary and drama which it entails. Interest in docudrama lies in this particular relationship which can also be found, albeit in a different way, in the films of the corpus. In fact, the "mark" of which these films can be said to participate — despite the traditional generic definitions to which they have been ascribed — can be precisely found in the postulation of this relationship.

Given that the term "docudrama" has been primarily used to refer to television productions it is necessary to start by differentiating the meaning we intend to give to it from its traditional definition. Secondly, we shall trace some of the ways in which this neologism has been used in the context of Argentine cinema by filmmaker Héctor Olivera. Finally, this chapter will analyse the elements that relate the films of the corpus to others in the genre. In the analysis of the corpus, however, it was necessary to add to the two components of the "docu" and the "drama" a third one which allowed for the relation of the genre to the melodramatic, thus creating a certain "generic field" that could be defined by recourse to a new neologism: *documelodrama.*

I.   TELEVISION DOCUDRAMA

As with the definition of cinematographic genres, there is no theoretical formulation of the docudrama as a category. In general, the term is used to refer to those productions that tend to present themselves as faithful reconstructions of certain extratextual events and where the locations and interiors pictured are the "same" as those where the events took place. According to some authors, the actors should also be the "same subjects" whose story is being told (Maqua 1992); for others, the substitution of the "real character" by an actor does not only not go against the conventions of the genre, but constitutes instead an essential part of its definition (Jameson 1992).

In most cases docudramas incorporate a voice-over, voice-off or a reporter, who describes the incidents, provides extra information, incorporates proofs, supplies evidence, etc. These productions are fundamentally made for television and are, therefore, closely related to the characteristics normally attributed to this medium: alleged immediacy, simultaneity, transparency, etc.

Given the lack of theorization on the subject, it is interesting to consider the observations of Spanish filmmaker Javier Maqua in *El docudrama: fronteras de la ficción* (1992), a book which can be seen as "written from within the genre". That is, although the text is presented as an exploration of the most efficient ways of making a docudrama (and therefore one would expect from it an exploration of the conventions that regulate it) Maqua's text, instead of analysing these conventions, reproduces the principles and bases that sustain the genre. Thus, he thinks of the docudrama director as "only an alert miner whose duty is to extract from the entrails of reality, the script it holds". The filmmaker's main objective should thus be "the filming of the real" (Maqua 1992: 31, my translation). This possibility of direct access to "the real" through the image is never called into question, not even when, as has been mentioned, Maqua reveals, under the form of instructions for future filmmakers, certain conventions of the genre: "if his/her story is fascinating but its protagonist is not, do not make the film", "let the camera guide you", "macro is an

obscene lens", "the camera is a respectful voyeur", "the sound manager should have the reflexes of a sound hunter", "a professional actor on the frontiers of fiction is out of place"[1] (Maqua 1992, my translation).

From these instructions, one can define the docudrama as a genre that:

1. presents a subject who is simultaneously the actor and the protagonist of certain events of which he has been part (some professional actors might also be included in secondary roles);

2. the profilmic space is structured upon the extratextual space;

3. technical interventions are reduced to a minimum.

According to Maqua, the "*quid* of the frontiers of fiction" rests upon the actor, insofar as it is the peculiar relation between the actor and the character s/he interprets that allows us to differentiate this genre from others (Maqua 1992: 13). Different on the one hand from what Maqua calls the "Hollywood model" (in which the character is "embodied" by a professional actor) and, on the other, from Italian Neorrealism (in which the character is not a professional actor but someone who shares the same social condition), in the docudrama, the actor "not only could have undergone the same situations that are being recounted [as in the latter case], but has, actually, suffered them in his/her own flesh". This ambiguity between representation and that which is being represented is, for Maqua, what sustains the genre's "perversion" of "making appear as truth something that, by the fact of being a film, is unavoidably artifice, fiction". However, as opposed to Hollywood's realism which also intends, through the construction of filmic verisimilitude, to blur the distinction between reality and fiction, the double role of the actor in the docudrama — simultaneously subject and object of the narrative — unsettles the spectator and obliges him/her to assume a much more critical — and therefore, "more real" — attitude towards that which is being recounted. Thus, whilst Hollywood's model would depend on the notion of verisimilitude in order to make fiction appear as truth, docudrama would

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[1] Maqua uses the construction "frontiers of fiction" to refer to docudrama.

seek to dim those boundaries leaving the spectator the freedom to judge and decide (Maqua 1992: 13-14).

Obviously, it would be necessary for Maqua to define what he understands by Hollywood's model — the differentiation of actors on its own does not seem to be enough. In doing so, the distinction between the two forms might not be so clear, both of them sharing certain common strategies in relation to verisimilitude — which for Maqua do not intervene in the docudrama.

However, the explicit constitution of the docudrama as a reconstruction of events, with all its consequences regarding representation, does establish a basic difference in relation to other genres. For Fredric Jameson, docudrama is one of the best achievements of American commercial television and its success can in part be ascribed to "the distance which such pseudo-documentaries maintain between the real-life fact and its representation" (Jameson 1992: 40). This distance exposes the paradox that for Jameson can be found in the relationship between realism in film and in television:

> The older values of realism, living on in commercial film, empty the anecdotal raw material of its interest and vitality; while, paradoxically, the patently degraded application to and juxtaposition with advertising, end up preserving the truth of the event by underscoring their own distance from it. (Jameson 1992: 41)

Jameson understands docudrama as a fictional documentary which, contrary to what Maqua suggests, presents the reconstruction of certain events by professional actors. However, the fundamental difference between these two conceptions lies in the fact that, according to Jameson, the best docudramas rather than "filming the real", as Maqua advised, are those that instead "preserve the existence of a secret in their historical content, and, at the same time that [...] purport to give us a version of the events, exacerbate our certainty that we will never know for sure what really did happen". It is this "structural disjunction between form and content" that for Jameson differentiates docudrama from other realist aesthetics, such as classical Griersonian documentary, Italian Neorrealism, *Kino-Pravda* or *Ciné-Vérité* (Jameson 1992: 40). Docudrama would thus make explicit the tension in all realism — to which we have

referred in chapter 1 — between the epistemological function (implied in the prefix "docu") and the representational one (implied in the suffix "drama"). We shall return to this point later.

II.   DOCUDRAMA IN THE NEW ARGENTINE CINEMA

In the context of Argentine Cinema, filmmaker Héctor Olivera has used the term docudrama to define part of his production and of his partner in the company ARIES, Fernando Ayala. This would include films such as *Pasajeros de una pesadilla* (Ayala 1984), *La noche de los lápices* (Olivera 1986) and *El caso María Soledad* (Olivera 1993). The criterion that leads Olivera to isolate and differentiate these texts from the rest is that they are based on certain extratextual events. A fundamental factor for establishing this "correlation" are the notices at the beginning of the films. In these one might trace both the directors' reflection on their own production as well as a certain process in the constitution of the genre.

Of the three films mentioned, *La noche de los lápices* (1986) is the one closest to a conventional model (the Hollywood model according to Maqua or conventional realism in Jameson's terms). The title of the film refers to a military action, which took place on 16th September 1976 in the City of La Plata. In this action, seven teenagers who were campaigning for a student discount in public transport were kidnapped by military forces. Six of them are still *desaparecidos*. The only survivor, Pablo Díaz, is mentioned in the film's credits as adviser on the script.

At the beginning of the film a notice explains:

> Esta película está **basada** en personajes y hechos reales. Por razones argumentales se han introducido algunos cambios que **no alteran el espíritu de veracidad de lo acontecido.** (My emphasis)

Just after this warning, a subtitle establishes the temporal and spatial location: "*La Plata, setiembre de 1975*". From that moment onwards, the film follows a linear chronology, without further interventions from the cinematographic enunciator, except for one scene that refers to the military coup. In this scene a subtitle signals

the date while a voice-over reproduces the first *comunicado* of the Military Junta transmitted on the official broadcasting network.

Alongside these explicit interventions of the enunciator, there are other references, within the plot, that function as points of anchoring of the text in the extratext: the date written on the blackboard of an improvised open air school where Claudia, the girl Pablo fancies, helps a group of children living in a shanty town; a television programme in which an official is interviewed about the student campaign; the recourse to music of a well known pop-group of that time (*Sui Generis*). Moreover, within the conventions of the docudrama — as expounded by Maqua or Jameson — , Olivera uses as settings for the film the locations where the "events took place": the houses of the students who "disappeared", the schools they attended, the streets and squares of La Plata. These spaces would presumably be easily recognizable for certain audiences.

Pasajeros de una pesadilla (1984) presents a slightly different approach to the relationship between text and extratext. The film starts with the credits being projected over different panoramic views of the city of Buenos Aires. One of these credits declares that the film is a:

> Versión libre de *Yo, Pablo Schoklender*, escrito en la cárcel de Villa Devoto por Pablo Schoklender con el asesoramiento literario de Emilio Petcoff.

After the titles, the camera focuses on a close-up shot of a thin trickle of blood dripping over a car's number plate, and over this image the following text is presented:

> Esta película está **inspirada** en hechos reales. Nombres y circunstancias han sido modificados con el objeto de proteger a personas inocentes. (My emphasis)

With the beginning of the action — ambulances, the removal of the dead bodies — two more texts are shown. These provide information about the extratextual events the film intends to reconstruct: the murder of a couple, related to the military, by two of their children. One of them, Pablo Schoklender, is the author of the book upon which the script is based. These texts are:

> En el otoño de 1981 fueron hallados en una calle de Buenos Aires los cadáveres de un matrimonio en el baúl de su automóvil.

And:

> Dos de sus hijos, acusados de dichas muertes, se encuentran detenidos, al día de la fecha, a la espera de una resolución de la justicia.

> Buenos Aires, 14 de junio de 1984.

As opposed to the spatial and temporal reference at the beginning of *La noche de los lápices*, in this case the mention of time and place refers to the enunciation and not to the *énoncé*; this constitutes a first mechanism for imposing distance between the events and its representation. This distance will gradually be increased by different devices. One of these is the very structure of the film. Being constructed as an interview — presumably a psychological one — conducted with the youngest son of the dead couple[2] in prison, the film alternates this frame with flashbacks of what the character relates. That is, the film constructs a simulacrum of enunciation — the psychological interview — that coincides with that of the first enunciation of the story — the book written by Pablo Schoklender in the prison of *Villa Devoto*.

The first scene after the opening credits describes in sepia the marriage of the couple. This is interrupted by the first scene of the interview, in colour, which presents the following dialogue:

> DIEGO: No, no creo que papá aceptara hablar.
> INTERVIEWER: Y ella? Susana, habló?
> DIEGO: No sé, no estuve presente.
> INTERVIEWER: Pero sería **verosímil**?
> DIEGO: Sí, mamá no hubiera desaprovechado la ocasión. (My emphasis)

Narration returns to sepia in order to describe the events surrounding the marriage: the wedding, the wedding night, the presentation of the mother to the father's family. There is a new interruption in the frame of the interview:

> DIEGO: Sí, sí, **seguramente** fue así, pero ya le dije, yo no estaba.
> INTERVIEWER: Qué pasó después cuando ya estabas?
> DIEGO: La feliz pareja....

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[2] For this reason this character is easily associated with Pablo Schoklender, despite the fact of being named Diego in the film.

From this scene onwards flashbacks are in colour, as a consequence of the narration being constructed from Diego's memories and not events that were transmitted to him by others (through photographs in sepia, for example). The returns to the frame gradually diminish in order to ensure more continuity to the analeptic plot. The narrative frame thus built justifies the dominant focalization from Diego's perspective. This and the constant returns to the fictive situation of enunciation contribute to the relativization of the events recounted. In the end, the question about the identities of the authors of the murder persists. However, the way events have been reconstructed, on the one hand, leads the spectator to doubt the responsibility of the sons — given a rejected homosexual lover, the family's business in gunrunning, a "Green Falcon" waiting outside of the house[3]. On the other hand, in the event that the sons' responsibility were to be confirmed, the film tends to justify their actions — considering the abuses and mistreatment the children had been subjected to.

The film *El caso María Soledad*, depicts an event that took place in the province of Catamarca in which a teenager, named María Soledad Morales, was murdered. As the son of an important member of the government was suspected of being involved in the crime, many obstacles and pressures were imposed upon the judges. Faced with these, the people of the province of Catamarca, headed by the nun Marta Pelloni — headmistress of the school María Soledad attended — took to the streets demanding justice. The province was "intervened" by the national government and a second trial had to take place.

The narrative structure of the film is based on the narration of a witness, Mava, a fictional character who synthesises diverse attributes of several of María Soledad's schoolmates. As with the other films, this one also begins with a warning. Upon a black screen and before the credits, the following text appears and is at the same time read by a male voice-over[4]:

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[3] Green Falcons were the cars used by the military in the kidnapping and illegal detention of people.

[4] The fact of it being a male voice is not irrelevant, insofar as it points to an external enunciator (who

> Aunque basada en **hechos reales**, esta es una **obra de ficción**. Por lo tanto, no pueden tomarse como **ciertos** todos los hechos y circunstancias que aquí se narran. Sólo son **verdaderos** los nombres de la familia Morales y de la hermana Marta Pelloni; los demás son genéricos o ficticios.
>
> Debido a que el crimen de María Soledad Morales no ha sido judicialmente esclarecido, se ha puesto especial cuidado en que ninguna escena o diálogo de esta obra afecte la intimidad o el buen nombre y honor de quienes directa o indirectamente puedan sentirse identificados con personajes de la misma.
>
> Buenos Aires, marzo de 1993 (My emphasis)

This opening is followed by scenes of religious demonstrations in front of a Christ and of the *Virgen del Valle* in the place where the body of María Soledad Morales was found. The camera then focuses on Mava, who looks into the camera and presents herself as a witness: "María Soledad Morales, Sole. Sole era mi mejor amiga". Mava will be, like Pablo in *La noche de los lápices* and Diego in *Pasajeros de una pesadilla*, the main focalizer of the film.

After this scene, that establishes the frame for the enunciation, a subtitle that sets the date of the *énoncé* ("10 de setiembre de 1990") is superimposed onto a scene in which a man finds the dead body of the teenager. Following the list of credits, Mava's voice (in off) provides a short synopsis of the historical and political context of the province:

> Cuando pasó lo de Sole, gobernaba nuestra provincia una influyente dinastía política que había sido fundada hacia mediados del siglo por Vicente Leónidas Saadi. Durante sus cuarenta años de vida pública, este caudillo logró conquistar importantes cargos: fue dos veces gobernador y siete, senador nacional, además de alcanzar la presidencia del partido peronista. Considerado por sus amigos un hábil político, acusado por sus adversarios de ejercer un franco nepotismo y de atentar contra la independencia de los poderes republicanos, a su muerte en 1989, todos coincidieron en afirmar que había desaparecido el dueño de la política catamarqueña. Pero tiempo antes don Vicente había delineado su herencia política en la figura de uno de sus hijos, Ramón, que fue elegido dos veces gobernador. Lo que no sospechó el patriarca fue que la muerte de una chica humilde cambiaría la historia que él había imaginado para su Catamarca.

Mava's testimony is illustrated by interventions of the cinematographic enunciator, adding documentary material such as archive photographs of the Saadi's family or detaining the camera in places that are being referred to. Mava walks around the city

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a naive spectator might be tempted to associate with the filmmaker) instead of the internal narrator Mava.

pointing out the places where the actions took place: the main square, the cemetery where Vicente Saadi is buried, the house where María Soledad Morales lived. Historical discourse and visual documentation support Mava's role as a competent witness.

However, in this case as opposed to the others, focalization does not fall exclusively on Mava. Instead, the film alternates four different enunciational configurations: the police investigation presented by an objective camera, flashbacks of different witnesses' declarations (from each witness' perspective), Mava's recounting of the whole story (from her point of view) and certain flashbacks that can neither be attributed to a character — insofar as the information provided by the image is not accessible to any of them — nor to the first objective enunciator —as this narrates in the present of the enunciation and the scenes refer to a past event.

Television footage is incorporated in the scene in which President Menem announces the intervention of the province by the national government. As mentioned in the initial warning, the characters, excepting those of the Morales's family and of the nun Marta Pelloni are designated by their thematic role or through a physical characteristic ("*la abogada*", "*el juez*", "*el flaco*"). However, the selection of the cast has been so careful that it is rather easy to refer the actors to the extratextual subjects involved in the judicial case.

Finally, as in *Pasajeros de una pesadilla*, the question about the authors of Sole's death persists, but the responsibility of the political aristocracy of Catamarca is confirmed in relation both to the crime itself as to the hiding of proof and to the handling of the witnesses.

The three films seek to establish a relationship between the filmic and the real, but, as can be seen, they differ in this respect. It is interesting to compare the three warnings that open the films and which can therefore be considered as fundamental in the establishing of the reading contract between production and audience. In the first case analyzed, this relationship is proposed as direct; there is no

mediation between "lo acontecido" (on which the filmic plot is "based") and its representation, which is posed in terms of "veracidad". Changes are only due to the differences between the modes of narration, that is, for "razones argumentales". In the second case which we considered the cinematographic text is presented as "inspirado en hechos reales". Inspiration, being a term that refers to artistic composition, entails the recognition of certain conventions. This idea is reinforced by the first dialogue of the interview in which the narration is posed in terms of verisimilitude ("Pero sería verosímil?") and not in terms of truthfulness ("veracidad"). Finally, the third film's introductory text poses the distinction between real facts ("hechos reales") and the fictional work ("obra de ficción"). These last two cases, admitting the impossibility of a direct reproduction of events, assume that a certain displacement is unavoidable and therefore only make explicit those changes that refer to legal matters, such as the protection of the individuals involved.

The comparison of the opening texts allows us to read the oscillations and the different options filmmakers are faced with when trying to elaborate on the relationship between cinema and history that defines the genre. In an interview of 1986, Héctor Olivera explained his interest in exploring:

> [...] las relaciones siempre escabrosas y, no obstante (o precisamente por eso), vivas y riquísimas entre la realidad y su representación fílmica y, más concretamente entre la ficción filmada (la película de argumento) y la realidad filmada (lo que se llama documental). (Olivera 1986, quoted in España 1994)

It is in this convergence between the "filmed fiction" (the drama) and the "filmed reality" (the documentary) that the genre we call docudrama is constituted. However, it is in this same convergence that the specificity of the genre might be questioned, given that such a relationship between text and extratext can only be conceived, as was pointed out in the first chapter, in terms of the strategies used in order to "make appear as real" the story that is narrated. The problem being one of verisimilitude rather than of truth, displaces the emphasis from what the genre is to what it alleges it is, that is to the reading contract it presents to the spectator.

The definition of docudrama in Argentine cinema does not rest upon the characters (as Maqua suggests), nor upon the representation of events that "effectively took place" (as Olivera postulates), but instead in a certain "will to truth" that affects both form and context often exposing, as Jameson states, the tension between these two. This tension is bequeathed to docudrama by classical realism and is implied in the very word used. If realism was split between the aesthetic demand of "representation", and the epistemological one of "faithfulness to reality", docudrama exposes this same tension in the terms "docu" and "drama".

In this respect, the difference between Ayala and Olivera's productions described above and other films of the period is not so clear. *Los chicos de la guerra*, based on the Falklands / Malvinas war, although describing fictional situations, presents them in such a way that the spectator is led to believe that, even if the actual characters might not have existed, the events depicted are mere examples of what a whole generation went through. The strategies upon which verisimilitude is built are similar in both cases: a clear temporal and spatial setting, use of television and radio footage, references to the musical groups of that time (Juan Carlos Baglieto, *Sui Generis*). The last scene of *Los chicos de la guerra* shows a demonstration of ex-combatants and upon the frozen image of these projects a title acknowledging their contribution to the film. This last scene is completely isolated from the plot, and can thus be seen as serving the same purpose, in relation to verisimilitude, as the credits in which a testimonial source is acknowledged: Pablo Díaz's advice in *La noche de los lápices* or the reference to Pablo Schoklender's book in *Pasajeros de una pesadilla*.

These similarities between the films allow us to maintain the terms "docu" and "drama" in the definition of the genre. However, the displacement from the representational character to that of example or "case", needs to be designated by a new term. This is the reason why we have coined the term "docu-melo-drama" in order to define the films included in our corpus.

On the other hand, films such as *Darse cuenta* (Doria 1984) which, through paratextual information we know based on a true story (a young man who is considered unrecoverable and therefore pronounced dead in a public hospital recuperates thanks to the persistence of a doctor) does not display many of the characteristics mentioned above: it lacks an opening text and the temporal and spatial location is ambiguous. Despite the fact that a scene of TV footage showing former-military-president Bignone allows the events of the plot to be related to the extratext, the film does not rely on this relationship for its meaning. In an universalistic gesture, the film intends to speak about the human condition in general, disregarding its anchoring in a concrete historical situation.

Thus, the way in which fiction and reality are articulated in cinema allows us to distinguish four terms, and not just two (as would be the extreme cases of documentary vs. fictional cinema) namely: documentary, docudrama, *documelodrama* and cinematographic fiction. This would be the difference — to take an example from another cinematography equally preoccupied with the representation of historical events — between the documentary *Shoa* (Claude Lanzmann 1985), the cinematographic docudrama *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1993), the documelodramatic television series *Holocaust* (Marvin Chomsky 1988), and the cinematographic fiction set in the Nazi period *La vita é bella* (Roberto Benigni 1997) that has produced so much debate recently.

As has been mentioned, whilst the docudrama intends to represent "real events", the *documelodrama* presents fictional stories set in a specific historical period, proposing these as "examples" or "cases" of situations "really lived" by a group of people. This form is clearly different from the realistic representation of an event and should not be confused with what Maqua calls Hollywood's realism[5].

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[5] *Documelodrama* has been increasingly exploited, not only by commercial cinema but also in television productions. In the context of North American cinema and TV productions, documelodramas often finish with a text indicating the number of people who undergo situations, similar to those depicted in the film (victims of domestic violence, maltreated children, teenagers suffering from anorexia, etc.).

In the series of Argentine films about the dictatorship it is also possible to distinguish between documentaries — such as *Malvinas, historia de traiciones* (Jorge Denti 1983), *La república perdida I* (Miguel Pérez 1983), *La república perdida II* (Miguel Pérez 1985), *Permiso para pensar* (Eduardo Meilij 1988), *Cazadores de utopías* (David Blaustein 1996), *Hundan al Belgrano* (Federico Urioste 1996), *Malajunta* (Eduardo Aliverti 1996), *Tierra de Avellaneda* (Daniele Incalcaterra 1996) — , docudramas, the films that have been analysed in this section, and documelodramas, the form that will be analysed in the next section and that would allow us to define the films included in the corpus.

Given the restrictions imposed by the thematic considered, there would be, strictly speaking, no fictional production. However, some examples of this can be found in experimental short movies by young filmmakers. One of these is the short *La nariz*, part of the feature film *De este pueblo* (Grupo Cine-testimonio 1984). The film is based on a short story by Gogol, and tells the story of a man that finds in his breakfast the nose of a member of the military Junta. Another example of the crossing between the fantastic and the documentary is *Líneas de teléfonos* (Marcelo Brigante 1996). This film narrates the telephonic encounter of two young people who live in the same flat but at different times: Vera in 1978 and Ariel in 1996. Vera is being persecuted by the military and, despite the knowledge that time grants Ariel, he is unable to save her from "disappearing".

Documelodrama would thus mediate between the two terms that both Maqua and Jameson set in opposition: television docudrama (with its defining formal innovation and its consequent capacity for "estrangement") and classical realism, differentiating it from these forms as well as from the classic documentary.

III.   DOCUMELODRAMA

1. Between documentary and melodrama

The continental movement of the sixties and seventies known as the New Latin American Cinema stressed the connexion between the cinema and the political, both in the films themselves and in their theoretical grounding by filmmakers — in manifestos, documents and interviews — and critics. This interest entailed a certain conception of the medium as a useful instrument for political action — for filmmakers — as well as a base for its analysis — for critics. For this reason, the broad theoretical work on the movement has tended to focus on the documentary and testimonial developments, as can be seen in the lengthy survey realised by Ana López:

> As I hope this survey of some of the different documentary practices of the New Latin American Cinema has demonstrated, the importance of the documentary for the New Latin American Cinema cannot be overestimated. It was the documentary, with its aura of authenticity and immediacy, that seemed the most practical, effective, and appropriate medium for the active contribution of the cinema to the struggles and politization of the people of Latin America. [...] From Fernando Birri to Mario Handler, Santiago Alvarez and Patricio Guzmán, the principal function of the documentary has been defined, above all, in terms of its social and political effectivity for the peoples of Latin America. (López 1986: 150-151)

However, as this same author points out, the approach to films realized in a Latin American context of production requires the modification of certain theoretical categories from traditional film studies.

Firstly, the notion of "author" which — whilst occupying a privileged position in certain cinematographic discourses in Europe and North America — does not appear to be relevant in a context in which films are produced by groups or people engaged in collective projects.

Secondly, the category of "genre", at least as it is understood by the Hollywood industry — that is, as a result of commercial pressures regarding the predictability of the market and the efficient distribution of resources — could not be applied to the New Latin American Cinema's productions. In these, conventional genres cannot be easily recognized. The very notion is of little or no use, according

to López, insofar as it tends to emphasise textual mechanisms over historical determinations. Thus,

> If the notion of genre is to have any utility in the study of the New Latin American Cinema it must be reconceptualized and recontextualized as a notion that encompasses both history and textuality, as a historical intertextuality that is actively reckoned by filmmakers in their rejection and transformation of the production and reception models of established systems of filmmaking (López 1986: 129)

Finally, the production of the New Latin American Cinema requires the re-elaboration of the terms through which one identifies a "national cinema" and the elements that constitute such identifications, that is the notions of "the nation" and of "the national". In this respect, according to López, Latin American cinema, as opposed to Japanese cinema for example, has always been conscious of its difference with respect to dominant practices. This leads López to assert that "in Latin America the issue of nationality in the cinema has been [...] a hotly debated issue of much concern almost since the birth of the cinema" (López 1986: 130).

The question about the national presents an interesting aspect if it is posed, as López does, not in relation to the debate between particularism and universalism — vastly exploited — but instead in relation to the construction of subject-positions in cinematographic discourses produced in a specific cultural formation that constructs certain frameworks for the reading of a film. In this respect, one could think of the national as a part of the reading contract structured by the apparatuses of enunciation of the texts.

This reconfiguration of the theoretical space from which López proposes to conceptualise the New Latin American Cinema, allows her to observe the convergence in it of documentary and fiction, melodrama and history, spectacle and experience. It also allows her to observe the changes that the movement undergoes, for example, from the social documentary of the sixties to the historical documentary of the eighties. However, in pointing out these intersections, and given López's object of study, a certain notion of the purity of traditional genres is still at work. This is precisely what allows us to define the transgressive or innovative character of the films that participate in such convergences. Thus López states that:

El otro Francisco, a 1975 Cuban film directed by Sergio Giral, is to the melodrama and history as *De cierta manera* is to documentary and fiction: both modes of discourse are utilized, exploited, torn asunder, and redirected towards new ends. (López 1986: 503)

What in the context of the New Latin American cinema is still perceived as a transgression, will constitute, in the Argentine Cinema of the eighties, a certain norm, established precisely on the crossing of traditional genres. Thus, in the series we are analysing these convergences can be said to have a constitutional character, which allowed us to redefine the genre in the terms developed above. Taking elements both from documentary and from melodrama, the *documelodrama* points out the necessary hybridity of cinematographic genres while at the same time establishing a space where, as will be seen, the distinction between documentary and melodrama — that still sustains López's reflection — or between some of its variants — melodrama and realism (Gledhill 1987), melodrama and tragedy (Heilman 1968) — loses all meaning.

2. The conventions of documentary

It would be possible to consider both the documentary and the melodrama as genres and, therefore, to include them in the discussion developed in the previous chapter. Much in the same way as the genres established by the industry, these two more general "modes" or "forms" of cinematographic narration can be differentiated according to a textual criterion — a certain corpus, although broader than the former with specific characteristics — as well as a certain form of social circulation — both in production and reception. Bill Nichols in *Representing Reality* (1991) considers these possibilities when analysing the definition of the documentary with regard to three instances: the filmmaker, the text and the spectator.

According to Nichols, from the perspective of the filmmaker, documentary can be defined as an institution; that is, as a field with its own system of restrictions regarding who can participate in it and who defines the norms, its circuits of circulation and consumption, specific instances of legitimation, etc.

Rather than proposing any ground or centre outside the practices of documentary, such a definition stresses how the field operates by allowing itself to be historically conditioned, unfolding, variable, and perpetually provisional, based on what documentarists themselves consider admissible, what they regard as limits, boundaries and test cases, how boundaries come to exert the force of a definition, however loosely, and how qualification, contestation, or subversion of these same boundaries moves from inconsequential anomaly to transformative innovation to accepted practice. (Nichols 1991: 15)

The institution that regulates documentary production is thus subjected — as the more general one in which it is immersed, that of cinematographic production in general — to a system of restrictions specific to the field. The main preoccupation within it would lie in the intention of referring to "reality". This intention regulates both the organizational principles of the texts — their style, structure and techniques — and their circuit of distribution and exhibition.

Regarding the definition in textual terms, documentary can be considered, according to Nichols, a genre insofar as it groups together a number of texts that share certain common characteristics:

Firstly, films recognized as documentaries are organized around an informative logic, which operates in terms of "problem solving". This logic defines the paradigmatic structure of any documentary: establishing of a problem, presentation of antecedents, examination of the problem — often including more than one perspective — , possible solution. Even in those documentaries which one might call "narrative", whose development is organized in terms of the presentation of characters, conflict and resolution, the problem solving scheme can be observed in certain scenes or underpinning the structure of the plot.

Secondly, editing techniques tend to a conceptual rather than to a narrative continuity. The cuts do not organize a spatial and temporal continuum for the characters to move in, but instead they form part of a reasoning, acting as evidence of what is being stated. This centrality of argumentation assigns a privileged position to the sound track, insofar as oral narration — in the form of voice over, off, narrators, interviewers, informants, etc. — is of fundamental importance. Moreover, as opposed to the characters' word in fictional cinema, the word of these subjects is

always presented as truthful, even when there might be the possibility of another perspective.

Nichols adds, as one of these characteristics, the character of evidence with which images and sounds are presented, as opposed once more to what happens in fictional cinema in which these elements respond to internal necessities of the plot. According to this author, this "gives priority to the structuring elements of an argument concerned with something external to the text rather than to the structuring elements of a story internal to it" (Nichols 1991: 20). From our perspective this presentation of sound and images as "evidence" is fundamental, inasmuch as it allows for the definition of documentary as a genre that alleges an homologation between text and extratext. However, in Nichols's argument, the association of narration with fiction and argumentation with "reality" leads to a confused conceptualization of the terms implied: as if narration could not be used in the frame of an argumentation or an argumentative position could not be presupposed in a narration.

In a sense this possibility is perceived by Nichols when describing the four possible "modes" — or rather, types — of documentary practice. In his taxonomy, Nichols distinguishes between: expositive documentary (the classical mode); observational documentary (the non-interventionist mode), interactive documentary (which allows for the participation of interviewer and interviewed) and reflexive documentary (that which exhibits its own mechanisms of production)[6]. However, opposed to these modes, Nichols contraposes monolithically the "fiction film", without observing that many of the characteristics he correctly attributes to documentary can be, or have been, appropriated in different ways by certain modes of fiction (such as those we analyse).

Finally, Nichols defines the documentary in relation to the spectator. Accepting that there might not be any formal characteristic that allows for a clear distinction of documentary and fiction, he speculates on the possibility that "the distinguishing mark of documentary may be less intrinsic to the text than a function

of the assumptions and expectations brought to the process of viewing the text"
(Nichols 1991: 24). These assumptions and expectations are the result of previous
experiences on the part of the spectator which determine the processes and his/her
capacities of comprehension and interpretation of a documentary.

In this respect also, the main difference between documentary and non-
documentary films would lie in the relationship of the text with the "historical
world". This statement should be read, according to Nichols, in two ways: firstly,
insofar as the images registered by the camera (the profilmic event) and its referent
(the historical event) are practically identical — "the image is the referent projected
onto a screen" (Nichols 1991: 25); secondly, given the fact that what is presented on
the screen proposes a certain opinion regarding the external world.

Among the specific procedures at stake in the interpretation of a documentary,
Nichols analyses different ways of reading the motivation between image and
referent. For this author, these can be systematised in four categories: realism,
functional motivation, intertextual motivation and formal motivation. But the
distinction between each of these is not clear. It is true that the motivated or
unmotivated character of signs constituted (and still does for some semiologists) a
valid principle of differentiation between indexical and iconic signs — motivated by
their referent — and symbolic signs — established by convention. However, the
conventional character of a cinematographic shot (its symbolic aspect) cannot be
disregarded. Although the distinction between motivated and unmotivated signs
might serve as a hypothesis in relation to a naive response on the part of certain
audiences, it cannot constitute the basis for the distinction of different
cinematographic forms or genres from a theoretical perspective.

As a matter of fact, Nichols returns to this distinction in order to propose as
a fundamental expectation of the documentary, the indexical relationship that is
presupposed between images and sound on the one hand, and the "historical world"
on the other. The indexical relationship sustains a metonymic continuity as opposed

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[6] In a later work, Nichols adds a fifth mode, "performative documentary" (See Nichols 1994).

to the metaphorical relationship proposed in fiction. Although Nichols admits that both the alleged reference and the indexical link between image and reality are called into question by the documentary itself, particularly in its reflexive form, these two notions constitute, according to this author, a fundamental part of spectator expectations regarding documentary. What is lacking in this argument is why this is so, or how the reading contract is articulated in order to generate and then sustain such expectations.

At the end of his reflection, Nichols introduces an interesting difference between the documentary and the fiction film based on the mechanism of identification proposed to the spectator in each of these forms. According to this author:

> Through an imaginary realm, fiction depends for its success on its ability to draw us into a highly specific situation through the psychodynamics of identification with characters and turns of plot. Documentary also begins with the concrete representation of people and places, situations and events but depends for its success far more on its ability to induce us to derive larger lessons, broader outlooks, or more overarching concepts from the detail it provides. [...] Point-of-view shots, shot/reverse shots, over-the-shoulder shots, and other devices for aligning the camera with the perspective of a particular character in order to establish a first-person, more fully subjective rendering of time and space are rare. [...] Our identification with specific social actors therefore has less of the intensity common to fiction. (Nichols 1991: 29-30)

Whilst diminishing our expectations regarding access to a possible interiority, our expectations regarding the possibility of an objective knowledge are increased. It is towards this alleged possibility of objective knowledge that all documentary strategies are directed. Thus, the relation of the form to what Nichols calls epistephilia. In other words: in the documentary all the elements are organized in relation to knowledge, namely: "an organizing agency that possesses information and knowledge" (which we call the enunciator), "a text that conveys it" (the *énoncé*) "and a subject who will gain it" (the enunciatee) (Nichols1991: 31).

This last point has important consequences for the analysis of the films of our corpus, given that in them, as will be seen, knowledge constitutes the main object of value both within the *énoncé* — that is, for the characters of the plots — as well as for the subjects involved in the instance of enunciation.

3. The conventions of melodrama

In its use in Media Studies as well as in Olivera's definition, the dramatic component of the "docudrama" is given by its representational character; which is, paradoxically, precisely what it seeks to hide under the appearance of transparency, of direct manifestation of events. However, as has been mentioned it is also possible to relate the films of the corpus to the mode, genre or form known as melodrama. This reaction can be doubly justified: firstly, it can be seen in the text themselves, which manifest many of the characteristics traditionally attributed to the melodramatic mode; secondly, the relationship between documentary and melodramatic forms can be inscribed in a certain tradition, which can be traced back to the New Latin American Cinema movement. As Ana López observes:

> Besides adopting and transforming the strategies of documentary filmmaking, the filmmakers of the New Latin American Cinema have sought to transform the forms and strategies of fictional filmmaking itself in their efforts to use historical fictions to expose and materialize the often-repressed histories of the continent's struggle for liberation. The New Latin American Cinema's search for popular yet materialist cinematic discourses has led to the extension of the range of options available for historical narrativity in the cinema. More specifically, the New Latin American Cinema has attempted to transform the social effectivity of the fictional cinema by decentring melodramatic and spectacular representational strategies away from the personal or individual realms towards a historical realm conceived of as the site of popular culture and consciousness. (López 1986: 494)

However, López also observes how, in the militant context of the sixties and seventies, this relationship does not cease to be problematic. The interest in reaching a "popular" audience, used to the conventions of melodrama — in cinema but also in its television format, the *telenovelas* — confronted intellectual filmmakers and critics — many of them with a strong Frankfurt School perspective on mass culture — with a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, melodrama had the capacity to deliver a popular audience, the people to whom the cinematographic and political project of the New Latin American Cinema was supposedly directed. On the other hand, some characteristics of melodrama — its strong reliance on identification, its emphasis on emotional reaction over rational analysis, the reduction of social conflicts to the private sphere — made it appear as a useful instrument for the

dominant classes. Additionally, melodrama was seen as a clear example of Hollywood's interfering with the Latin American cinematographic market. However, this presupposition implied an alienated mass, unable to constitute itself into a political subject and therefore the crumbling of the whole project.

It was necessary to find a way out of this contradiction, an intermediate solution that, without disregarding the uses to which melodrama had been subjected as an instrument of domination, would allow filmmakers to recuperate the genre — and its audience — for a liberation project. Some filmmakers found this way out in the aforementioned convergences of genre. Setting melodrama in a historical context they were able to reach a broad audience while at the same time making a statement against the domination which it had been subjected to.

> By historicizing the melodramatic — that is, by cultivating either past or present history as the site and principal determinant of the melodrama's excessive sentiment and pathos — the melodramatic began to be reconciled with the concerns of the New Latin American Cinema. This process ultimately entailed dismissing from the melodrama some of its principal characteristics, especially its ahistoricism, and the redirection of its strong identificatory mechanisms. (López 1986: 498)

However, as happens with other cinematographic genres, or even more than with those, the characteristics that would define melodrama are not clear. In a classic definition, the most evident feature of melodrama appears to be the participation of the spectator in a passional trajectory strongly established by the film. This trajectory requires the spectator's involvement with the protagonist (mainly through identification), who is characterized by virtue as opposed to an antagonist — another subject, a group, certain circumstances or even the whole social order — that lacks this value — thus being evil, unfair, hypocritical, etc. Melodrama stages the fight between good and evil — in absolute terms — at the end of which virtue will be rewarded, even if this requires the death of the protagonist.

This definition constitutes, however, a later elaboration of the original meaning of the word, which etymologically refers to the incorporation of music — *melos* — into representation — *drama*. The term was, as Christine Gledhill reminds us, coined by Jacques Rousseau, at the beginning of 1770s in order to distinguish his

"musical drama" *Pygmalion* from Italian opera (Gledhill 1987: 19). The process by
which the term achieves its present meaning is described by Thomas Schatz as
follows:

> In the strictest definition of the term, melodrama refers to those narrative forms which
> combine music (melos) with drama. Hollywood's use of background music to provide a
> formal aural dimension and an emotional punctuation to its dramas extends back even into
> the "silent" era. Live musical accompaniment (usually organ or piano) was standard from the
> earliest days of theatrical projection. As the Hollywood cinema and its narrative forms
> developed, though, and borrowed elements from pulp fiction, radio serials, romantic ballads,
> and other forms of popular romantic fiction, the term "romantic melodrama" assumed a more
> specialized meaning. Generally speaking, "melodrama" was applied to popular romances that
> depicted a virtuous individual (usually a woman) or couple (usually lovers) victimized by
> repressive and inequitable social circumstances, particularly those involving marriage,
> occupation, and the nuclear family. (Schatz 1981: 221-222)

The problem with this definition of the term is that it ignores the fact that passional
manipulation is not exclusive to melodrama but instead is common to all genres,
varying the passional configuration they operate upon. This might explain why many
authors consider "the melodramatic" a mode and not a genre (Elsaesser 1972,
Gledhill 1987). In fact, if we consider the term in its extensive definition, that is, as
mechanisms for the spectator's passional involvement, all Hollywood's cinema, as
Schatz suggests, would be melodramatic (Schatz 1981: 221).

Thomas Elsaesser begins his analysis of the classical family melodrama (that
produced in Hollywood between 1940 and 1960) by making an interesting historical
and geographical survey of the mode's antecedents (Elsaesser 1972 in Gledhill 1987).
In England, melodrama can be traced back to the Gothic novel, whereas in France it
can be related to the costume drama and the historical novel. In Germany, its main
source can be found in the ballad together with popular forms such as the *Moritat*
(popular songs). Finally, in Italy, melodrama is closely related to opera.

Elsaesser considers two of these closely: the German *Bänkellied* (a popular
form of narrative with musical accompaniment) and the bourgeois drama. The former
relates to the melodrama not so much with regard to the techniques of emotional
shock or the play with sympathies and antipathies known by the audience, but in the
non-psychological conception of the *dramatis personae*, constructed less as an

autonomous individual than as a medium for the transmission of the action. According to this author, the function assigned to melodrama as a "constructor of myths" derives from this characteristic. The "moral / moralistic pattern" that surrounds the plot (passional crimes, indifferent mothers, murderous servants, unfair teachers, etc.), is overlaid with the proliferation of realistic details while, at the same time being parodied and relativized by rhythm (the mechanical forms of verses, the singer's voice). Rhythm is thus established, according to Elsaesser, often against value (moral, intellectual, etc.). In Jameson's terms we could say that here also, as in the docudrama, form enters into tension with content.

The most direct antecedents of the family melodrama, could be found in the sentimental novel of the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on private feelings and the interiorized codes of morality (in novels such as Richardson's *Clarissa* or Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloise*) and in bourgeois tragedy (such as Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*). According to Elsaesser, these works obtain their dramatic power from the conflict between the extreme individual idealism of its heroes and the extreme corruption of the environment. The ideological message is, for this author, evident: "the struggle of a morally and emotionally emancipated bourgeois consciousness against the remnants of feudalism" (in Gledhill 1987: 45). A struggle that can be analysed in political, ethical, religious, metaphysical and economic terms. Although this particular conflict is not relevant for the analysis of filmic melodrama in its present form, the personalization of ideological conflicts remains one of the mode's most evident characteristics. It is also this personalization of social conflicts which will interest us in the analysis of Argentine documelodrama.

From this perspective, the persistence of melodrama could be seen both as the way in which popular culture deals with social crises, and, at the same time, as a refusal to understand social changes outside of the private sphere and in emotional terms.

Regarding form, Elsaesser recuperates the etymological reference of the term, as a dramatic narrative in which musical accompaniment signals emotional effects.

This definition allows him to consider melodrama as "a problem of style and articulation", thus defining it as a form and not a genre. Music, alongside other elements, serves both a functional purpose (of structural signification) and a thematic one (it manifests an expressive content). In fact, the relationship of melodrama with its expressive devices might (always according to Elsaesser) account for its development and sophistication with technical advances (colour, lenses, dolly, etc.) Thus, as an "expressive code" melodrama can be described as "a particular form of dramatic *mise-en-scène*, characterized by a dynamic use of spatial and musical categories, as opposed to intellectual or literary ones" (in Gledhill 1987: 51). That is, while the dramatic conflict loses part of its semantic value, other aspects, such as music, lighting, composition and decoration, increase it.

By referring to "emotional effects", Elsaesser gets close to traditional definitions of the genre, which consider its main characteristic the passional involvement of the spectator. The possibility of the spectator's recognizing the situation being described and identifying with it depends, according to Elsaesser, on the aptitudes of the iconographic (the visual), but also on the quality — complexity, subtlety, ambiguity — of the orchestration of transindividual, popular, mythological experiences in the structure of the plot. In other words, in the way *melos* (lighting, editing, visual rhythm, sets, acting, music) is incorporated into *drama*.

Alongside these formal concordances, Elsaesser observes certain common traits in the films that constitute his corpus — Hollywood's family melodrama — at what we have called the discursive level (that is, characters, space, time). He mentions as characteristics of the melodramatic, the following:

- Characters move in a closed world. They are passive rather than active, suffering the consequences of somebody else's actions. They have a "negative" identity obtained through suffering, self-immolation and disillusionment.

- Given that social pressures are rigidly established, there is little room for strong determining actions. These are replaced by impotence, hysterical outbursts or social inadequacy. The structure of the plot leads characters constantly to

examine themselves and each other. Characters are the only reference, as there does not appear to be an outside world.

- There seems to be a structural shift from the linear externalization of action (as for example in the Western) to the sublimation of dramatic values in more complex forms of symbolization.

- The melodramas analysed by Elsaesser often describe the American middle class, its iconography and its family experience, juxtaposing stereotypical situations with new configurations.

- As has been mentioned, decor acquires a fundamental importance. The setting of the family melodrama is, by definition, the middle-class house, full of significant objects. Iconographically, melodrama develops in the claustrophobic space of the bourgeois house or of the small town. The development of the action in interior settings entails a strong preoccupation with the *mise-en-scène*. Nothing is therefore casual; everything has a symbolic dimension.

- The plot is centred around the quest for an unobtainable object. In general, melodrama focuses on the perspective of the victim, but often manages to present all characters as victims.

A last point Elsaesser considers is particularly relevant for our analysis: the importance of irony and *pathos*. According to Elsaesser, whilst irony gives privilege to the point of view of the spectator over that of the characters, *pathos* results from the identificatory processes of the spectator with them (Elsaesser 1972 in Gledhill 1987: 66). These two figures reveal the existence of diverse degrees of consciousness on the part of the characters and of the subjects of the enunciation. However, it also entails the possibility of producing certain passional reactions in the spectator, according to the relations built between enunciator, enunciatee and characters. Irony presupposes a relationship of complicity (based upon knowledge) between the enunciator and the enunciatee and thus a distance from the perspective of the

characters. *Pathos*, on the contrary, reduces such a distance as much as possible, bringing the enunciatee closer to the character than to the enunciator.

The question of who privileges what leads us once again to the manipulatory action of an enunciator that constructs a certain position of knowing or not knowing (being / not being able to, wanting / not wanting to, having / not having to) for the enunciatee. As has been mentioned, these modalities articulate the passional trajectory of the enunciatee, which the spectator is to follow if he is to enter the game of the film.

From this perspective, both the traditional melodrama as well as the form we have named "documelodrama", share the necessity of a strong identification of the spectator with the protagonist, an emotional identification with him/her and the participation in his/her passional trajectory. The main conflict is, in both cases, built around the moral values of the protagonist and the corruption of the environment, articulated upon the opposition between the public and the private. Finally, the importance of expressive devices in order to generate emotional effects is also a common trait of the films of the corpus and of melodrama in its traditional form.

However, the films of our corpus, in their reading contracts, also propose a strong articulation between what is represented and a historical reality. For this reason, in the same way that they could not be considered "documentaries", neither can they be considered "melodramas". Participating in both forms without belonging to either — and also participating in other genres, as has been mentioned —, they occupy the space of the intersection of two sets (in set theory as suggested by Derrida). It is this intersection which we call *documelodrama.*

CHAPTER 5

DOCUMELODRAMA (TESTIMONIAL MELODRAMA)

This chapter synthesises the analysis of the corpus and proposes a first systematisation of the general characteristics that allow for the definition of the genre that in the previous chapter was labelled *documelodrama*. The chapter thus intends to assign content to this term by confronting it with the particular texts. To claim the existence of general characteristics in the films of the corpus — despite the three periods referred to in the introduction or the particularities proper to some filmmakers or even to certain texts — entails an obvious generalisation. However, these general traits can be seen precisely as those that, by defining the genre, produce simultaneously the law and the possibility of its transgression.

As has been mentioned in previous chapters, our interest in analysing the series of films about the military dictatorship in relation to cinematographic genres does not only lie in the possibility of pointing out thematic and formal recurrences — which have already been observed by other authors. It is also possible to find regularities in the enunciational *dispositif* of the films considered and therefore in the reading contract they seek to establish. For this reason the chapter has been divided into two parts: a first part that approaches the texts focussing on the *énoncé* and a second part which considers the enunciation and therefore intends to relate the texts to their conditions of production and recognition.

I. FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FILMS SURVEYED

Although the analysis of the corpus tends to concentrate on the narrative aspect — given that it consists of narrative films in which the story occupies a fundamental position — we shall briefly consider some cinematographic options implied by the genre. At a second level, we shall analyse elements pertaining to what we have called the discursive level, that is, characters, time and space. On a higher level of

abstraction we shall analyse the structuring of the actions of the plot in the different films. Finally, we shall examine the main lines of meaning that the different texts have in common.

1. Cinematographic codes (superficial level)

Cinematographic codes (visual, graphic, sound and syntactic codes) work, in general, upon the axis of neutrality and homogeneity. These allow us to consider the films of the corpus in terms of what Cassetti and Di Chio call a "classic regime" of cinematographic writing. That is, an even style that puts emphasis on communicative functionality, which seeks to ensure coherence and cohesion over any possible ambiguity and that intends to hide any instance of mediation in the representation of events. This description could be applied to the whole of commercial filmmaking — in Maqua's terms to the whole of "Hollywood's realism"— and can also be observed in the majority of the films of our corpus. The most notable exceptions are the works of Fernando Solanas, Jeanine Meerapfel and Lita Stantic. These directors, although presenting a certain homogeneity, do so upon "marked" options (rather than neutral ones). These options, to which filmmakers return again and again in different films, are precisely the marks that are seen as defining their "style" (blue lighting, dream images, decentred frames, complexity in the construction of the plot, etc.)

Leaving aside these exceptions — which will be analysed when considering the different periods — the basic options of the films' realism can be specified in relation to the four codes mentioned above:

VISUAL CODES:

At an iconic level the films opt for a naturalistic representation of objects. Perspective is central and there is no use of lenses or filters that could distort images. There is a strong preponderance of medium shots and total shots for actions and of close-up shots for dialogues, as opposed to long shots, panoramic shots and detail shots, which are rare. There is a primacy of frontal frames with normal inclination. Lighting is in

general neutral. Camera movements respond to functional needs: centring of characters, travellings for subjective shots of a moving character or for the description of spaces, particularly at the beginning of the narrative (e.g. the camera that describes the house at the beginning of *Contar hasta diez* or in *La historia oficial*). Regarding apparent camera movement — in the use of zoom — it is mainly employed in dialogues, moving from a medium shot to a close-up shot or from this to an extreme-close-up shot, in order to emphasise the dramatic character of what is being said.

GRAPHIC CODES:

As has been seen regarding Ayala's and Olivera's productions, the opening or closing notices play a fundamental part in the definition of the docudrama genre. In the same way, the definition of a film as *documelodrama* requires a clear spatial and temporal setting for the events that are being recounted. This can be accomplished through iconic references (green Falcons, the demonstrations of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*), the recourse to subtitles or through references to other texts, mainly in television, radio or newspapers.

The use of other graphic codes is limited to conventional uses as in titles and credits. Among the latter, it is important to consider the reference to some type of source of information. Whereas in the docudrama this reference is made explicit as a way of legitimating the enunciator's knowledge (Pablo Diaz in *La noche de los lápices*, Pablo Schoklender in *Pasajeros de una pesadilla*) in some *documelodramas* this same function is covered by the acknowledgements to certain extratextual institutions, organisations or characters (*Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* in *La historia oficial*, *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in *La amiga*, a group of former soldiers in *Los chicos de la guerra*).

SOUND CODES:

As with the majority of commercial filmmaking, in the films of the corpus the sound track is articulated upon images, music fulfilling a mere rhetorical function in the

stressing of the mood of certain sequences (sentimental, heroic, dramatic, etc.). This does not entail that it cannot have other functions, as for example the use of national rock music (*rock nacional*) to characterise a certain generation in *Los chicos de la guerra* or in *La amiga* — a mechanism also used in *La noche de los lápices*. Music can also serve to describe certain spaces (the singing of the National Anthem at school, or the playing of sacred music in church, both in the film *La historia oficial*). It can also fulfil a symbolic function, as does the infantile melody "*En el país de nomeacuerdo*" in Puenzo's film or the song "*De regreso, Mirta*" by the pop singer Juan Carlos Baglieto in *Los chicos de la guerra*.

Pino Solanas's films constitute once again an exception insofar as both *El exilio de Gardel* and *Sur* incorporate musical scenes into the structure of the plot. Included in a character's performance (María's dancing in the streets in Paris or the *tanguedía* her mother and the others try to stage) or as interventions of an extradiegetic enunciator (the *Balada del tartamudo* in *Sur*) in both cases, musical scenes assume a narrative function.

SYNTACTIC CODES:

In all the films considered, the basic form of editing is through *découpage*, that is, the association of images through cutting and reorganisation, in order to define the situation in precise terms and to avoid any possible doubt on the spectator's part. Cinematographic conventions that tend to assure linearity and continuity are followed (such as shot / counter-shot, the 180° rule, *raccords*, etc.). This editing puts emphasis on the elements thus associated rather than on the link between them. Images are associated according to their content and not upon the basis of their actual coexistence — as would be the case in the frame-sequence in which unity relies on the permanence of the camera.

In general, frame-sequences are used as a way of transition between different spaces following a character's movement. They are normally very short and depict secondary actions, presupposed in the main actions of the protagonists (waking up, driving to work, taking children to school, etc.).

2. Discursive level

Following the same conventions of the docudrama that have been considered in the previous chapter, the films of the corpus pursue a realistic representation of historical events. For this reason technical manipulation is reduced to a minimum in order to avoid the breaking of the "reality effect" that the films seek to establish.

In general the time of the narrative and the time of the story coincide in the linear depiction of events, often distinguishing days, months or years (*La historia oficial, Sofía, Contar hasta diez*). When this chronology is altered by flashbacks (as in the case of *Los chicos de la guerra*) subtitles or titles are used in order to establish the time in which the events take place and these are always followed by a return to the main narrative[1]. Flashforwards are not used, given their anticipatory character and the consequent ambiguity in relation to the main narrative[2].

Regarding space, its description is related to characters. In general the films describe the social sphere of the protagonist and of the antagonist. This relationship serves as basis for other oppositions: thematic roles, actoral functions, moral values (e.g. the school where Alicia works as opposed to her husband's office in *La historia oficial*, the south and the capital city in *Contar hasta diez*, Buenos Aires and the Falklands / Malvinas islands in *Los chicos de la guerra*).

This configuration of spaces around the sphere of action of the characters gives origin to another opposition between public and private spaces[3]. This can be articulated upon a veridictional square: private spaces are related to "secret" and "lie"

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[1] We follow here Gerard Genette's distinction between story and narrative, and also his conception of main narrative as opposed to analepsis (flashbacks) and prolepsis (flashforwards).
[2] In this sense the film *El Censor* (Calcagno 1995) which uses flashforwards in a complex temporal structure, points towards a new conception of the genre and of the series in the 90s.
[3] For the definition of public and private spaces we have considered two variables: property and accessibility.

(Alicia's false motherhood in *La historia oficial*, the secret relationship between Sofía and Pedro in *Sofía*), whereas public spaces impose the recognition of truth[4].

However, most spaces are defined at an intermediate level between the public and the private. Encounters between characters take place in semi-public spaces (restaurants, bars, coffee houses) or in semi-private spaces (shops and offices after-hours, like Alicia's brother in law's carpentry and the shop where Ana works in *La historia oficial* or the secret office under the cinema in *Los dueños del silencio*). We regard the former as semi-public because, although private property, they are open to anyone that wishes to enter. We define the latter as semi-private for whilst also being private property and open to the public, outside of office-hours entry is limited. It is thus possible to establish a distinction upon the axis public – private:

PUBLIC SPACES	PRIVATE SPACES
Plaza de Mayo	Inside of houses
Other squares and streets	Rooms
Churches, hospitals, schools	
NOT PRIVATE SPACES	NOT PUBLIC SPACES
SEMI-PUBLIC	SEMI-PRIVATE
Restaurants, coffee houses, bars	Commerce
Human Rights Organisations	(shops, carpentry, cinema)
Churches, hospitals, schools (after hours)	outside of office hours

Finally, it is also necessary to consider the opposition between open and closed spaces. Most of the actions of the plots take place in closed spaces —a characteristic shared with the family melodrama. Open spaces appear just as areas of transition between one closed space and the next. As has already been mentioned, these movements are presented through frame-sequences that function as links between scenes. The most significant exception is the space of the *Plaza de Mayo*.

The distinction between closed and open spaces added to the former one between private and public ones, allows us to distinguish four new categories:

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[4] In Greimas's theory, veridiction articulates the opposition between being and appearance in the form of a semiotic square. In this, the positive terms ("being" and "appearance") define "truth", the negative terms ("not being" something and "not appearing" as such) define "falsehood", "being something but not appearing as such" defines "secret" and finally "not being something but appearing as such" defines "lie". (See Greimas & Courtés 1982).

OPEN PUBLIC: Squares and streets; *Plaza de Mayo*
CLOSED PUBLIC: Schools, churches, hospitals
OPEN PRIVATE: gardens, *patios* (the appearance of such spaces is very limited)
CLOSED PRIVATE: Inside of houses (these constitute the main setting for most of the actions)

Conflict and political activity (demonstrations, repression) define open public spaces. They are also described as spaces of confusion and movement. On the contrary, in closed public spaces there is a strong respect for forms (rituals in church, formality at school, bureaucracy at hospitals). The relationship between open spaces and conflict on the one hand and between closed spaces and respect for norms on the other is also present regarding private spaces. This does not imply that the respect for norms might avoid conflict but instead that the irruption of violence is considered a transgression that should be avoided. This limit serves to emphasise the transgression produced by the violent irruption of the military in the private sphere.

As has already been mentioned, the spatial and temporal setting of the story is always clearly established. This is achieved through different mechanisms: recourse to intertextual references (television footage, newspapers, etc.), written texts (Alicia's hand writing the date in *La historia oficial*, subtitles in *Los chicos de la guerra, Contar hasta diez*), or through the intervention of an intradiegetic narrator who explicitly dates the events he recounts. In all these cases the purpose is to situate the story in a specific period of Argentine history, whilst at the same time providing information about the socio-political context of the time. This aspect will be further developed when analysing enunciation.

Regarding characters it is possible to distinguish two clearly delimited groups: allies of and opponents to the military regime. This opposition is not limited to the relationship between two even forces disputing a common object but, on the contrary, it is sustained by a numerical difference: the majority of the people vs. the military and a small group of civilians who obtain benefits from the support they give to the former.

The distinction between the two groups is the basis for a moral oppostition between those who pursue a personal profit, often related to a selfish economic gain and to foreign interests, and those seeking a general social goal. Additionally, the characters included in the first group have the power to carry out actions that directly or indirectly damage the characters belonging to the second group. This power relationship functions on several levels. In the first place, the first group possesses political power: the characters occupy governmental positions or are close to those who do. They also have economic power: they belong to the higher social classes as opposed to the second group, whose social position is lower or lower-middle class. Finally they possess the physical, material power to impose violence in the way of kidnapping, tortures, killings, physical aggression, etc. The power relationship can thus be synthesised as that between powerful aggressors and powerless victims. In short:

military regime's opponents		military regime's allies
majority		minority
social interest	vs.	selfishness, greediness
powerless		powerful (in political, economic and physical terms)
victims		victimizers / aggressors

The opposition between these two groups of characters is strongly demarcated in the first period. However, it becomes subtler in the following ones.

It is also important to observe that, in general, political activity is mainly carried out by male characters: Roberto in *La historia oficial*, the father and the two male brothers in *Contar hasta diez*, the musician and the boxer in *Cuarteles de invierno*, etc. Both the characters of Sofía in the film of the same title and of Ana in *La historia oficial* are persecuted by the military not for their own political participation but for that of their partners. The film *Amigomío* is a notable exception, given that in this text the relationship is inverted. The exclusion of women from the political sphere gives the action of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. an exceptional character.

3. Narrative structure

The films present a frame or general situation in which the conflict between the different projects (narrative programmes) of each of these groups is developed. The members of the first group seeking the restoration, preservation and continuity of democratic institutions, on the one hand; those that support the continuity of the military in power or conspire against the legitimate government, on the other. Each of these groups defines the objects in circulation as objects of values. In the first case these values are socially recognised as such — respect for life, physical security, identity, etc. The narrative programme of the latter also implies the circulation of certain values, or rather antivalues, such as violence, falsehood and death.

There is also a difference in relation to the Senders who detinate each narrative programme[5]. Respect for democratic institutions is prescribed by the country's Constitution, and entails an ethico-political dimension. The Constitution as Sender proposes values that are not only accepted as legitimate but also as elementary rights (life, physical security, identity). The second group instead respond to their own interests. The uneven competence of the characters (powerful vs. powerless) results in the realisation of the narrative programme of the first group, whilst the narrative programme of the other group remains at a virtual level (that is as a project that does not take place).

This context defines the general situation in which the personal conflict of the protagonists takes place. This conflict often duplicates the general scheme in the private sphere. Taking once again the film *La historia oficial* as an example, after the transformation of Alicia's character through the acquisition of knowledge — the shift from her passive identification with the dominant group to her active association with the victims — the personal conflict between her and her husband, Roberto, reproduces in the private sphere the main opposition that structures the socio-political space. In both cases — in the private and the social sphere — the narrative

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[5] The figure of the Sender is fundamental insofar as it constitutes the ground and warrant of circulating values. It therefore functions as an instance of legitimization of the axiology and actions

programme of the powerless characters remains unresolved. However, in this film, the final confrontation between Alicia and Roberto shows Alicia achieving power, as she is able to leave the house disregarding her husband's requests. The film thus suggests the possibility of resolution of conflicts — both Alicia's personal conflict but also of the broader political one — through the acquisition of knowledge. The films *Sofía* and *Contar hasta diez*, present the same shift from indifference — grounded in the lack of knowledge — to commitment in their protagonists, Pedro and Ramón respectively.

The reproduction of the socio-political situation in the familiar space appears in other films, the protagonist always being the subject who responds to a legitimate Sender in an ethico-political dimension (social conscience, common good, ideals, human rights, etc.) opposed to an anti-subject who responds to an anti-Sender (personal interest, economic profit, sadistic instincts, wickedness, etc.).

Antagonists are normally represented as violent figures, usually a father or brother who seeks to establish and maintain a certain family "order" which reproduces the "order" imposed by the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*. This is the case of Roberto in *La historia oficial*, the military father in *Los chicos de la guerra*, the torturer in *En retirada*, the father in *Contar hasta diez*. However, in some films, "fear" appears as Sender of the anti-subjects, and in some cases also of the subjects. In these cases, the antagonist is a character emotionally related to the protagonist (father, mother, friend, couple) that has or believes s/he has knowledge of the situation and, knowing the risks of political participation, wishes to protect the protagonist. This is the case of Pedro's parents in *Sofía*. This aspect could be seen as a way of explaining — if not justifying — the passive attitude of the people at the time, and shows an important difference in the next period (1986-89).

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of the characters.

4. Semic level

At this level, we shall analyse the semantic repetitions that confer homogeneity on the *énoncé*. In Greimasian semiotics these are termed *isotopies*. The determination of isotopies follows on from the analysis of the previous levels and therefore recuperates what has been developed in them. The films of the corpus can thus be read in relation to three main isotopies:

- an existential isotopy that establishes the opposition between life and death, which includes other oppositions such as peacefulness vs. violence, aggression vs. resistance, etc.

- an ethical isotopy that opposes two systems of values (axiologies): one clearly presented as correct insofar as it proposes legitimate values (such as social interest, common good, respect for life, etc.), the other presented as incorrect (personal interests, economic benefits, disdain for life, etc.). This opposition is grounded in values and anti-values recognised at an extratextual level and thus plays a fundamental role in the construction of both enunciator and enunciatee, as will be analysed in the following section.

- a political isotopy that articulates the former oppositions upon the modal value of power in the form legitimate power vs. illegitimate power.

Three secondary isotopies complement the former, namely:

- a cognitive isotopy that is articulated upon the opposition of knowledge vs. lack of knowledge

- a juridical opposition that establishes the space for sanction in the form justice vs. injustice, innocence vs. culpability

- a mnemic isotopy that sustains the opposition memory vs. Oblivion.

These secondary isotopies correspond to the different periods we established at the beginning of this work. However, the presence of any of them is not exclusive.

It is rather a matter of the predominance of one of them over the other two according to the different periods and the socio-political processess that take place in them.

II. ENUNCIATION

As has been shown in previous chapters, the link that would allow for the transition from the text to the extratext is given by the instance of enunciation. This should be considered as a simulacrum of interaction between textual subjects (enunciator and enunciatee) which can be related to the social agents involved in the process of production of the text.

If we consider enunciation in this way — rather than as the historical instance of production of an utterance — one can observe both the differences between the two types of subjects and at the same time a certain continuity between them. That is, on the side of production, the construction of a certain figure of the enunciator entails the installation of a "place" from which the text is produced. This "place" can be related to the filmmaker's position within certain objective conditions. In turn, in the instance of reception, the enunciatee constitutes the textual figure with which the spectator is called upon to identify him/herself. Thus, although the difference between both instances (textual figures – social actors) is undeniable, it is possible, as has been mentioned, to recognise some kind of continuity between them, at least as strategies or options of a filmmaker producing his/her work under certain objective conditions.

This presupposes that, faced with new historical and social conditions, one would encounter different places assigned to the subjects inside the texts. This hypothesis sustains the periodization proposed in the introduction. In this section we shall analyse the general characteristics of the enunciative apparatus of the texts of the corpus.

1. Conditions of production: the figure of the Enunciator

Insofar as the relationship between enunciator and enunciatee is conceived of as a contractual one, there cannot be a unilateral imposition of meaning on the part of the enunciator. Neither can the text relie on the unconditional collaboration of the enunciatee (as for example, Umberto Eco postulates in *Lector in fabula*). It is thus necessary to acknowledge a persuasive "doing" on the part of the enunciator corresponding to the interpretative "doing" of the enunciatee.

In *La manipulación en el relato indigenista*, Teresa Mozejko (1994) analyses in detail this persuasive "doing" in three aspects: the enunciator, the values of the text and the enunciatee. Regarding the first of these, the way a text constructs the figure of the subject producing it is a fundamental strategy. In order to be acceptable — believable, *vraisemblable*— the text needs to forge an enunciator with the necessary competence to know, speak, evaluate and, finally, manipulate.

Working with cinematographic texts, it is necessary to modify slightly the terms in which this hypothesis is posed. Whilst we shall maintain the notion of "competence to know" and "competence to evaluate", the notion of "competence to speak / to say" will be substituted by "competence to make known" — given that enunciation in cinema does not, as has been pointed out in previous chapters, relie exclusively on what is said but also on what is shown. Finally, the last of the four competences postulated by Mozejko (the "competence to manipulate") will be left aside given that, from our perspective, all of the previous ones, as well as the different strategies within the text or regarding the enunciatee, aim at the same goal. We shall therefore consider the construction of the enunciator's competence to know, to make known and to evaluate.

These three competences are also valid for intradiegetic narrators as well as extratextual cinematographic enunciators. Regarding the latter, the films analysed predominantly present an omniscient enunciator that pretends to disappear behind an

objective camera (mainly in the first period considered). Within the conventions of classic cinema, along with this objective camera there are some subjective shots from the perspective of the protagonists. These constitute anchoring points for the spectator's look and are aimed at his/her identification with the character. This aspect relates to what we have called, following François Jost, ocularization and it will be analysed in detail later on when analysing the mechanisms of identification proposed to the enunciatee.

In the second and third periods, the *documelodrama* gradually distances itself from the more conventional forms of realism and an unreal objective camera replaces the predominance of the objective shot. This change of perspective reveals the necessary mediation between the facts and their depiction and therefore entails a different conception regarding the possibility of representation — as in Solanas's, Meerapfel's or Stantic's films. Finally, in some films the spectator is addressed by way of what Cassetti calls interpellation. There is an example of this in María Elisa's looking into camera at the end of *La amiga*. Another, more direct type of interpellation appears in those films that have an intradiegetic narrator like María's monologues to camera in *El exilio de Gardel*.

This film, together with *Sur* (Solanas 1988), is a good example of the possible interventions of a cinematographic enunciator. Indeed, in these two films the enunciator appears not only through the frequent use of an unreal objective camera but also through the marks that Cassetti groups under the term "deictics": division into episodes introduced by titles or subtitles, the incorporation of musical numbers into the plot, use of iris, fades, etc. Both films also present an intradiegetic narrator — María in *Tangos* and *El Muerto* in *Sur* — as providers of information.

This strong presence of the enunciator is exceptional and is absent in most films. However, in the films of the corpus, the attention given to the spatial and temporal setting, the acknowledging of sources or the references to other texts, establish the enunciator's competence to know. These intertextual references tend to forge the figure of an enunciator endowed with a certain knowledge that he can,

therefore, transmit. The enunciator's knowledge legitimates his/her role as such and "authorises" him/her to speak — in this case to narrate through images. An important mark of the cinematographic enunciator that allows for a certain continuity between this textual figure and the social actor responsible for the production of the text are the acknowledgements at the beginning of the films. These indicate a personal, passional participation of the filmmaker in what is about to be recounted.

The second competence (the competence to make known) is instead related to the handling of language — in this case of cinematographic language — and, in the particular case of the corpus, to the conventions of realism. Among these conventions we could include the characteristics analysed in the first part of this chapter regarding cinematographic codes: the naturalistic representation of objects, the respect for perspective, the use of frontal normal shots, neutral lighting, the restriction of camera movements to functional goals, the preponderance of *découpage*, the pursuit of linearity and continuity.

Finally, in relation to the enunciator's competence to evaluate, the opposition of the two axiologies that have been pointed out in the analysis of the *énoncé* is articulated upon values circulating in the extratext. In this way, the system of values that sustains the enunciator's judgement does not appear as his individual appreciation but instead is grounded on social values with which the enunciatee should agree: respect for life, physical integrity and truth as opposed to death, torture and lies.

These characteristics of the enunciator may be extended to the intradiegetic narrator, where there is one. María's character in *El exilio de Gardel* (Solanas 1985), Mirta in *Mirta de Liniers a Estambul* (Coscia y Saura 1985) or Ernesto in *Un lugar en el mundo* (Aristarain 1991), possess the knowledge of what they narrate on the basis of having been direct witnesses of what happened to their parents or friends. It is interesting to note that, in these three cases, a certain temporal distance is necessary between what happened and the moment of its narration as opposed to the simultaneity in those films lacking an intradiegetic narrator. This temporal distance

establishes the necessary time for the characters to acquire maturity (they are all very young at the time of the dictatorship) and reassess the events in order to narrate them. Thus their competence to know but also to narrate and evaluate is increased by the time for reflection which allows a "more objective" perspective than the one the other characters might have had at the time. María makes explicit this difference with respect to her mother in several comments regarding her emotional instability after her husband's kidnapping and her exile.

A different mechanism is at work in those films in which cinematographic enunciation — and not only narration — appears as an "enunciated enunciation" through reference to the filming process in the film itself. This is the case at the beginning of *Sur* — in the voice off of a director recounting his encounter with *El Muerto* —, in *El amor es una mujer gorda* — in which the protagonists try to avoid a film being made of their story — and in *Un muro de silencio* — in which an English filmmaker goes to Argentina to make a film about the dictatorship. In these cases the filmmaker's position — that is the position of the social actors involved in the production of the film — intersects with the position of the characters, producing different effects which will be analysed in the respective chapters.

2. The énoncé: the notion of the "vraisemblable social"

In order for the contract between enunciator and enunciatee to take place the object that circulates between them, that is, the *énoncé*, must be considered of value by the latter. A fundamental characteristic that it must have — within genre conventions — is that it must appear, if not as truth, at least as *vraisemblable*[6]. That is, the text needs to refer to the institutionalised system of values that occupies the place of the real and that defines in any moment in time what is believable. Following Marc Angenot, we have referred to this system above as the "*vraisembable social*".

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[6] Given the difficulty in finding an English equivalent of this word I shall use the French term, both as a noun (as in "the social *vraisemblable*") and as an adjective (as is the case here).

The problem that appears immediately is where and how this social *vraisemblable* can be registered. Angenot, in the proposal that has been previously outlined, enumerates a series of components of what he understands as Social Discourse, but — as has been mentioned — does not suggest elements to analyse them. Thus, for example, the concept of *doxa* — closely related to that of the social *vraisemblable* — rather than contributing to the analysis reproduces instead the more traditional notion of " public opinion" and presents the same problems as the latter for its approach.

From Eliseo Verón's perspective, the social *vraisemblable* would be part of the conditions of production of a given text and it would therefore be possible to analyze it in other discourses: journalistic, political, cinematographic, etc. In turn, the production of new texts, in their recognition — inevitably related to the production of new texts — , might produce effects upon that *vraisemblable.*

In the films of our series, insofar as they intend to depict actions that took place in the extratextual space, socio-political events play a fundamental role within the conditions of production. In different ways certain political actions leave their trace in the production of the texts: the military coup of 1976, the Falklands / Malvinas War (1982), the return to democracy and the presidential elections of 1983, the derogation of the amnesty law — sanctioned by the military to avoid being taken to court — the creation of the *Comisión Nacional sobre Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP) (1983), the *Juicio a las Juntas* (1984-1985), the laws of *Punto Final* (December 1986) and *Obediencia Debida* (June 1987), the presidential *indultos* (October 1989 and December 1990).

In general, none of these events appear as such in the films, that is, represented directly, but reference to them is made through other texts. This relies mainly on television footage but also on radio or press material.

In the case of the military coup, in those films where the plot begins before 1976, the date is presented in subtitles and / or the reproduction in voice over of the first official communications of the military Junta (either the *Proclama* or the

Comunicado Número 1) through the *Cadena Nacional de Radiodifusión* (the oficial tele-communications agency). This is the case in *Sentimientos, La noche de los lápices, La deuda interna, El rigor del destino*. The *Comunicado Número 1* also appears in *Memorias y olvidos*, but in this case as an anachronistic reference whose purpose is to create confusion among the characters. (It is reproduced by one of the characters in a TV studio in order to confuse the others).

Those texts that, not including the coup in their plot, nevertheless develop actions taking place after it, clearly establish the temporal setting within the period of the dictatorship, be it through subtitles (*Los chicos de la guerra, Contar hasta diez. Los dueños del silencio, La amiga*), written texts (the hand that writes the date in *La historia oficial*), dialogues (*El exilio de Gardel, El amor es una mujer gorda*) and /or by TV footage: the military government propaganda or TV news (*Los chicos de la guerra, La historia oficial, Cuarteles de invierno, Sofía, Los dueños del silencio, La amiga*). Temporal setting is also defined through the use of iconography — military uniforms, the *Madres*'s white scarves, green Falcons — the description of spaces and characters, etc.

The Falklands / Malvinas War is the setting for *Los chicos de la guerra* and the last historical event depicted in *La deuda interna*. In both cases the temporal reference through subtitles is complemented by documentary material. *Los chicos de la guerra* presents the news from Argentine radio (announcing the Argentine occupation of the islands) and from British radio (informing of the end of the war). There are also several references to newspapers and magazines of the time. The military government's propaganda appears in a poster in the window of a bar showing the legend: *UNIDOS ES MÁS FÁCIL*. (The shot is taken from inside the bar so the poster appears reversed.)

In *La deuda interna*, Veronico's teacher follows the development of the war on TV in a bar in Humahuaca. Alongside the spatial and temporal setting indicated by a subtitle (Humahuaca, 1982) there are three TV references: to the Argentine

"recovery" of the islands, the development of the war and the sinking of the ship General Belgrano.

Those films in which the plot extends to span the change of government of 1983 manage this through the mechanisms mentioned above: TV footage of the political campaign for the elections, scenes of the collection of signatures against the amnesty law, scenes of the trials of different military figures (all of these in the film *En retirada*), radio footage of Alfonsín's assumption, also indicated by subtitle in *La amiga*.

The demands of Human Rights organisations during and after the dictatorship are another text that appears repeatedly in the films, whether in the development of the plot (*La historia oficial, Los dueños del silencio, El exilio de Gardel, La amiga, Un muro de silencio*), or reproduced in television (*En retirada*).

Finally, those films in which the plot includes the sanctioning of the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida* present these through newspapers (as in the epilogue of *Los dueños del silencio*, or in *El amor es una mujer gorda*), and radio (the beginning of *Bajo otro sol*). The reactions against the laws appear in banners in the demonstrations in *Plaza de Mayo* (in the film *La amiga*). They are also referred to in dialogues in *El amor es una mujer gorda* and in *Un muro de silencio*. This last film also includes references to the *indulto* through a newspaper the protagonist is reading.

Recourse to TV, radio or written press coverage has not only a referential function. It also serves to point out the contradictions between what is being said — especially regarding military propaganda and journalistic reports about the Junta's actions — and what is actually happening.

In the film *Cuarteles de invierno*, whilst a television report asserts "un período de paz y seguridad" the protagonists suffer the repressive actions of the local police. The same thing happens in the film *La amiga*. At the same time as the television asserts that "hoy vuelve la paz a nuestra tierra", showing a propaganda

cartoon of a little *gaucho* happily feeding a cow, a paramilitary group violently searches María's house.

In *Los chicos de la guerra*, there is a scene, in the segment set in 1979. in which Fabián's parents are watching a TV programme about the relationship between parents and children. The programme finishes with a sentence that was also part of the military government's propaganda: "¿Usted sabe con quién está su hijo y qué está haciendo ahora?". Paradoxically, their son is being detained and beaten by some military men. In this movie, in the 1982 segment, the *Comisión de padres* informs the rest of the soldiers' relatives that the government has definitely assured them that the soldiers are being fed properly in the islands. In the following scene a soldier is punished ("estaqueado") for trying to steal food. When Santiago finds this out he confronts his superior and the rest of the soldiers join him in the demand for better conditions.

In the film *En retirada*, whilst one can hear on TV songs announcing "se va a acabar, se va a acabar, esa costumbre de matar" we are shown the character of *El Oso* (Rodolfo Ranni), former parapoliceman, now unemployed, preparing a scalpel. In this first scene he is to use it on a bonsai tree. However, later on in the plot, his repressive activities reach the point of torturing his ex-girlfriend and killing a friend of hers.

The contradiction between the official discourse of the media and the events of the plot entails a modification of the forms of validation of knowledge: from authority to personal experience. This transformations assigns a fundamental role to the figure of the witness, and consequently to testimony, as will be analysed in the following chapter.

However, this modification also entails a valorisation of what is to be believed as true and what as false, of who is right and who wrong. In short, a modification of what Angenot calls the social *vraisemblable*. In a way this shift runs parallel to the modification of official discourse after 1983. Indeed, it might be the case that what can be socially believed (the *social vraisemblable*) coincides with

what one can socially / publicly say one believes. In this respect it is worth noting that in the films there appears to be no public discourse of opposition to the regime. Contestatory discourses and practices are restricted to private spheres or to clandestine activities. The only public domain of opposition appears to be the demonstrations in Plaza de Mayo.

On the one hand, the films as "documents" register this change in the social *vraisemblable*, while on the other, as "agents" they contribute to its establishment, by asking the spectator to follow the same course as the characters. The spectator, constructed by the cinematographic apparatus as a witness of the events depicted, can thus follow the same trajectory from the false version of official discourse to his own testimonial reading.

Changes in the social *vraisemblable* can also be registered in the rather more ambiguous place that Angenot terms *doxa*. Although it is quite difficult to systematise the possible variations of the *doxa*, it is interesting to confront the social attitude from 1983 onwards regarding human rights — which the number of copies sold of the *Nunca más* report might indicate[7] — with the presence during the dictatorship of a series of discourses that sought to deny kidnappings and illegal detentions. There are two versions of the latter: a causal-explicative discourse couched in ordinary language in the formulas *algo habrán hecho* or *por algo será* and a cynical-provocative one directly launched by the military, for example, the stickers with the legend *Los argentinos somos derechos y humanos*, or the reference to the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* as "locas".

Although the first one is hard to encounter in written discursive productions of the time, these formulas appear later in postdictatorship cinema as a way of describing the general attitude of the people during the period. In *La historia oficial*, in the scene of the school reunion that Alicia (Norma Aleandro) attends, one of her

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[7] Sixteen reprintings of the first edition between November 1984 and April 1992, which add up to a total of 242.000 copies. Four reprintings of the second edition between May 1994 and June 1997, which make a total of 26.000 copies. A third edition in June 1997, reprinted in November 1997, of 4000 copies each. A fourth edition in December 1998.

former classmates says "Si se los llevaron por algo habrá sido". In *La amiga*, the first dialogue between Raquel (Cipe Lincovsky) and María (Liv Ullman) as adults reveals their differences regarding official discourse. Thus, when María asks Raquel for help to find Carlos — who has been kidnapped by a paramilitary group — Raquel asks if he "estaba metido en algo" and faced with María's angry answer sustains that "alguna explicación tiene que haber".

Regarding the propaganda stickers, in the film *Made in Argentina* there is a dialogue between Mabel (Marta Bianchi), who is exiled in New York, and Yoli (Leonor Manso), her sister in law, in which the former affirms: "Y después cuando nos enteramos que aquí en los autos ponían *los argentinos somos derechos y humanos* me daba tanta vergüenza. Tenía ganas de decirles yo soy argentina sí, pero les juro que no tengo la culpa".

In these cases, rather than the contradiction between what is being said and what is being shown, what is at stake is the military government's attempt to justify its actions through the reduplication of its discourse by the people. In a sense every person repeating the cited formulas or pasting a sticker, represented someone accepting the military discourse whilst at the same reproducing it. The dialogue quoted from *Made in Argentina* is the only one in which this discursive strategy is at least hinted at. The rest of the films of the corpus simply use the formulas or the stickers to characterise the two opposite groups of characters.

3. Conditions of recognition/recollection/reading: the figure of the enunciatee

In the previous section we mentioned that the films, whilst revealing a modification of the social *vraisemblable*, also contribute to it. However, to pose this question without falling into the old manipulation theories requires a careful rethinking of the relationship between a text and the extratextual space in which it is received.

For Eliseo Verón, it would be a matter of reconstructing the grammar of recognition of a text, that is reconstructing a field of possible effects. For Verón these

effects can only be observed in the production of new texts, understanding text in its broadest sense as any signifying practice. The conditions of recognition leave marks in the texts, which can be analysed as traces of the process of production in new texts.

It is possible, however, to reconstruct certain conditions of recognition, inscribed as marks in the texts, by analysing the construction of the enunciatee (textual figure) that the spectator (empirical subject) is called upon to identify with. As with the image of the enunciator, the enunciatee is endowed with certain competences[8]. Firstly, as a subject that wants-to-know (*vouloir-savoir*). The text works upon this wanting-to-know in order to maintain it and increase it, through techniques such as suspense, ellipsis, enigmas, etc. The subject that at first wants-to-know will constitute itself as a subject of knowledge (*savoir*) through the information the text provides, both regarding the events of the plot as well as the extratextual information. In this extratextual knowledge the reference to other discourses plays a fundamental role. The text thus operates upon what is already known (the previous epistemic competence) and the new information that proposes a rereading of the former.

The second competence necessary to operate the transition from the text to the extratext is power. In this case, power is closely related to knowledge. Insofar as the enunciatee already possesses a certain power — the possibility of testifying and making demands to the authorities —, manipulation consists in making the enunciatee know (*faire-savoir*) that s/he can do something. In this respect, it is fundamental that the text establishes a homologation between text and extratext. Hence, the attention given to spatial and temporal settings. The transformations proposed should also remain open, given that, if this were not the case, there would be no possibility of action[9].

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[8] We follow once again Teresa Mozejko's theory of manipulation as expounded in Mozejko 1994.

[9] This might explain, at least as a hypothesis, the gradual discontinuity of the series after the presidential pardons of 1989 and 1990, and its revitalization after the appearance of the "*arrepentidos*" in 1995.

However, for the enunciatee to become a subject of "doing" (*sujet du faire*) in the extratextual space, it is indispensable that — besides having acquired knowledge and power — s/he want to operate the transformations proposed to her/him. In the construction of the enunciatee as a subject of will (*vouloir*) passional manipulation plays a fundamental role. As has already been pointed out, this constitutes a defining characteristic of the *documelodrama* genre. Additionally, the cinematographic apparatus is particularly suitable for the production of emotional reactions through the identification of the spectator with the characters of the plot.

The texts of the corpus differ in this respect. Some seek only a cognitive sanction and therefore the enunciatee is constructed almost exclusively upon knowledge, both as a subject of knowledge — under the figure of the witness — and as a subject of making-known (*faire-savoir*) — through his/her testimony. Other texts demand instead a pragmatic sanction, whether individual (in the form of revenge) or social (in terms of justice). Finally, another group of texts asks for a symbolic retribution in terms of memory. It can be suggested that these differences relate to the moment of production of the films and to the different socio-political conditions prevailing at the time. This aspect will be developed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 6

TESTIMONY-CINEMA (1984-86)

«¿Será verdad?... No... Digo,
porque habrá gente como usted,
que cambió de empleo,
que está en otro lugar...»
(Alicia in *La historia oficial*)

In the preceding chapter, *documelodrama* was defined according to a thematic criterion (that is, as constituted by the series of films which thematizes the dictatorship and its consequences). However, within this thematic, the films produced during the first two years of democracy also contribute to a specific topic, which could be extended to the Social Discourse of the period. This is the topic of testimony; or, to be more specific, the importance and value of testimony.

This chapter intends to survey certain *topoi* where the topic of testimony comes into view within the social circulation of discourses, in order to concentrate on the way these appear in the cinematographic production of the first two years of democratic government.

I. THE TOPIC OF TESTIMONY

Those discourses that put the topic of testimony into circulation in the social space[1] — from literature to everyday conversation, through mass media and cinema — have certain actions of the national government as part of their conditions of production. These have to do with the evaluation and sanctioning of the military government's *performance* during the previous period.

In this respect, one of the first measures of the democratic government that won the elections in October 1983 and assumed office on 10 December was the creation of the *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP).

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[1] Although we use the word testimony in the singular, with this term we intend to refer to the set of operations implied by this figure — as the term "*topica*" does for Angenot.

It was announced on the second working day after President Raul Alfonsín assumed power and was made effective two days later. Under the presidency of writer Ernesto Sábato, for nine months the CONADEP received denunciations from relatives and acquaintances of missing people. These were later published by EUDEBA in the *Nunca más* report[2]. A figure that might serve to measure the impact that this publication produced in postdictatorship Argentine society is, as mentioned in the last chapter, the number of copies of this book which were sold.

The second measure of the democratic government — announced in the same speech as the creation of CONADEP — was the derogation of the amnesty law sanctioned by the military as a way of avoiding trial. This decision included the taking to court of the members of the first three military *Juntas*, who were considered to bear the main responsibility for the repressive actions that took place during the dictatorship. Members of the *guerrilla* organisations ERP (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*) and *Montoneros* were also taken to trial. Following a long procedure to establish the organism that should carry out the trial (the military or civil courts), a reform to the Military Code of Justice established two instances for the trial: the first one within the military forces, the second one, in a civilian forum. However, the military refused to set up the first of these and the matter was forwarded to civil justice. On 22 April 1985 "oral public trial" (*juicio oral y público*) began. Eighty passes were handed out every day from 7.30 in the morning. In order to get one, people would queue from 3 am. The trial went on for almost eight months. During this time around 2.200 witnesses were heard — of which only 118 were called by the defence — in connection with 709 cases. According to attorney Julio Strassera this was just "*una muestra representativa*" of illegal repression. The final sentence was handed down on 9 December that same year. It condemned the former commandants to sentences that ranged from life imprisonment — for Videla — to verdicts of not guilty —for four of the nine military men accused. From that moment onwards, the

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[2] From these declarations, the Comission estimated the number of missing people at 8,960. This number is not — according to the Comission — to be taken as final, given that there are many cases

denunciations affecting second rank military personnel proliferated. Simultaneously, the pressure that the Armed Forces imposed on the government also increased. This ended, as will be seen in the following chapter, with the promulgation of the laws of *Punto Final* (December 1986) and *Obediencia Debida* (June 1987). However, the period reaching from Alfonsín's assumption in December 1983 to the first of these laws is characterised by the search for truth, the social condemnation of the military and the reliance on justice.

Luis Alberto Romero, in *Breve Historia Contemporánea de la Argentina*, puts it in the following terms:

> El grueso de la sociedad, que había empezado condenando a los militares por su fracaso en la guerra, se enteró de manera abrumadora de aquello que hasta entonces había preferido ignorar: las atrocidades de la represión, puestas en evidencia por un alud de denuncias judiciales, por los medios de comunicación y, sobre todo, por la Comisión Nacional para [sic] la Desaparición de Personas (CONADEP), constituida por el gobierno y presidida por el escritor Ernesto Sábato, cuyo texto, difundido masivamente con el título de *Nunca más*, resultó absolutamente incontrovertible, aun para quienes querían justificar a los militares. En la sociedad se manifestaron algunas confusiones y ambigüedades: ¿eran culpables de haber hecho la guerra de Malvinas, o simplemente de haberla perdido?; ¿eran culpables de haber torturado, o simplemente de haber torturado a inocentes? Pero la inmensa mayoría los repudió masivamente, se movilizó y exigió justicia, amplia y exhaustiva, quizás un Nuremberg. (Romero 1994: 340)

All the way through the prosecution, *Editorial Perfil* published the *Diario del Juicio*, a weekly bulletin on the development of the trial. It presented the most relevant outcomes regarding testimonies, attorneys and laywers's interventions, interviews with the former, etc. The *Diario del Juicio* was published between 27 May 1985 and the 28 January 1986. It was later reprinted as a book (*El libro del Diario del Juicio*) in 1986. Simultaneously, other media, such as newspapers, television and radio programmes, distributed information and opened spaces for debate regarding not only the trial but also what had been going on during the dictatorship.

An important factor to be considered is the activity of Human Rights organisations. These were the ones to initiate the debate regarding the form the trial should have. Alongside these organisms' demands — which now have the support

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which were not denounced.

of most of the population — certain international publications start to circulate in Argentina. Such is the case with the Amnesty International reports. These include the organisation's annual reports but also some accounts that specifically refer to Argentina: *Homicidios políticos perpetrados por gobiernos* (May 1983) — which includes a chapter entitled "Argentina: Desapariciones y ejecuciones extrajudiciales" — and *Tortura. Informe de Amnistía Internacional* (Editorial Fundamentos, Madrid 1984). The report of the *Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos* (CIDH) — an organism belonging to the Organisation of American States that made an oficial visit to the country in September 1979 — was published in Argentina in 1984. It had first been published in Washington in 1980.

During the trial, the press was freely allowed into the court. However, it was not possible to enter the room with tape-recorders or photographic cameras. For the broadcasting of the sessions, the Federal Court gave out every day transcripts of the previous day's hearings. This was intended to preserve "decorum" and thus avoid what many considered could turn into a "roman circus"[3].

However, despite these measures, the commercialisation of the trial and of testimonies could not be avoided, giving rise to what was known as "the show of horror". This was undertaken by superficial magazines (the Argentine equivalent of British tabloids) such as *Gente* and *Siete Días*. Regarding these magazines and their subject matter during and after the dictatorship, Eduardo Blaustein writes in *Decíamos ayer: La prensa argentina bajo el proceso* (1998):

> [...] ya señalamos hasta dónde los medios gráficos de la dictadura, los "serios", hacen de correa de transmisión y amplificación de los discursos monocordes y verticales de las FF.AA. Hacemos constancia de que hasta aquí no hemos hecho ninguna referencia acerca de la otra prensa, la así llamada frívola. Son siete largos años de mandar en tapa el romance de Susana Giménez y Carlos Monzón, las cirugías estéticas de las estrellas, las aventuras de Pata Villanueva, los amores de Guillermo Vilas. Parte de esa prensa presuntamente liviana, llegada la democracia, pasa a interesarse súbitamente por la política. Es la que en buena medida desata el show del horror hasta que el asunto, sencillamente, cansa. (Blaustein and Zubieta 1998: 55)

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[3] A roman circus did effectively take place some years later in "el caso María Soledad", which has been mentioned in previous chapters

Specifically regarding *Gente*, he writes:

> En lo que respecta a Samuel Gelblung[4], finalizada la dictadura militar fue uno de los más fervientes impulsores del Show del Horror, del llamado destape de la guerra sucia. La secuencia sería: bikini, represión, bikini, destape y de nuevo bikini y luego todo junto. (Blaustein and Zubieta 1998: 140)

The film *En retirada* (Desanzo 1984) describes this "show of horror". In the movie, former repressor *El Oso* (Rodolfo Ranni), now "available manpower"[5], examines on a news-stand the titles and front pages of several newspapers and magazines. The title of *Crónica* — a real newspaper — is "*Cadena perpetua a un torturador*". There is also a fictional reference to a magazine called *Porque*, the title of which is "*Intimidades de la guerra sucia*". After carefully observing these titles, *El Oso* decides to sell his own story. He goes to see a magazine editor and, at a secret meeting, the following dialogue takes place:

> OSO: Hay cosas jodidas que conozco bien. Pero no me las contó nadie. Las hice yo.
> EDITOR: ¿Está arrepentido?
> OSO: (hace gesto negativo)

El Oso's interest is exclusively commercial. He does not feel remorse nor is he at all interested in what his testimony might contribute to the finding of truth or to justice. On the contrary, he is searching for a way of getting profit out of the only thing he knows how to do and which is no longer acceptable.

However, the other press — the one Blaustein calls serious — does not participate in the show. It modifies its discourse and, where before it had reproduced the Armed Forces's discourse, it now assumes the denunciation of what had been happening during the dictatorship. It is a limited commitment, of course, insofar as there is no questioning of responsibility or of the media collaboration with the regime.

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[4] Gelblung was chief director of *Gente* at the time of the coup and at present has a TV programme paradoxically called *Memoria*.

[5] After 1983, a common way of referring to former repressors now "out of work" was as "mano de obra desocupada".

All these publications put into circulation, from different domains and in different ways, a "new version" of what had been happening in previous years. Its main consequence was the dismantling of the dictatorship's narrative premised on a war between Western, Christian values, sustaining a natural order and "international sinarchy". At an internal level the latter was represented by *guerrilla* movements, whose members had to be exterminated, as "cancerous cells", from the (social) body. Many works have been written on the metaphors used in the *Junta*'s discourse — the infected body, the national space as a battlefield for the struggle between good and evil, the value of "order" against "subversion"[6] — and we shall therefore not go any further into this. However, it is important to point out — as one of the principal changes within the social space — the discrediting of military discourse confronted by democratic institutions. In this reordering, new strength is placed on direct personal experience in which the figure of "testimony" acquires a renewed value.

II.   THE CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL *VRAISEMBLABLE*

It is in the context outlined above that certain changes in the social *vraisemblable* can be perceived. These changes refer not only to a different "version" of history but also to what is to be believed and the ways truth is established.

We have already pointed out the difficulties in analysing what Angenot calls the *doxa* and its relation to the concept of public opinion. These two notions are linked by two concepts: that of the *topica* and that of the social *vraisemblable*. The *topica* produces the "speakable". It constitutes the order of consensual veridiction which is a precondition of all discursive production (Angenot). The ordinary topic repertoire of a social group at a certain time — the commonplace topics (*topoi*) of the social *vraisemblable* in a certain cultural formation — constructs the *doxa* as that which is publicly implicit.

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[6] See Graziano 1992.

This last idea allows us to relate the *doxa* to the more common notion of "public opinion", insofar as both notions are premised on certain presuppositions of the social *vraisemblable*. Given that the notion of "public opinion" has been strongly questioned in the past few years it is necessary to specify what we understand by it. In Henry Pratt Fairchild's dictionary of sociology, public opinion is defined as "the attitude of an important portion of the population regarding a certain proposition, which is supported by a minimum of real proofs and which presupposes a certain degree of reflection, analysis and reasoning" (Fairchild 1949, my translation). Fuenzalinda Fainovich in the *Diccionario de Ciencias Sociales* published by the *Instituto de Estudios Políticos de Madrid*, reproduces Robert J. Koblitz's criticism of this notion. For this author the concept of "public opinion" is premised on three presuppositions, all equally mistaken: the presupposition of a real interest of the subjects in the problems at stake; the presupposition of their knowledge; and finally the presupposition of the subject's rationality. For Fainovich there is also a more general assumption that consists in presupposing that the subjects form their opinion in complete isolation, without considering the groups in which they are involved or the influence of mass media.

However, the main problems seem to us to lie in ascribing to public opinion the attributes of rationality, common interests or authenticity. "Public opinion" should instead be considered as a social construction, which simultaneously assumes and legitimates certain presuppositions producing not a real, effective consensus but instead an effect of consensus. This does not entail that "public opinion" really represents the opinion of the whole of society, but of "an important portion of it" as Fairchild puts it. Neither does it imply that all particular opinions have the same weight and that the globalizing effect is constituted by mere numeric accumulation. Even if this is the final effect, in the formation of public opinion, there are social actors of different weight who intervene.

The problem arises out of the fragility of this concept and its relationship with the construction of the social *vraisemblable* by the media but also by other

institutions. When a journalist, an institution or the state addresses "public opinion",

it hands out a certain knowledge in order for it to become part of the topic repertoire,

the *doxa*, of society as a whole, that is as a homogeneous totality. However, in the

same way that "public opinion" does not refer to the opinion of a particular subject,

neither does it refer to the sum of all individual opinions — given that society is not

a homogenous whole. It refers rather to the posture that is dominant — in Angenot's

terms, hegemonic. This imposition does not depend on the internal validity of its

arguments, nor on the possibility of external confirmation, but instead on the position

of the subjects that produce them. Thus, certain subjects or institutions can be

considered — by their symbolic capital, their influence or history — as "public

opinion producers". In the particular case of the Argentine dictatorship, the

imposition of official discourse is undoubtedly related to the control of state

apparatuses by the military. However, it also owes its share to the regime's

propagandists who, from different spheres (mass media, sport, education, etc.), built

the basis for its acceptance[7].

In this respect it is important to consider the open adhesion of certain civil

sectors to official discourse, through newspaper and magazine advertisements.

Regarding press coverage of the activities of the CIDH (*Comisión Interamericana de

Derechos Humanos*), Blaustein observes:

> Hacia 1979, cuando ya *Clarín* e incluso *Crónica* dedican un amplio espacio a la visita de la
> CIDH –sin que esto implique acercar un grabador a la boca de algunos de los miles de
> familiares de desaparecidos que hacen cola para dar su testimonio– *La Nación* no deja de
> dedicar su propia aunque distante cobertura del asunto y además publica el listado de
> doscientas cámaras empresariales y otras organizaciones civiles que se preparan para
> publicar la solicitada de despedida de la Comisión. El título de esa solicitada dice en cuerpo
> catástrofe "Los argentinos queremos decirle al mundo". ¿Decir qué? Que "los
> ARGENTINOS estuvimos en guerra", que la decisión de entrar en esa guerra "no fue
> privativa de las FF.AA." y que "todos, absolutamente todos los hombres de buena voluntad
> que habitan suelo argentino pedimos a las Fuerzas Armadas que entraran en guerra para
> ganar la Paz. A costa de cualquier sacrificio". Y que "en idénticas circunstancias volveríamos
> a actuar de idéntica manera."[8]. (Blaustein & Zubieta 1998: 37)

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[7] Most totalitarian regimes have been, in this sense, aware of the need and usefulness of *propaganda*.

[8] According to Blaustein "*esa es una hermosa pregunta para la historia. En idénticas circunstancias,
¿volveríamos a actuar de idéntica manera?*" (Blaustein and Zubieta 1998: 37)

Many examples could be added to the list. On 5 September, the *Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires* published an announcement in the newspaper *La Prensa*, with the title "Los argentinos somos derechos y humanos". We have already referred to the population's participation in the reproduction of this caption through the stickers distributed by different media. *Somos*'s front page on 7 September shows a cartoon of a man wearing glasses with an inquisitive look, who examines a surprised policeman under a magnifying glass. The title states: "Comisión de Derechos Humanos. ¿QUÉ BUSCAN?" On the same date, *Crónica* shows a photo of Maradona in the Argentine junior team under the title "*Más Derecho y Humano, Imposible: De la Quiaca hasta Japón... Argentina Corazón*". On 6 September *Gente* publishes a "*Carta abierta a los miembros de la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos*" and on the 14th of that month, the magazine *Precisiones*, publishes in *Clarín* an advertisement in which it proposes "*10 precisiones sobre derechos humanos y desaparecidos*"[9].

These examples show that "public opinion" accompanied when it did not openly reproduce (as in the case of the stickers) the Armed Forces's discourse. It could be argued that the acceptance and reduplication of oficial discourse by certain sectors did not represent general opinion, or that it did not show what people really thought in private but could not express in public. This is true. And it is in this respect that the concept of "public opinion" needs to be considered together with the limits outlined above: it can only account for what circulates publicly and in doing so produces a certain totalizing effect. In this sense the concept is limited by the complexity of the very processes it might help to explain.

According to Blaustein, in Argentina, public opinion has in the past been strongly linked to the press, in particular to certain newspapers' editorials. Regarding *La Nación*, founded by Bartolomé Mitre in 1870, and this newspaper's relationship to public opinion, this author affirms:

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[9] All references have been taken from facsimile reproduction in Blaustein and Zubieta 1998.

> [...] son 106 años de existencia y un universo cautivo de lectores notables: funcionarios judiciales y diplomáticos, hombres de empresa, políticos semijubilados pero no clandestinos, la gente del campo, miembros de las FF.AA., profesionales, la Curia, figuras de la cultura señera y de la que hoy denominaríamos progresía liberal. Cada diario tiene un mercado propio –sólo el de *Clarín* atraviesa transversalmente a la sociedad– y el público de *La Nación*, en un sentido un tanto exacerbado, sería el de un club selecto que se sabe dominador. Aquí interviene la larga historia de un malentendido: el concepto de opinión pública. La idea conveniente de que la mera suma de los editoriales de tres diarios y de un número aleatorio y breve de voces calificadas conforman eso que se llama opinión pública. El concepto ha languidecido (a las editoriales hoy se sumaría el ruido de las encuestas y la visión de siete economistas que piensan más o menos lo mismo) pero, para 1976, aludir a *La Nación* era decir algo bastante parecido a "opinión pública". Eso otorga un nuevo plus de responsabilidad. (Blaustein and Zubieta 1998: 36)

Blaustein's analysis is correct but, being restricted to the press, it is also too limited. Besides newspapers one should consider other media such as television, and in particular certain journalists and TV presenters who conduct current affairs programmes. These programmes do not only reveal public opinion but also construct it. Such is the case of Bernardo Neustadt in the TV programme *Tiempo Nuevo* — shared at first with Mariano Grondona — and of the latter in *Hora Clave*. Both Neustadt and Grondona, when analysing different political or economic situations, cite the figure of "ordinary people" (*el hombre común*). Neustadt does this through a character he names "*Doña Rosa*", a stereotypical housewife involved in everyday activities who nevertheless suffers the consequences of political actions and economic measures. Through this character he intends to analyse — but actually constructs — the effect of certain events upon public opinion. By contrast, Grondona uses the figure of the "people" in order to address the "*hombre común*". He gives this construct a leading role not only through examples — as Neustadt does — but also by granting it direct participation in the programme through street interviews, telephonic votes, surveys, etc. In both cases, these figures serve to deny the journalist's own intervention in the construction of public opinion[10].

It is not our intention to analyse the way in which these figures intending to reveal public opinion, do actually construct it, thus participating in the modification

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[10] Regarding *Hora Clave* and Mariano Grondona's enunciative strategies, see Guillermo Olivera 1997.

of the social *vraisemblable* to which we have referred above. Rather we want to observe how this modification can be seen in the cinema of the period. In this respect, the films considered do not only reveal these changes but also contribute to their production by constructing the figure of the spectator and assigning to it certain operations. The purpose of the chapter is thus limited. If we can not know how or through which mechanisms changes are produced upon what we consider "believable", it might at least be possible to analyse how cinema contributes to this process.

III. THE PARADOXES OF TESTIMONY AND THE CINEMATOGRAPHIC APPARATUS

From what has been seen up to this point, it could be asserted that, during this first period, the basic operation that the texts effect, both from the enunciator's perspective and for the enunciatee, is a veridictional one. That is, different discourses (and not only films) operate upon veridictory modalities (truth, falsehood, secret, lie) but also upon cognitive categories (knowledge, ignorance). This operation entails a veridictional valorisation of previous discourses (coming from the Junta, from national media as opposed to international ones, etc.) now displaced to the axis of falsehood — revealing secrets and lies. It also entails an appreciation of the ways of acquiring knowledge, from believing others (authorities, mass media) to the revalorization of direct experience, whether one's own or that of other witnesses.

Françoise Davoine and Jean Max Gaudillière, working from psychoanalysis with war traumas, postulate that the first thing that the trauma asks of the analyst — the trauma itself and not the patient — is the recognition of its existence (Davoine y Gaudilliere 1998). The trauma's claim for the recognition of its existence can also be observed in postdictatorship Argentine cinema, among other discourses, through the recourse to testimony.

However, testimony carries in itself a double, paradoxical character. Firstly, although it is possible to testify to the existence of illegal detention centres and of torture, it is not possible to do so regarding the "desaparición", given that the people who suffered it are not here to give their testimony. There are no witnesses insofar as no one can testify to their own death[11]. Secondly, the witness requires in turn someone else who can affirm the truth of what the former testifies. This is the function of the oath in the act of swearing.

It is thus no longer possible to distinguish, as Foucault did in the second lecture of *La verdad y las formas jurídicas*, the form of the proof — as exemplified by the dispute between Antiloco and Menelao — from that of testimony — as exemplified in Oedipus. Both of them rely on a superior instance that guarantees the truth of the witness' word.

In a lecture delivered in Buenos Aires in December 1995, Jacques Derrida took these paradoxes to the extreme of stating "the impossibility of testimony", insofar as "there is not, there cannot be, a witness to/for the witness"[12]. There is no witness "to/for" the witness in three senses. There is no witness to/for the witness as "in favour of" the witness. That is, no one can testify to the authenticity of the witness. But neither is there a witness "in the place of" the witness, insofar as no one can die in the place of someone else, no one can replace the witness. In this respect, testimony is always in the first person. The survivor can only testify to the situation of the "witnesses that died". Finally, "to/for the witness" can also be read as "in front of" — that is a destinatee of testimony. There is no witness of testimony insofar as the judge is not a witness, even though the witness must first act as judge in front of his/her conscience. In Derrida's analysis of Paul Celan's "Aschenglorie" (Ashes of

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[11] The different figures regarding the number of missing people might be seen as a consequence of such an impossibility.

[12] Given the impossibility of finding the original text, I have reconstructed the lecture from my memory and notes of its translation. It is therefore possible that it does not strictly coincide with what was expounded by Derrida. My gloss should thus be read as reflections inspired by such speech (Conference delivered at the *Teatro Cervantes*, Buenos Aires, December 1995).

Glory / Glorious Ashes / Glory of Ashes), he shows that what this poem displays is "the testimony of testimony's impossibility".

In that lecture, Derrida established — as did Foucault — a difference between proof and testimony. However, in this case, Derrida seems to refer to juridical proofs as evidence that, as opposed to the witness' testimony, allows the establishing of an "incontestable" truth. For Derrida, whilst proof operates upon knowledge, testimony does so upon belief. It is an act of faith, founded on the witness' signature and oath — the promise of being truthful. In this sense it possesses a performative character: "you must believe me, not for epistemic reasons, but because I say so, because I ask you to, because I commit myself to saying the truth". It can thus only be answered by another performative: "I believe you". Nevertheless, the oath is not entirely a speech act, insofar as it involves something of the body — the hand sustaining it — and also the threat of punishment in case of perjury.

In the Argentine legal system the verdict and sentence rely on the judges. The criteria for establishing the verdict can take three forms: "prueba legal o tasada" — which relies on clear evidence; "sana crítica racional o libre convicción" — which demands that the judge justify his/her conclusion in order for it to be assessed by the prosecution and the defence; and finally, "íntima convicción o libre arbitrio" — in which case the judge is not compelled to make explicit the reasons of his/her conviction. The option chosen for the members of the *Junta*'s trial was the second one. This implied that the verdict should be based on the judges's opinion after the examination of the evidence.

It is important to note that testimony refers to something of the order of belief — and not strictly of knowledge — as does the second form of verdict. The relationship of testimony to belief allows us to refer it to the constitution of the social *vraisemblable*. Belief constitutes an epistemic category, which we term "certainty". This category grounds the contract between enunciator and enunciatee. It also establishes the possibility of manipulation between them, sustaining both the

enunciator's persuasive "doing" (in the form of "making-believe") as well as the enunciatee's interpretative "doing" (as a "believing").

It could be said that in cinema this fiduciary contract between enunciator and enunciatee is necessarily established through the figure of testimony. It might be the case that the cinematographic apparatus' functioning — and not just certain films — depends on the constitution of the spectator as witness. This is basically achieved through the identification of the spectator's eye and ear with the look and the hearing that the film proposes.

The first one to assert this relationship was Christian Metz, in a fundamental article entitled "The Imaginary Signifier". We briefly commented on this article in chapter two. It is worth remembering that the importance of Metz's lacanian reading of the cinematographic apparatus lies in the spectator's perception of him/herself as pure act of perception. For Metz, the spectator perceives him/herself as an "all-perceptive subject, a great eye and ear without which the perceived would have no one to perceive it" (Metz 1974: 48). Since the act of perception is directed by the look of the camera, the eye of the spectator blends with that of the camera, his/her ear, with that of the soundtrack. Cinema's capacity to abduct the spectator's senses differentiates it from other arts. It also links it in a differential manner to testimony.

François Hartog, when analysing the procedures through which discourse — in his case, historical discourse — produces the effect of belief, suggests that this is organised around an "I have seen" which legitimates a speech under the form "I recount what I have seen". The HÍSTOR, Hartog reminds us following Benveniste, is precisely "the witness insofar as he knows, but firstly insofar as he has seen" (Benveniste 1969, quoted in Hartog 1995: 14). Hartog goes on:

> Esta preeminencia convenida para la autopsia[13] en toda forma de investigación (historié) tiene consecuencias en la historia propiamente dicha: si uno aplica con todo rigor este principio metodológico, no hay, en efecto, ninguna otra historia a no ser la contemporánea. Esta misma es la posición de Tucídides, para quien la única historia factible es la historia del presente. [...]

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[13] From the Greek *autopsia*: action of seeing through one's own eyes (footnote in the original).

Tucídides, para quien solamente la historia contemporánea era factible, paradójicamente va a ser elevado al primer rango de los historiadores de la antigüedad (en el siglo XIX), por hombres para quienes la historia no puede hacerse sino del pasado. [...] Hacer historia es ir a los archivos y desplegar, pero nada más del pasado, largas cadenas de acontecimientos.

Pero el acontecimiento así exorcizado "vuelve" hecho otro, producido por los medios masivos, y así se plantea de nuevo la cuestión de la historia contemporánea. Ahora bien, ¿"la vuelta del acontecimiento" no es también la vuelta del ojo? [...] Este acontecimiento que vuelve es puesto en escena y, al dejarse ver, construye su propio campo de visibilidad: "Nunca está sin informador-espectador ni espectador-informador; se le ve haciéndose, y este 'voyeurismo' proporciona a la actualidad, al mismo tiempo, su especificidad con relación a la historia y su aroma ya histórico"[Nora]; la autopsia si así se quiere, pero una autopsia distinta, construida. (Hartog: 18 y ss.)

The films we are analysing construct a place for "autopsy". They construct an image and a narrative for the spectator to "see through his/her own eyes". Thus, if there can be no witness for the witness, the cinematographic apparatus intends, rather than to display a witness, to turn the spectator into one. It expects to make the spectator "see" and "know" through his/her own eyes and asks of him/her to give his/her own testimony later.

It is evident that the actual acceptance of this place by the spectator will largely depend on his/her acceptance or rejection of the fiduciary contract regarding an extratextual figure: his or her trust in a certain director, scriptwriter or even in certain actors or actresses. This is in part the reason for the films' quoting other texts, either to agree or disagree with them. However, leaving aside the relationship of the spectator with the figure of a "model author", during the film's projection, the spectator's look is abducted by the film, making it simultaneously that of the enunciator and of the enunciatee.

IV. THE PASSIONAL TRAJECTORIES OF TESTIMONY

In this section we shall analyse the main "passional trajectories" presented in some films produced during the first years of democracy. Namely: *La historia oficial* (Luis Puenzo 1984), *Los chicos de la guerra* (Bebe Kamin 1984), *En retirada* (Juan Carlos Desanzo 1984), *Cuarteles de invierno* (Lautaro Murúa 1984), *Sentimientos... Mirta de Liniers a Estambul* (Jorge Coscia y Guillermo Saura), *El exilio de Gardel*

(Fernando Solanas 1985), *Contar hasta diez* (Oscar Barney Finn 1985), *Sofia* (Alejandro Doria 1986), *Los dueños del silencio* (Carlos Lemos 1986-1987), *El dueño del sol* (Rodolfo Mórtola 1986), *Los días de junio* (Alberto Fischerman 1985), *El rigor del destino* (Gerardo Vallejo 1985), *Made in Argentina* (Juan José Jusid 1986), *A dos aguas* (Carlos Olguín 1986)[14].

1. The trajectory of the witness-survivor

In the context described above, the films we have included under the title "testimony-cinema" operate basically according to a "making-known" (*faire-savoir*) that relates to the changes in the social *vraisemblable* which we have described. The films depict events taking place during the dictatorship: persecution, kidnappings, torture, death, exile. But the main narrative is articulated around a character who moves — whether intentionally or not — from ignorance to knowledge.

As mentioned in chapter three, by placing emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, it is possible to consider this as an autonomous trajectory, independent of the pragmatic actions of the plot. That is, the protagonist does not seek knowledge as a prerequisite for developing some other action — at a pragmatic level — but rather as an object in itself. It is thus possible to read the character's trajectory as a modal history that involves the transformation of the character's "being" rather than of his/her "doing".

A clear example is the character of Alicia in *La historia oficial*. In this film, Alicia wants to know not as a way of achieving the competence to realise a certain action but as a goal in itself. Alicia aspires to be "who knows" or better to belong to "those who know". This search for knowledge is equally present in the other films. The main passional trajectory of the protagonist can thus be described as the acquisition of a certain knowledge that was previously hidden as a secret or lie.

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[14] Technical information and summaries are included at the end of this work in Appendix 1.

The acquisition of knowledge, thematized in the *énoncé*, constitutes also the first operation asked of the enunciatee. As has been mentioned, in the construction of the spectator as witness identification plays an important part. This is based on primary identification with the camera — a look that simultaneously makes the spectator see and know — but also on secondary identification with the characters of the plot. In most films the protagonists are themselves involved in the search for knowledge or truth. As Catherine Grant observes regarding *Hombre mirando al sudeste* (Subiela 1986):

> [...] unlike David Foster who sees Rantés as the film's main "identification figure", I would argue that it is the psychologist who, more often than not, fills this role in the film. The fact, then, that he spends most of his time engaged in a quest for truth links Subiela's film with many of the other movies of the period whose "truth-seeking" protagonists might be seen as representing metonymically sectors of Argentine society engaged in similar quests after the Dirty War. (Grant 1997: 98-99)

In order to analyse the construction of these figures of identification, it is necessary to return to the analysis of characters developed in the previous chapter. As has been said, in the films of this first period, the distribution of characters into two antagonistic groups is strongly contrasted. This opposition is shown in the dialogues. Taking once again an example from *La historia oficial*:

> PADRE: Todo el país se fue para abajo. Solamente los hijos de puta, los ladrones, los cómplices y el mayor de mis hijos se fueron para arriba.
>
> ROBERTO: Y te vas a morir creyendo eso, ¿no viejo? ¿Nunca vas a admitir que a ustedes y a los que son como ustedes les fue para la mierda? Pero si tenés las mismas máquinas que hace cuarenta años. El mundo sigue andando y les pasa por arriba a los que se quedan mirando las nubes.
>
> ROBERTO'S BROTHER: ¿Pero no te da vergüenza seguir repitiendo ese verso tan estúpido y tan inmoral mientras la gente se muere de hambre?
>
> ROBERTO: ¿Hambre? ¿Y dónde está el hambre aquí? ¿Quién carajo tiene hambre? ¿Me querés decir? ¡Pero si en esta casa se empachan, sobre todo de palabras que no quieren decir nada! Siguen repitiendo las mismas boludeces anarquistas de toda la vida. ¡La guerra de España terminó y ustedes la perdieron! ¡Per-die-ron! ¿Y me quieren hacer sentir culpable a mí porque no soy un perdedor? ¡No! ¡No! ¡No soy un perdedor! Eso métanselo bien en la cabeza.
>
> ROBERTO'S BROTHER: ¿Y esta otra guerra? La que ganaste vos con tu bando, ¿quién la perdió? ¿Sabés quién la perdió, hermano? Los pibes, los pibes como los míos, por qué ellos van a tener que pagar los dólares que se afanaron. Y los van a tener que pagar no comiendo y no pudiendo estudiar. Porque vos no vas a pagar. ¡Qué vas a pagar vos, si vos no sos un perdedor!... (*La Historia Oficial*)

The opposition between "us" (the people, the majority of the population, the common citizen) and "them" (the military and their supporters) excludes any possible third term. The character of the "*guerrillero*" does not appear. There is only one reference to a character belonging to some armed organisation in *La historia oficial*, and he is associated with the second group, insofar as he imposes violence. The film thus reproduces what was known as the *Teoría de los dos demonios*. According to this, the population had found itself pursued by two demons of equal characteristics: state terrorism and the guerrilla. Needless to say, this excessively simplistic vision overlooks a number of factors: the uneven distribution of forces, the institutional definition of both groups, the character of the social actors involved, the degree of violence, the state's ethical responsibility, etc.

In the film, the *Teoría de los dos demonios* appears in the dialogue between Ana and Roberto. This scene comes in the middle of the film and breaks with the dominant focalization given that Alicia is not present[15]. In this encounter Roberto asks Ana if she knows who Pedro was ("Vos sabés quién era Pedro ¿no?") to which Ana replies "Sí, era igual a vos. La otra cara de la moneda; por eso él te odiaba tanto como vos a él".

Pedro is the only character in the films of the first period who is apparently involved in armed struggle. However, nothing is said of the organisation in which he participated. He is only referred to as a "subversivo" by Roberto. This absence is intended to emphasize the injustice suffered by the characters who were not at all involved in political struggle (Ana had not seen Pedro for two years). Which leads us to the question which Luis Alberto Romero directs at postdictatorship Argentine society in the paragraph which has already been quoted: were the military responsible for having tortured or only for having tortured innocent people? (Blaustein and

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[15] We say that the focalization regime is from Alicia's perspective insofar as space is dominated by this character. The camera is where she is and knows what she knows. However, there are two sequences (out of a total of 47) in which Alicia is not present: the scene in which Roberto and his associates meet for dinner at Alicia's house and Roberto's encounter with Ana in the car park. The enunciator — and also the enunciatee — thus shares in the secret from which Alicia is excluded.

Zubieta 1998: 340). It is obvious that the cinema of this period is not interested in taking on these matters. The strong polarization of characters is a way of setting a moral base with which everybody would agree[16].

In the polarization of characters the protagonist is clearly presented as "hero". In narratological parlance, this means that it appears as the subject endowed with euphoric moral connotations as opposed to the traitor. There is a series of enunciative strategies intended for identification of the spectator with this character. These concern focalization (the spectator knows the same as the character), ocularisation (subjective shots from the character's perspective) and auricularisation (sounds or words that only the character perceives).

It is worth noting that in cinema, the optical point of view varies from shot to shot. Thus, when we speak of a main ocularisation regime we are referring to shots that are particularly significant, such as the reading of texts, subjective travellings following a character's movement, detail shots of objects that are being observed, flashbacks for memories, etc. This differentiates the protagonist from other characters. Internal auricularisation, although less frequent, similarly functions as a differentiating trait.

If, as Metz suggests, primary identification relates to the camera's look, this finds a second source in the protagonist. Secondary identification of the spectator with the character plays a fundamental role in organising the system of values internal to the film upon an external ideological space.

The exception would be the film *En retirada*, where the hero is not the protagonist (paramilitary *El Oso*, Rodolfo Ranni) but his opponent (Julio De Grazia, father of the missing boy). In this film, the focalization regime is dominated by *El Oso*. The camera follows his actions and therefore the spectator knows what this character knows. However, despite the focalization regime, there is only one scene

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[16] In the case of *La historia oficial*, the choice of the subject of stolen children can also be considered part of this strategy.

of internal auricularisation from Ranni's perspective as opposed to the multiple flashbacks of the boy's kidnapping as remembered by the father.

The protagonist is the witness / survivor who has gained knowledge by closely witnessing the actions of the military upon a relative or friend. This is the case of Alicia in *La historia oficial*, of the three survivors in *Los chicos de la guerra*, of Julio in *En retirada,* Galván in *Cuarteles de invierno*, Mirta in *Sentimientos*, María and the group of exiles in *El exilio de Gardel*, Ramón in *Contar hasta diez*, Pedro in *Sofía*, of the Swedish journalist in *Los dueños del silencio*, Martín in *El dueño del sol*, of the actor returning from exile in *Los días de Junio*, of Miguelito in *El rigor del destino*, of Osvaldo and Mabel in *Made in Argentina*, and of Isabel and Rey in *A dos aguas*. All of them are witnesses whose partner, parents, children or friends have suffered represion, torture or death.

The relationship between the witness-protagonist and the character-victim of extreme violence — which leads to his/her death or his/her "desaparición" — can be observed in the following table:

FILM	FOCALISING CHARACTER	VICTIM (and relation to the protagonist)
La historia oficial	Alicia	Ana (former school mate)
Los chicos de la guerra	Falklands/Malvinas's survivors	Falklands / Malvinas's dead (fellow soldiers)
En retirada	Julio	Son
Cuarteles de invierno	Galván	Rocha and Mingo
Sentimientos	Mirta	University classmates
El exilio de Gardel	María	Father and family of other exiles
Contar hasta diez	Ramón	Pedro (brother)
Sofía	Pedro	Sofía's husband, Sofía
Los dueños del silencio	Sixten Ryden (Swedish journalist)	Swedish girl
El dueño del sol	Martín	María (younger sister)
Los días de junio	four friends	Mutual testimony of different forms of represion (external and internal exile, persecution, torture, censorship)
El rigor del destino	Miguelito	his father and his father's friends
Made in Argentina	Osvaldo and Mabel	Friends

| *A dos aguas* | Isabel and Rey | Tito Alesio (friend) |

In all these cases, the character-focalizer moves from lacking knowledge to achieving it. The spectator is asked to follow this same trajectory. This operation also appears in later films, although superposed with other procedures:

Revancha de un amigo	Ariel	Carlos Rearte (friend)
Bajo otro sol	Manuel Ojeda	"El Petizo" (friend)
La deuda interna	Veronico/Teacher	Veronico's father, Veronico
El amor es una mujer gorda	José	his girlfriend
La amiga	María and Raquel	Carlos (son and godson respectively)
Un lugar en el mundo	Mario and Ana	Ana's brother
Un muro de Silencio	Silvia and Bruno	Jaime (Silvia's husband and Bruno's student)
Amigomío	Carlos	"La negra" (Carlos's partner)

The relationship thus established between enunciator, protagonist (focalising character) and victim can be read as a variation of the narrative structure of canonical realist texts. Philip Hamon, when analysing the latter, establishes as one of its characteristics the reduplication of the enunciative situation within the *énoncé*[17]. In traditional realist narratives, the source of information is represented in the plot by a character that acts as "delegate" of the enunciator. This character's thematic role makes him the holder of a certain knowledge — thus, the figure of the doctor, the priest, the specialist in general — reproducing inside the *énoncé* the place of the enunciator (Hamon 1982). This structure can be outlined as follows:

Enunciator
(possession of knowledge)
⇓

| Character 1   ⇒
 (possession of knowledge) | Object: Knowledge   ⇒ | Character 2
 (lack of knowledge) |

⇓
Enunciatee
(lack of knowledge)

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[17] Hamon's article describes literary realist discourse as it appears in authors traditionally considered as realists such as Defoe, Flaubert, Zola, etc.

In realist narratives, the enunciator sends a certain knowledge to an enunciatee through the figure of a delegate (character 1) whose thematic role makes it a legitimate source of knowledge in the extratextual space. This delegate sends knowledge — within the énoncé — to a second character (character 2) which duplicates within the plot the place of the enunciatee.

In the case of postdictatorship Argentine cinema, within the énoncé, the character who has suffered to an extreme the action of the antagonists (torture, death or kidnapping and disappearance) occupies the place of character 1. Character 2 (the witness / survivor) obtains knowledge by witnessing this. Regarding enunciation, this character doubles the place of the enunciatee within the text. In an initial situation neither of them knows, both of them are survivors and, through film, both of them will reach a final situation of knowledge. Both of them will be witnesses. However, there would be an inversion regarding the relationship between the enunciator and character 1. If in canonical realist texts the character acts as a delegate of the enunciator, in this case it functions as sender of a mandate of "making-known" (faire-savoir).

It must be remembered that at the base of the reading contract lies the trust that what is being shown is effectively a "(re)presentation" of "real events" taking place during the dictatorship. Hamon's scheme can thus be reformulated as:

Enunciator
(destinatee of mandate)
(possession of knowledge)
⇓

Desaparecido Sender of a mandate of making-known	⇒	Object: Knowledge	⇒	Protagonist (initial situation: lack of knowledge) (final sit.: possession of knowledge)

⇓
Enunciatee
(initial situation: lack of knowledge)
(final situation: possession of knowledge)
WITNESS
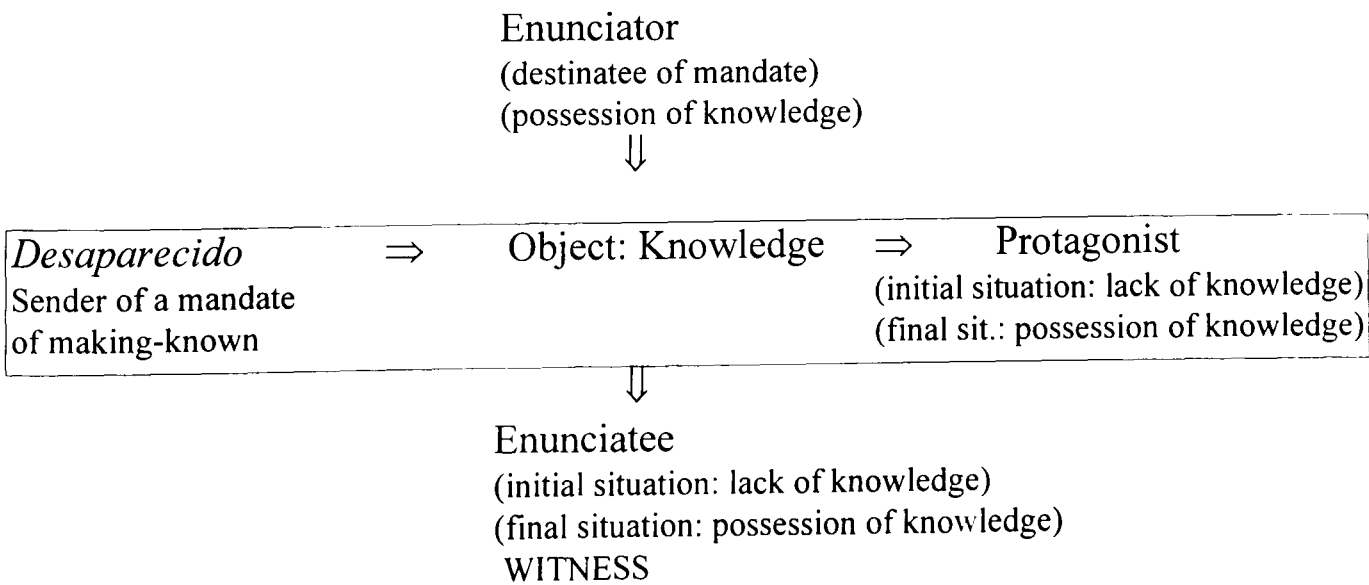
The trajectory that constitutes the spectator as witness is articulated upon a complex net of successive modal combinations that the protagonist goes through in his/her search for knowledge. The spectator is asked to follow this same trajectory through his/her identification with the character.

The main passional trajectory is thus articulated upon knowledge and could be defined as the acquisition of a knowledge that before was hidden behind a lie or a secret. This is obviously a cognitive trajectory. However, it is also related to another passional state which can be termed, following Mozejko once again, "compassion". This can be defined as the knowledge acquired by a first subject regarding the action of a second one. Subject 2 carries out certain actions, acquires certain values but, instead of being rewarded by a Justice Sender, is punished by it. Compassion refers to the subject that observes the process (subject 1) without participating in it[18].

In the case we are analysing, both the protagonist and the spectator observe the unfair sanction operated by illegitimate Senders upon character 1. This sanction not only implies a conjunction with antivalues (prison, kidnapping, death) but also the deprivation of all values (including life and identity).

In the same way that the protagonist fulfils the role of witness / survivor — having acquired knowledge after observing the actions of the antagonists upon character 1 without suffering them — the spectator is called to occupy the place of witness, feel compassion for the victim and testify in his/her favour, not only during the projection of the film but also once this is finished.

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[18] These developments are based on classnotes from *Semiótica Literaria I, Escuela de Letras, U.N.C.* Also in Mozejko 1994.

2. The trajectories of exile

Passional trajectories regarding exile in such films as *Los días de junio* (Alberto Fischerman 1985), *El exilio de Gardel (Tangos)* (Fernando Solanas 1985), *Sentimientos... Mirta de Liniers a Estambul* (Jorge Coscia y Guillermo Saura 1985), *A dos aguas* (Carlos Olguín 1986), *Made in Argentina* (Juan José Jusid 1986), share many of the characteristics regarding testimony outlined above. As exiles the characters are in a position to give their testimony of what was happening in the country before they left given that they are also survivors. They are also in a position to testify about exile — whether internal or external — and in some cases also about the difficulties of returning.

However, the main difference between the two passional trajectories involved does not lie in these actions — which are incorporated following the same logic of testimony — but in the search for a different knowledge that refers to the character's identity. Mirta in *Sentimientos*, María in *Tangos*, the two characters returning from different exiles in *A dos aguas*, Osvaldo in *Made in Argentina*, the actor in *Los días de junio*, are all of them searching for some knowledge regarding themselves and their "place in the world".

In the first three cases the protagonists are also intradiegetic narrators. This allows the film to explore their lack and search for an "inner truth" through a voice over or in the character's speech to camera. This knowledge is complementary to that acquired by them as witnesses of what happened to others. They are thus witnesses both of what happened to others and at the same time of their own situation.

In the first scene of *Sentimientos* — before the titles — Mirta asks herself when the "journey" started ("me pregunto cuándo empezó el viaje"). When asked by her boyfriend about which journey, she replies: "Siento que ha sido un largo viaje, de Liniers... de Liniers a Estambul". At the end of *El exilio de Gardel*, María summarises by way of epilogue:

Han pasado nueve años
de aquellos contratiempos.
Pero mucho más pasó
en la vida que en el tiempo.
Casi todos regresaron
con sus tangos de papel,
y a su tierra se llevaron
el exilio como piel.
Yo no sé bien lo que haré.
Voy y vengo y aquí estoy.
Algún día partiré
cuando sepa bien quién soy.
Pero algo yo aprendí,
viviendo exilios y daños:
¡Cuánto queda por vivir!
¡No hay mal que dure diez años!

In the film *A dos aguas*, the relationship of the characters to exile is rather more complex. The character of Rey leaves Argentina in 1968 and returns in 1976, a few days after the military coup. The film does not comment on the reasons for this exile but explains Rey's return as a consequence of his father's death. There is a large temporal ellipsis until "las primeras navidades democráticas" when he meets Isabel. Isabel is returning from her own exile after the dictatorship. The time of the ellipsis, covering the seven years of military government, in a way signals Rey's inner exile since his return to Argentina until 1983. The final monologue deals with Rey's coming to terms with his past and with his father's image: "Papá, la vida es algo más que un rompecabezas. Pero voy a lograr algo tan próximo a mi verdad que estoy seguro va a tranquilizarnos a los dos, y nos va a hacer más feliz la vida y la muerte".

Thus, the search for knowledge appears in the three monologues as an end but also as a new beginning: Mirta's "viaje", María's "aprendizaje", Rey's "verdad". In the other films, insofar as the protagonists are not narrators, the search for this personal knowledge appears in the dialogues.

In *Made in Argentina*, Osvaldo and Mabel have divergent opinions on exile. When buying souvenirs to take as presents on their trip to Argentina, a Colombian salesman asks them if they are going back. Osvaldo gives a positive answer whilst

simultaneously Mabel replies the opposite. Once out in the street the following dialogue takes place:

> MABEL: ¿Por qué dijiste que sí?
> OSVALDO: Porque es cierto. Volvemos.
> MABEL: Él te preguntó otra cosa.
> OSVALDO: Bueno, no sé qué me preguntó. No me iba a poner a explicarle...
> MABEL: Es increíble, Osvaldo, pero desde que supiste que podés volver, sos otro.
> OSVALDO: No, no soy otro. Soy yo. Con un montón de cosas de vuelta. Dentro de pocas horas voy a volver a mi país...
> MABEL: ¡Tu país! ¡El lugar del que te echaron como un perro sarnoso!
> OSVALDO: Esos fueron un montón de facinerosos. No fue el país. ¡Qué cosa bárbara, ese veneno que tenés!
> MABEL: Ese veneno me lo hicieron tragar de un saque sin comerla ni beberla. Lo tomamos juntos.

In a later scene, already in Argentina, Osvaldo confesses to Cacho: "En todo Nueva York, yo no me puedo tomar un café con nadie. Eso es el exilio".

In this case too what is at stake is the acquisition of a certain knowledge. However, this consists in the confrontation of the character's expectations with the real conditions of going back: Osvaldo will not be able to return to Argentina in the same way that the actor of *Los días de junio* must face the frustration of going back to a devastated country.

These films also make a distinction between those characters who decided to leave the country and those who stayed. These different options modify slightly the manichean opposition between characters. However, in this first period, there is no conflict between the two options. The final dedicatory inscription of *Made in Argentina* ("A todos los amigos que no pueden volver. A todos los amigos que fantasean con irse. A todos") displays the intention of not making a moral judgement upon these options. The same thing happens in the penultimate musical theme of *El exilio de Gardel*. This song also incorporates a third option: that of internal exile which was mentioned above:

> Para vos que te quedaste,
> para Gaby, Tito y Diego,
> para vos que te exiliaste
> en tu barrio o tu ropero
> para vos que te aguantaste

discursear a los ladrillos;
para vos que soportaste
bandas, canas y rastrillos.
Para vos que te llevaron
por el pelo o por las dudas;
para vos que te humillaron
y te largaron desnuda.
Para todos va mi canto;
va buscando su raíz.
Somos hijos del exilio,
dentro y fuera del país.

The alternatives of leaving the country or staying do not represent a conflict insofar as the main figure in the films is that of testimony and this can also be made from exile. Conflict will appear in later cinema, as for example in the film *La amiga* (Meerapfel 1989). The different options will also reappear alongside other problematics — regarding identity and memory for the new generations — in *Amigomío* (Meerapfel 1992) and *Un lugar en el mundo* (Aristarain 1992).

V.   CINEMA AS PLACE FOR TESTIMONY

The configuration of the spectator as witness is, as analysed above, a characteristic of a particular genre in a given socio-political moment of Argentine history. However, it is also part of the possibilities of cinema and might serve to define a certain general functioning of this medium.

Thus, even if the figure of testimony entails several contradictions, cinematographic fiction grants the possibility not of presenting a witness — as a certain realism or a naive reading of the medium would pretend — but instead of constructing one. It is obvious that in this displacement the truth-value of testimony is necessarily relative. This limit has given rise to certain criticisms that would see in audiovisual media the construction of a "reality" in some way in contradiction with a "real". However, this possibility for forgery is always present as a consequence of the impossibility of a witness for the witness.

Cinema possesses the capacity to constitute the spectator as HISTOR, the one who knows because he has seen. This is possible given two characteristics of the

medium. In the first place, the conditions of identification of the spectator with the camera allow the apparatus to appropriate the spectator's look and hearing. The second characteristic has to do with time. Insofar as cinema can only express events taking place in the present, everything that is shown appears as "happening here and now", even if these actions refer to the past.

Thus, the principal passional trajectory proposed in the films considered in this chapter reveals a general function of cinema regarding its relationship with testimony. This relationship sustains in many ways the discussion around realism considered in the first chapter. In the following period, given the modification of the conditions of production — mainly in politico-institutional terms — the figure of testimony will be displaced by new topics.

CHAPTER 7

DENUNCIATION-CINEMA (1986-89)

«Mientras el Petizo se pudre
en un cajón los que lo mataron
andan por ahí, tranquilos».
(Manuel Ojeda in *Bajo otro sol*)

In the same way that a particular topic can be established as dominant during the first two years of democracy, it is also possible to read a common isotopy traversing the group of texts produced in the following years. This period comprehends the last two and a half years of President Raul Alfonsín's government until the assumption of his successor Carlos Menem. The main isotopy traversing the films produced at this time within the thematic we are considering is structured around the figure of "denunciation". Denunciation as a *topica* allows for the grouping of certain discourses circulating at a social level, while, at the same time, acting as an organising principle within postdictatorship Argentine cinema.

The present chapter has a similar structure to the last: we shall survey governmental actions regarding human rights policies in order to observe certain effects as a response to these actions. These, as has been said, will necessarily be in the form of new discursive productions, out of which we shall concentrate on films.

I.   THE NEED FOR DENUNCIATION.

After the democratic fervour of Alfonsín's first two years of government, crisis was to follow. The crisis affected several areas and can be analysed in economic, institutional, political and social terms. One explanation would attribute this crisis to the conflictive relations between Alfonsín's government and the most influential groups with political power — the military, the unions and the church — due to the trials, the attempt at democratising unions and the divorce law, respectively. Another possible explanation is the lack of support from economic power groups. An

excessive confidence in democracy as a way of solving every difficulty could also account for the underestimation of real problems. This confidence had grounded the political campaign that led Alfonsín to the presidency. During the campaign Alfonsín would end every speech with the Preamble to the National Constitution and affirm that "con la democracia no sólo se vota, con la democracia se come, se cura y se educa". However, after two years in power, underlying problems reappeared, suggesting that something more than just institutional transition was necessary.

Regarding the military question, at the time of the verdict in the *Junta*'s trial in December 1985, there were still many cases pending against intermediate ranks. The proliferation and extension of the trials, far beyond the expectations both of the national government and of the military, produced commotion within the latter. In this context and under pressure from the Armed Forces, the Congress approved the law of *Punto Final* in December 1986. This established a date for the beginning of legal actions after which causes would lapse. However, the final effect of this law was the opposite of what had been expected given that its main consequence was the acceleration of existing legal actions and the multiplication of summonses and lawsuits.

Growing tension in the barracks ended in the Easter Week uprisings of April 1987. In these two different military units, one in Córdoba and another in *Campo de Mayo*, revolted against the legitimate military authorities. Faced with what appeared to be the return to old times, people took to the streets in defence of constitutional order. The end of the crisis was marked by Alfonsín's famous speech on Easter Sunday: "La casa está en orden y no hay sangre en la Argentina". A few months later a second disposition, the law of *Obediencia Debida* (June 1987), added new limits to imputable cases. Several human rights's organisations demonstrated against both laws, which were interpreted as a betrayal of people's trust in Alfonsín. Much of the population joined in these denunciations, through marches and campaigns against the laws.

Raul Alfonsín repeatedly asserted that the law of *Obediencia Debida* was included as part of his governmental policies from the very beginning and therefore was not the result of negotiation with the insubordinate military. In statements following the events, Alfonsín pointed out that the main objective of the trials was never to obtain retribution for the totality of crimes perpetrated but instead to prevent the repetition of these actions in the future. This depended primarily on the possibility of continuity of the democratic system. In order to achieve this goal, three limits should — according to Alfonsín — be established. The first regarded the social upheaval that the investigation of crimes might have given rise to. The foundation of CONADEP was in part intended to determine this limit. The second was a temporal limit, which was established by the law of *Punto Final*. And finally, there should also be a limit on the responsibility assigned to each person participating in the different crimes, which the law of *Obediencia Debida* intended to determine (Alfonsín 1992: 107-108).

Whilst it is true that these limitations had been suggested in the speech announcing the derogation of the amnesty law, it is also true that the laws represented a certain retreat by a government that had based its campaign on the defence of the Constitution and of human rights. This reading of the laws was very much influenced, as Luis Alberto Romero points out, by the very insubordinate militaries — who affirmed their "triumph" — and also by the parties from the opposition. For Romero the events of Easter Week showed "la evidencia del fin de la ilusión: la civilidad era incapaz de doblegar a los militares" (Romero 1997: 345).

In 1988 there were two new rebellions: one in *Monte Caseros*, in the Province of Corrientes and another one in *Villa Martelli*, in Buenos Aires. These had as their objective not the achievement of power — as opposed to former attempted coups — but specific demands, such as the vindication of the Armed Forces and of its actions during the dictatorship or economic claims. However, they did expose the government's weakness in dealing with the military question. Romero sees the

difficult position that the national government was forced into as a result of these crises:

> Desde el punto de vista del gobierno, quedaba claro que no acertaba a conformar ni a la civilidad –que lo encontraba claudicante– ni a los oficiales, cuyos reclamos pasaban de la "amplia amnistía" al indulto de los condenados y la reivindicación de la lucha contra la subversión. En definitiva, había fracasado el proyecto de reconciliar a la sociedad con las Fuerzas Armadas. (Romero 1997: 364)

A failed assault on the military quarters of *La Tablada* in January 1989 should be added to the analysis of the institutional crisis. This was attempted by a small and ill-equipped group of left-wing militants and was quickly quashed by the military forces.

The difficulties of solving the military question exposed the weakening of what Romero calls the pact between Alfonsín and "civility" ("*la civilidad*") in which the government's main strength lay. However, it was due to the successive economic crises and the lack of success of the different plans implemented that this pact was definitively broken. Between December 1983 and February 1989, inflation, although high, was somehow controlled. This meant that it was kept within certain limits that allowed people to accommodate to the new costs of living. In May 1989, however, inflation reached 78.5% per month and the inflationary process was to accelerate in the following months: 114.5% in June, 196.6% in July. Hyperinflation was followed by social crisis with assaults on and pillaging of supermarkets which were repressed by the police and security forces.

In this conflictive context, Alfonsín decided to bring forward the presidential elections and finally handed power to the newly elected president, Carlos Saúl Menem, on 8 July of that same year. It was the first time in the history of Argentina that a constitutional government was democratically succeeded by the party of the opposition.

II.   THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE

The move from the predominance of testimony to that of denunciation should be considered in parallel with certain changes at a social level. These changes refer to

the events described in the previous section but also to a certain structuration of the discursive field in which the national government also intervenes. Historian Luis Alberto Romero, when analysing the relationship between Alfonsín's government and the civil population, significantly speaks of a modification in what he terms "los grandes temas". According to Romero the fight against authoritarianism and the defence of democracy predominated during the first two years, after which these themes were replaced by the importance of participation and modernisation.

> El pacto entre Alfonsín y la civilidad se selló en la notable campaña electoral de 1983, en sus grandes actos masivos y en la fe común en la democracia como panacea. Consciente de que allí residía su gran capital político, Alfonsín siguió utilizando esa movilización, convocándola en ocasiones a Plaza de Mayo o al referéndum para resolver situaciones difíciles, como la resistencia del Senado a aprobar el tratado por el Beagle, o el cúmulo de amenazas que se cernía en las vísperas del Plan Austral. Pero, sobre todo, trabajó intensamente en su educación, en la constitución de la civilidad como actor político maduro y consciente. [...] Alfonsín le propuso los grandes temas y las grandes metas. La lucha contra el autoritarismo y por la democratización cubrió la primera fase de su gobierno, pero desde el Plan Austral, y sobre todo luego del triunfo electoral de noviembre de 1985, su discurso se orientó hacia los temas del pacto democrático, la participación y la concertación, y hacia la nueva meta de la modernización... [Romero 1997: 358]

The change of subjects and goals can be read as a change in the *topica* that structures a particular thematic within social discourse. Regarding human rights policies, a certain disaffection with the institutions that should guarantee justice called for the active involvement of the population in demanding it. In this sense there is still a certain trust in the action of the judicial power whilst the legislative and the executive power are seen as having betrayed the population's expectations.

In the films of the corpus this shift can be perceived in the construction of the enunciatee not only as a subject of knowledge (as witness) but also as a subject of "doing". If during the previous period the actions proposed to the enunciatee were mainly cognitive operations, during this period there are certain transformations that the enunciatee is asked to carry out at an extratextual level after the projection of the film. The veridictional operation (the truth of what had happened) and the individual sanctioning of the characters's being (guilty vs. innocents) proposed during the previous period are now replaced by the need for a pragmatic sanction regarding the character's action (the punishment of those who are guilty).

In previous chapters we have drawn attention to the importance of the configuration of competence in the construction of the enunciatee. The assignation of competence constitutes the enunciatee firstly as a subject of wanting to know (*vouloir-savoir*), secondly as a subject of knowledge (*savoir*) — through the information the text gives out —, thirdly as a subject of power / being able to (*pouvoir*) — by making known the possibility of action which the enunciatee has —, and finally as a subject of will / wanting-to (*vouloir*). Regarding the latter, passional manipulation is fundamental. This hypothesis, elaborated by Teresa Mozejko for the analysis of indigenist narratives, can be extrapolated to any discourse that seeks a modification of the social space, that is, to any denunciatory discourse.

The dictionary of the *Real Academia Española* establishes the "denuncia" as: "noticia que de palabra o por escrito se da a la autoridad competente de haberse cometido algún delito o falta" (*Diccionario de la Lengua Española*). If we are to follow this definition closely the enunciatee of a denunciatory discourse must already have a certain competence for it to be effective. In this case the enunciatee has the power to demand a sanction for the crimes committed.

In this respect the films of the corpus operate upon knowledge in two senses. On the one hand, they transmit a specific knowledge regarding the unfairness of the situation — victims without retribution, victimisers without punishment. On the other, the texts also make the enunciatee know that s/he possesses the power to reverse this situation through popular participation. In the films, scenes of demonstrations in the *Plaza de Mayo* are recurrent.

In some films — as for example *Memorias y olvidos* or *Revancha de un amigo* — the enunciatee's action is limited to his/her participation in demonstrating against authoritarianism and in favour of democracy. Other films — such as *Los dueños del silencio* or *Bajo otro sol* — seek a strong passional reaction in the form of anger or indignation in order to move the spectator to transfer the protagonist's claims for justice from inside the films to the extratextual space.

In short: after the promulgation of the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida* the films about the dictatorship do not only seek to transmit a certain knowledge but also require the participation of the spectator in the demand for justice. In this respect, as with indigenist narratives, the enunciator's "doing" is not only a way of making known but also a denunciation which, as such, is directed towards an enunciatee who is considered competent to produce a change, a reparation (Mozejko 1997: 182). Thus, the basic operation postulated in these texts is a pragmatic sanction, that is, an epistemic judgement upon the subject's action — rather than being — regarding the axiological system implicit or explicit in the texts (Greimas & Courtés 1982: 346). The films analysed in this period denounce the lack of sanction on the part of political power and seek the enunciatee's participation in the conflict in different ways.

III.   THE FORMS OF DENUNCIATION

1. Argentine cinema before the law

Cinema as institution is not indifferent to the crises that have been described above. Economic crisis has as a consequence a decrease in the production of films and a transformation in the main system of production, from state financial assistance to co-productions with foreign capital. Another financial strategy is the foundation of cooperatives. These sometimes enter into coproduction agreements generating a mixed system. These changes, alongside the new politico-institutional situation regarding the Armed Forces, can be seen as a possible cause for the reduction of films produced in the genre, since it is no longer possible to identify it as the main tendency within national film production.

However, although few, there are certain texts produced in the genre and the thematic we are analysing. Some of these are productions begun in previous years that are finished in 1987, such as *Memorias y olvidos* (Simón Feldman 1986-87) and *Los dueños del silencio* (Carlos Lemos 1986-87). Given this characteristic it is

particularly interesting to analyse in these films the modifications imposed by the new conditions of production.

Among the films produced during the period that explicitly thematize the dictatorship we shall consider: *Bajo otro sol* (Francisco DIntino 1987), *El amor es una mujer gorda* (Alejandro Agresti 1987), *La amiga* (Jeanine Meerapfel 1988) and *Sur* (Fernando Solanas 1988). These are produced after the law of *Punto Final* and in the last two cases, also after *Obediencia Debida*. For this reason, even if still included within the *documelodrama* genre, they present a different perspective from the previous period. We could briefly point out its common characteristics as:

1.   A clear spatial and temporal setting is still an important feature. However, in this case most of the action takes place during democracy and not during the dictatorship. The temporal frame extends to include the promulgation of the laws. These appear in references to other texts: temporal references regarding documentary material in *Memorias y olvidos*, written press in the epilogue of *Los dueños del silencio*, radio news-report at the beginning of *Bajo otro sol*, political signs in *Sur*, written press and dialogues in *El amor es una mujer gorda*, demonstrations in *Plaza de Mayo* in the film *La amiga*.

2.   Characters appear once again divided into two groups, which can be described as victims and victimisers. However, in this case, the first term refers to family and friends of the "desaparecido" who have been deprived of their loved ones and not to the direct victims of repression, deprived of freedom, life or identity, as in the previous period. This transformation can be seen in relation to the leading role that Human Rights organisations, which group together family and friends of missing people, acquire in the demonstrations against the laws. As opposed to the previous period, in which the protagonists were characters who did not suffer directly the actions of the military, in this case the films stress the pain and grief of characters closely related to the material victim — mothers, friends, partners, etc. Through the identification

of the spectator with these characters the films intend the spectator to adhere to their claims.

New political conditions complicate the Manichean opposition between characters. The films look at the different options presented to the population in the democratic period: political activism or resignation, the search for personal revenge or the respect for institutions, having left or stayed in the country.

Within these options the protagonist's choice is not established as the only possible one and therefore alternative figures for the spectator to identify with are greater in number than in the previous period.

3.   The films still recount the protagonist's passional trajectory in order for the spectator to identify with it. However, in this case, it is no longer presented as a search for knowledge but instead as a call to action. The protagonist appears involved in a just project that s/he cannot realise alone and for which s/he therefore needs the help of others — including the enunciatee — to be able to achieve his/her goals. The films stress the need for participation and collaboration in a common project. Individual actions end in failure. Justice itself is a common goal — a social form of retribution — as opposed to revenge, which represents an individual compensation.

2. The lawful spectator

The films begun in the previous period but finished after 1986 are particularly interesting for the analysis of the shift in emphasis from the topic of testimony to that of denunciation. This is the case of *Memorias y olvidos* and of *Los dueños del silencio*. These films could be considered as hinges that, whilst responding to the themes of the first period, must adapt their plots to the new conditions imposed by later events. However this reworking leaves its traces in the texts. In the two cases mentioned above, the marks of the new political situation appear in the form of

epilogues added to the plots at a later stage. If one conceives — as we do — a cinematographic text as a totality, the incorporation of these final sequences is not incidental. On the contrary, in neither of the two films can the epilogue be considered as an appendage, as a sequence among others, given that its incorporation modifies the reading of the text as a whole.

Within the preoccupations of the first period regarding knowledge, in *Memorias y Olvidos* two journalists — of different gender and opposed political parties — are asked to make a documentary in response to the question "¿qué nos pasó a los argentinos?". For the elaboration of this documentary, the producer provides them with a documentary corpus ranging from 1930 to the present of the enunciation. Out of this corpus each of the journalists selects the events s/he is interested in recuperating for history. There is also a Swiss historian who, with the support of a computer, ends up producing a "total reading" in a kind of what we today know as hypertext. The computer's organisation of events, following a thematic criterion, allows each person to build their own interpretation of history.

At the meeting in which each of these characters exhibits the results of their work, a violent discussion takes place. Political differences between all of those present — peronists, radicals, liberals and left-wing militants (a representative panorama of the principal political tendencies during the first years of democracy in Argentina) — turn out to be irreconcilable. The fight ends only when an assistant reproduces — as if it were a live transmission — the first notification of the *Junta*. Believing there is a new coup, the characters stop fighting and concentrate on the television screen. The reappearance of a common enemy — represented by the military — serves as a way of surmounting political differences and peace can be re-established at the television set.

Following this scene, one of the employees at the set asks the Swiss expert to exhibit once more the answer that a young woman gave the interviewer when asked for a message to her fellow citizens:

INTERVIEWER: Si vos, a través nuestro, pudieras dirigirte a tus compatriotas de todo el país, ¿qué se te ocurre?, ¿qué les dirías?

YOUNG WOMEN: Que participen, que no tengan miedo, que participen.

This answer is reproduced in several squares filling the whole of the screen. This could be considered the final scene of the film. However, after it, there is an epilogue regarding the military crisis of Easter Week[1]. In this a title explains:

> Esta película se terminó antes de los acontecimientos de Semana Santa. En esas jornadas el pueblo argentino no tuvo miedo y participó.

After this notice, the film introduces several pictures in black and white of the demonstrations in *Plaza de Mayo* during the military crisis. The last photograph shows a little girl holding a poster bigger than her in which, in infantile handwriting, one can read:

> Quiero la paz. Quiero la democracia de mi país. Quiero la libertad para poder crecer y ser libre. No me falle, Sr. Presidente.

This text can be read in the context of what has been alleged above regarding the need for participation in the questioning of those institutions considered legitimate, in this case the executive power.

On the one hand, the incorporation of this sequence, reinforces the idea developed in the plot; on the other, it also transforms it. Indeed, if the message to be obtained from the film was the need for people's engagement in the resolution of conflicts, the events of Easter Week showed, on the one hand, that such commitment on the people's part already existed; on the other, they proved that popular participation was not enough to confront military power. As has been mentioned above, despite demonstrations across the country, the military uprising had as its consequence the recognition of the power which the military still had, to the point of being able to impose their conditions upon justice. Moreover, the incorporation of this epilogue could be seen as an attempt to confirm at a social level the Manichean

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[1] As opposed to the films of the previous period, in which fear appeared as a justification for the people's passive attitude, in this case, the films make a clear point against it. See for example, the final conversation between María and Raquel in the film *La amiga* (RAQUEL: "Yo tengo miedo de que todo vuelva a repetirse", MARÍA: "Y a mí me da miedo la gente que cede, poco a poco, y que un día se

construction of the ideological conflict depicted in the plot. This confirmation serves as a strategy towards the constitution of the *vraisemblable* — constructing the "real" it refers to — as well as a way of legitimating the enunciator's knowledge.

Thus, if the preoccupation regarding the search for knowledge relates this film to those produced in the previous period, the direct appeal to the spectator to realise an extratextual action allows us to assign the film to this second moment. In these later films, the enunciatee constructed by the texts is not only a subject of knowledge but also a subject endowed with the power to carry out transformations at an extratextual level.

The film *Los dueños del silencio* can also be seen as hinge between the two periods. On the one hand, the search for truth — mostly in the form of a police investigation — relates this film to the preoccupations of the first period. On the other hand, the epilogue constructs a passional trajectory for the enunciatee in order to move the spectator to participate in the character's demand for justice.

The plot develops an investigation carried out by a Swedish journalist, Sixten Ryden. Ryden goes to Argentina disguised as a businessman with the real objective of finding out what has happened to the young daughter of a Swedish citizen living there. Although not explicit in the plot, the technical information of the film both in the catalogue of the *Cinemateca Nacional* and of the *Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía*, refers the case to the true story of Dagmar Hagelin, a Swedish citizen who was kidnapped by the military in 1977. Confirming this connection, the actor who embodies the individual responsible for the kidnapping and disappearance of the girl strongly resembles former Lieutenant (*Teniente de Navío*) Alfredo Astiz.

Coincidences finish there. In the plot of the film Sixten Ryden manages, through the Swedish Embassy, to meet a human rights organisation which is trying to get an important document out of the country to be published abroad. This is a list of people who remain at illegal detention centres. When the military discover

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despertarán con un arma apuntando a su cabeza").

Ryden's real objectives, the journalist is pursued, captured and taken to a detention centre. Here, he is obliged to observe how a young woman, who has acted as his contact, is tortured. Not being able to bear it he gives away the names of the people in the organisation and the place where he has hidden the document, after which he is forced to leave the country.

The narrative ends with a close-up shot of Ryden looking through the plane's window superposed with titles of Swedish newspapers, translated into Spanish in subtitles: "Sixten Ryden expulsado" and "Yo vendí mi alma en el infierno". However, this final scene that ends the plot is followed by an epilogue which presents — as in the previous case — references to extratextual events; in this case through subtitles, TV footage and newspaper titles. Namely:

- "Diciembre 1983": TV footage of *Plaza de Mayo* during Alfonsín's assumption of power. Superimposed on to these images we see titles from Swedish newspapers with the Spanish translation in subtitles: "Se retira la Junta", "Retorna la democracia a Argentina".

- "Abril 1985": Scenes of a demonstration in *Plaza de Mayo*. The young girl's mother forms part of the group of *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. Main title of *La Prensa* newspaper: "Iníciase el juicio a excomandantes".

- "Diciembre 1985": Demonstration of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Main title of Clarín newspaper: "Dictan sentencia a excomandantes". In this brief sequence, Sixten Ryden is shown returning to Argentina, walking over to the demonstration where he sees the girl's mother, and finally entering a projection cabin. From here he is able to observe TV footage of the *Juicio a los excomandantes*'s verdict.

- "Diciembre 1986": Main title of *La Razón* newspaper: "Agregarían otras medidas al Punto Final". New scene of *Plaza de Mayo*, and close-up shot of the mother demonstrating. The image freezes upon this close-up.

This succession of documentary material ends in a final subtitle. "Febrero 1987", in which we are shown the torturer enjoying a horse ride with his family. The image

freezes once again upon a close-up shot of his face and is confronted in half screen with that of the mother demonstrating. The camera moves once again towards the first scene in *Plaza de Mayo* and freezes once more upon the mother's face.

The film is eloquent: the enunciator attempts to disappear behind national and international newspapers and limits his intervention to confronting the final situation of both characters. The reconstruction of the relationship between both scenes and the adoption of an ethical position as its consequence is left to the spectator. It is clear that this is also a strategy, and a particularly efficient one as it appears as a conclusion of the enunciatee rather than as an assertion of the enunciator. The text thus constructs the opposition between the final situation of both characters in such a way that the spectator can feel nothing but indignation.

In the film *La amiga*, a scene within the plot presents the same contrast between the victim's grief and the victimiser's well-being. In an accidental encounter at a restaurant, María meets one of the para-military who participated in her son's kidnapping. The man is placidly having lunch with his wife and children whilst María is still mourning her son's death. In *Bajo otro sol* the protagonist, Manuel Ojeda, observes the man responsible for his friend's death come out of his house in the morning and say goodbye to his wife and children. The contrast between the two realities of victims and victimisers is made explicit in one of the dialogues: "Mientras el Petizo se pudre en un cajón los que lo mataron andan por ahí, tranquilos".

In *Sur* and also in *El amor es una mujer gorda* this opposition is slightly different. In the phantasmagoric atmosphere that characterises *Sur* there is an encounter between the ghosts of *El Muerto* and *El Tordo*, the man responsible for his detention. Having been recognised, *El Tordo* intends to justify himself by asserting (in a clear allusion to *Obediencia Debida*): "Fue una orden, viejo. Vos lo tenés que entender, ¡una orden!"... In *El amor es una mujer gorda*, José, whose girlfriend has been disappeared, is taken to jail for obstructing the shooting of a film about the dictatorship by an American filmmaker. The title of this film is significantly "*Punto Final*". Once out of prison, his friend Caferata shows him an article in *Clarín* with

the title "*Aprobó el senado el proyecto de Punto Final*", and asserts: "A vos te metieron adentro. ¡Mirá! ¡Mirá lo que sale en el diario hoy! A estos hijos de puta los van a dejar afuera".

The contrast between the victim's grief — in this case the family and friends of the missing person — and the benefits their aggressors still enjoy, seeks to stimulate the passional reaction of the enunciatee. As in the previous period, the identification of the spectator with the protagonist is fundamental. However, it is not so much a case of driving the spectator to adhere to the protagonist's search for truth but mainly of producing a violent passional reaction such as anger or "wrath" that can move him to act.

In *Du sens II*, Greimas gives a detailed description of this passion from a lexicographic perspective. This approach allows him to describe passions as sequences of states and actions, which can be decomposed for analysis. Given the importance this configuration has for our analysis, it is worth reviewing Greimas's work.

Taking as his starting-point the definition of "wrath" (*colère*) found in the *Petit Robert* — "violent mécontentement accompagné d'aggressivité"— the sequence that defines this passion could, according to Greimas, be established as follows: frustration — grief — aggression. Each of these "moments" can in its turn be decomposed into states and actions, which entail:

A first moment in which a subject 1 finds him/herself in disjunction with an object (lacking an object) that s/he wants (simple waiting). However, this subject also believes that someone else — subject 2 — should give him/her the object (fiduciary waiting). Given that the conjunction with the object does not occur, there is a modal clash between wanting-to-be-in-conjunction and knowing-oneself-in-disjunction with the object. This opposition gives rise to "frustration". Frustration refers not only to the lacking of the object but also to the sorrow produced by the action of the subject of "doing". Disillusionment is thus double: on the one hand, subject 2 has betrayed

the confidence placed in him/her; on the other hand, subject 1 has placed his/her trust in the wrong subject.

The disillusionment produced by the persistence of the lack can either remain there — giving place to "resignation", "hostility" or "rancour" — or it can assume the form of a narrative programme of elimination of lack in the form of a wanting-to-do (*vouloir-faire*). This refers to a negative action towards the subject considered responsible for the disillusionment and the persistence of the lack (subject 2). Regarding this subject, Greimas considers two possibilities: it can either be the Sender — in which case the wanting-to-do will assume the form of rebellion; or it can be the opponent (anti-subject) — in which case the wanting-to-do will serve as starting point for revenge. However, revenge, as an individual form of retribution, might be delegated to a Lawful Sender who will be in charge of achieving the reparation. In this case, revenge turns into justice. Delegation has the effect of introducing a distance between the wanting-to-do (*vouloir-faire*) of the subject and the being-able-to-do (*pouvoir-faire*) of a superior instance (Greimas 1983: 255 and following pages).

In the case of the films that we are considering, the anger that the texts seek to provoke refers to the opponents — the military and their supporters — (as in the previous period), but also to the Lawful Sender — the legitimate instances of sanctioning — to which retribution had been delegated. An unfair sanctioning has taken place. The subjects responding to the correct values, have been the object of deprivation and lack, whereas their aggressors have not been punished but instead rewarded. They are able to enjoy those same things the former have been deprived of: life, freedom, their family, and also other privileges — such as the horse ride.

The confusion or mistake between who is the real hero and who is the traitor — to turn once again to narratological terminology — is intended to move the spectator to assume the role of Lawful Sender who must clear up the confusion and restore justice. However, this can not be an individual action — which would lead to

revenge — but must instead form part of a social project. The films show popular participation as the only possible way of achieving justice.

3. The textualization of revenge

The figure of revenge can be seen, as has been mentioned, as an individual form of retribution opposed to justice. This no longer involves an undiscriminating general enunciatee, as metonymy of society as a whole, but instead a particular subject who has suffered the actions of the military and who finds in this aggression the justification for his/her own action against the former.

This option had already been posed in the film *Tiempo de revancha* (Aristarain 1981), which, from its very title, suggests this form of retribution. Read as a metaphor of the dictatorship, the "revancha" that former union worker Pedro Bengoa (Federico Luppi) pursues consists at first of an economic retribution for the death of his friend in a mining accident. However, it ends up involving larger demands. Bengoa, who pretends to be speechless after an explosion in the mine where he works, cuts his tongue out so that the deceit cannot be discovered.

Many readings can and have been made of this text: silence as a mode of resistance (Goity & Oubiña in España: 210); the impossibility of setting limits to mourning; the different ways in which subjects are involved in their demands. These go beyond the scope of our present analysis. What is particularly interesting in this film — as opposed to other texts which also include the semantic field of revenge in their titles (*El desquite, La búsqueda, Obsesión de venganza, Las esclavas, Atrapadas, Correccional de mujeres*) — is that, as Goity and Oubiña point out, revenge is conceived as a way of resistance to power and not as part of the "an eye for an eye" rule (Goity & Oubiña in España: 210). This conception of revenge links it to justice and will reappear in the films of the period we are considering.

As has already been mentioned, in the cinema of the period the figure of revenge is rejected in favour of the active participation of the population — and this

includes the spectator — in a project that ceases to be individual and becomes social. A clear example of this reformulation appears in the film *Bajo otro sol*, which thematizes the surmounting of revenge and its transformation into a social project. In this film, Manuel Ojeda, after hearing on radio the approval of the law of *Punto Final*, decides to make justice by himself. However, at the moment of facing the man responsible for his friend's death, he is unable to pull the trigger. Revenge reveals itself to be insufficient — insofar as it cannot compensate for the loss of loved ones — and Manuel returns to his friend's grave with a promise: "Vamos a hacer esa Patria, Petizo, la vamos a hacer". The film ends with these words. The use of the first-person plural and of the future tense incorporates the enunciatee — and therefore the spectator — in this new project. If revenge was the individual way out, the option now is a social one.

This choice for a social retribution rather than an individual one also appears — albeit differently — in *Revancha de un amigo*. In this film, Ariel's individual attempts — first at finding out what has happened to his friend, Carlos Rearte, and afterwards, at continuing the inquiry begun by the latter — are all unsuccessful. He will only manage to get positive results by joining the union members — who significantly exhibit on one of the walls of the union a poster of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. It is as part of a larger group that Ariel will be able to recover the evidence of illegal businesses that Carlos Rearte had found. His new allies will also help him to escape from those who are seeking the same documents. They organise a demonstration in front of the bank where the papers are kept, thus allowing Ariel to hide among the crowd in order to elude his pursuers.

In both films, it is only through organisation and participation that retribution can be obtained and that justice can be demanded. Individual options are predestined to failure. Ariel's father dies when he attempts to break out of the para-military organisation that he had, up to then, belonged to. Ariel's girlfriend also dies as a consequence of his solitary struggle.

The other film that postulates individual retribution is *En retirada*, which we have already briefly commented on. In this film, Julio (Julio De Grazia) — the father of a boy kidnapped by *El Oso* —, tired of the slowness of the legal system, decides to obtain justice by himself. However, in the final scene, during a pursuit across the roofs surrounding the building where *El Oso* used to live, the torturer slips and falls without the father's direct participation in his death. A certain chance or destiny intervenes as a superior power — in this case supernatural rather than social — closing the circle of revenge and opening the possibility for justice.

4. The construction of the enunciator

In chapter five, we mentioned the particularity of the construction of the enunciator in those films that present an enunciated enunciation, that is, films which incorporate reference to the making of the film within the film itself. This is the case in *Sur*, *El amor es una mujer gorda* and *Un muro de silencio* — which will be considered in the following chapter.

In *Sur*, a voice over at the beginning of the film recounts the following dialogue:

> Una noche, en Barracas al sur, mientras los amigos me contaban historias de mis años ausentes, alguien me dijo:
> –Te busca un tal Ademar Martínez
> –¿Ademar? ¡No puede ser! ¡Si el Negro murió hace años!
> [...] Y era cierto. El Negro, mi viejo amigo muerto, estaba ahí, entre las sombras de la vereda.
> –¿Así que vas a hacer una película de amor?
> –¿Qué decís?
> [...]
> –Vamos, si de ida o de vuelta, nuestras historias fueron siempre historias de amor. ¡Vení!
> ¡Acompáñame! Te voy a contar la de un amigo querido...

The thematic role of the narrator as filmmaker and the reference to his exile, allow for a displacement between this character and the figure of the film's director, Pino Solanas. The character of *El Negro* — who is also referred to as *El Muerto* — acts as Sender of knowledge to this first narrator by recounting the story to him. *El*

Muerto acts as a legitimate source of knowledge given that, by the fact of being dead, he is able to know everything. In one of the final scenes, he asserts:

> Quiero olvidar. No se puede vivir sabiéndolo todo. No me interesa nada. No quiero nada. No deseo nada. Lo sé todo. Estoy acabado, como esta película. Estoy muerto. (El Muerto in *Sur*)

The character of the filmmaker to whom *El Muerto* tells the story functions as *shifter*[2], by duplicating on the screen the place of the film's director. The relationship between these two characters leads Gustavo Geirola to identify both of them — the filmmaker and *El Muerto* — with Solanas himself. In his reading, this author finds *El Muerto*'s statements regarding knowledge ("no se puede vivir sabiéndolo todo") a way for Solanas to reformulate "the ideologem of the enlightened intellectual of the sixties" in the new context of postdictatorship Argentina (Geirola 1997).

Enunciated enunciation serves a different purpose in *El amor es una mujer gorda*. In this film, the two main characters oppose themselves to the shooting of a documentary about Argentina by an American director. At the end, they find with horror and resignation that "it is too late" given that they are already part of a movie. As opposed to the previous cases, in this film what is at stake is not the need for a film to be made but instead the need to avoid it.

The film in some way recognises what we have termed the constitution of a genre and, at the same time, questions it. José's opposition to the proliferation of filmic explanations of the dictatorship is revealed in some of the dialogues. In a discussion with the editor of the newspaper that José works for, he states:

> Vos te hacés el gil. Todos se hicieron los giles. Pero tenés razón: de lo que pasó en Vietnam hasta tu tía sabe algo, pero de lo que pasó acá no tenemos nada. ¡Nada! ¿Entendés? Mirá que pelotudos que debemos ser que *sólo nos queda hacer peliculitas sobre el tema*, ahora y mientras nos dure. Y ojalá que, a pesar de los infelices como vos, nos dure mucho. (José in *El amor es una mujer gorda*; my emphasis)

In an interview for the magazine *El Amante*, Alejandro Agresti explained the attempt at distancing his cinema from these productions in the following terms:

> En ese momento yo necesitaba hacer un personaje así porque los argentinos nos veníamos tragando mil millones de cosas y nadie decía nada. En *La Historia Oficial*, por ejemplo, del

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[2] Following Philip Hamon's categories.

que había desaparecido, del que tenía el problema, no se hablaba. Entonces, el que lo tiene
es el facineroso y su mujer facinerosa, profesora de historia, de quien me quieren hacer creer
que nunca supo nada. (Agresti 1993)

However, despite Agresti's intention of differentiating his film from the others we
have included in the series, *El amor es una mujer gorda* participates in many of the
characteristics that define the genre, in particular, the configuration of an enunciator
endowed with knowledge. The construction of the enunciator's competence is in this
film even more careful than in the others. The enunciator in *El amor es una mujer
gorda* not only knows what has happened, he also knows the way it has been depicted
in films and is able to propose a new, more reliable, version of it. In a sense, in his
attempt at escaping the conventions that were being built around the genre, Agresti
confirms them. This is not to detract from the film — which is exceptionally sharp
— but instead confirms what has been mentioned in previous chapters regarding the
law of genre and its transgression.

Although not an enunciated enunciation strictly speaking, the film *La amiga*
shows an interesting series of displacements between the subjects of the *énoncé* and
the subjects of the enunciation. In this film the development of the plot is linear
between a first scene in which two little girls talk in the open-air cinema of the
Pejerrey Club in Quilmes and a similar scene, years later. In the latter, Raquel (Zipe
Lincovsky) and María (Liv Ulman), now two grown-up women, can meet once again
after a long separation. Their disagreements relate to their different attitudes during
the dictatorship — exile and struggle, respectively — but also during democracy —
the acceptance or rejection of forensic anthropology. However, this linearity is
interrupted by scenes from the play *Antigone*, which Raquel is staging, and also by
María's recollection of her son, Carlos, who is missing.

At the level of the *énoncé*, there is a modification of the place of enunciation
of the protagonists. Raquel finds in the character of Antigone a voice to give form to
hers. At a certain point of the narrative we hear (in the form of a voice-over)
Raquel's speech from the play and we assume it is her speaking until the scene in the
theatre is shown to us. In a similar manner, the group of *Madres* grants María a

position from which to speak. However, alongside these transitions represented within the *énoncé*, there are also crossings between the characters of the plot and the subjects of enunciation. These crossings sustain the relationship between text and extratext and concomitantly the relationship between the latter (enunciator and enunciatee) and the extratextual subjects (filmmaker and spectator).

The character of María, even if not strictly referential — in Hamon's terms — can be easily identified with Hebe de Bonafini, not only in her role as leader of the organisation *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* but also given that many of the character's interventions are taken from Bonafini's speeches. This relationship, suggested throughout the film, is evident in the final monologue:

> No entendés como luché por encontrar a mi hijo. Sentía su corazón latiendo y me decía que en algún lugar de este espacio está su sangre transitando. Y traté de encontrarlo en mi memoria, en mi memoria de sus gestos, de sus palabras. Así llegué a su corazón, así descubrí sus esperanzas. Llevo en mí sus deseos de justicia, sus sueños de libertad; llevo en mí los ideales de Carlos. Ahora sé que aunque seamos una minoría, son nuestras esperanzas las que cambiarán el mundo. *Yo fui parida por mi hijo*, Raquel. El está en mis pasos, él está en mis gritos [...] *Mi hijo no está muerto*. (María in *La amiga*; my emphasis)

The displacement of characters in this system of Chinese boxes — from one fiction to another fiction presented as reality (Antigone / Raquel, *Madre* / María), to "reality" (María / Hebe de Bonafini) — projects the places of enunciator and enunciatee on to that of the filmmaker and the spectator. Whilst the first of these can be easily filled, the latter presents itself as an empty space to be occupied by the spectator. The illusion of a closed world, indifferent to our viewing[3], is thus destroyed and the spectator is called upon to engage in the events the film describes and in their consequences at an extratextual level.

Although in a less obvious manner, this operation is also implied in the other cases of enunciated enunciation. By suggesting the correlation between enunciator or narrator and an extratextual subject — the filmmaker in *Sur*, José in *El amor es una mujer gorda* — the spectator is required to occupy the empty space left on the

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[3] This is one of the characteristics of dominant cinema that Laura Mulvey questioned in her

other side of the simulacrum of enunciation, assuming the actions proposed both in the textual and in the extratextual space[4].

IV.   CINEMA AS A POLITICAL TOOL

After the promulgation of the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida*, postdictatorship cinema affirms itself not only as a means for testimony but also as a tool for political action. If before the films demanded that the spectator assume the role of witness, now they ask for commitment towards action. The films produced in this period do not only seek to constitute the spectator as a subject of knowing but also as a subject of doing. These actions remain at a discursive level: the spectators are asked to demand of the legitimate authorities a fair sanctioning of those responsible for the crimes committed during the dictatorship.

The films analysed in this chapter present themselves as a possible way of producing transformations at a social level, thus assuming the function of agents that Marc Ferro attributed to cinema. It is worth noting that with this assertion we do not intend to make any claims about the effectiveness of the operations postulated by the texts. It is not our objective to evaluate audiences' responses. It is clear that the possibility for the films to produce social changes will largely depend on the acceptance or rejection, on the spectator's part, of the reading contract established in a text's enunciational *dispositifs*. However, the modification of these *dispositifs* reveals, as we hope to have demonstrated, transformations in the position of the subjects involved. It is for other approaches and disciplines to relate these transformations to larger social processes.

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famous article "Women's Pleasure and Narrative Cinema".
[4] The analysis of these films will be returned to in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8

MEMORIAL-CINEMA (1989-97)

«No se puede ser tan imbécil como
para dejar que las cosas se borren.
Hay cosas de las que uno no puedo olvidarse.
No tiene que olvidarse. Aunque duelan.»
(Ernesto in *Un lugar en el mundo*)

President Carlos Menem's election in 1989 entails an obvious modification in the conditions of production of films within the *documelodrama* genre. Changes do not only refer to new cultural policies implemented by the national government — new authorities at the *Instituto Nacional de Cinematografía* (INC), which in 1994 added to its name *y de Artes Audiovisuales* (INCAA), new financial strategies etc. — but also to human rights policies. In this respect, although the presidential pardons (the *decretos de indulto*) granted by Menem could be considered as a continuation of the laws promulgated by Alfonsín's government, their framing in a project of "national reconciliation" establishes a fundamental difference. The *topica* that can be seen as structuring several discursive fields — among them film production about the dictatorship — is now constituted by memory.

With this term we refer no longer to a veridictional operation (the truth about what happened) as in the first period, or to an epistemic judgement about the subject's action (guilt or innocence requiring punishment or reward) as in the second period, but instead to a cognitive sanction, that is, an epistemic judgement upon the subject's being (Greimas y Courtés 1982: 346). However, in this case, sanctioning does not derive from the legitimate institutions exclusively but must be carried out by society as a whole.

In this chapter, we shall first survey those actions of the national government that install "memory" as a subject within social discourse. Given that this topic structures a certain discursive field in which cinema participates, we shall analyse the operations entailed in its formulation, in order to approach the films of the corpus as manifestations of a larger pattern involving social discourse.

I.   THE POLITICS OF OBLIVION

Soon after he reached power, Menem broke away from "classical peronism" — and also from many of the proposals made during his campaign — by assigning the Ministry of Economy to one of the managers of the multinational company *Bunge y Born*. He also called upon Alvaro Alsogaray, at that time president of the UCD (*Unión de Centro Democrático*), a traditionally "anti-peronist" liberal alliance, to be his presidential adviser. With fast approval from the National Congress, two new laws were sanctioned: the law of economic emergency (*Ley de Emergencia Económica*) and the law of state reform (*Ley de Reforma del Estado*). These laws allowed for the beginning of a furious process of privatisations of state-owned companies (telephone, gas, electricity, airlines, trains, etc.). The main objective was to reduce state deficit, pay off part of the external debt or of its interests and encourage the investment of foreign capital and the settlement in the country of multinational companies. Most of this economic plan was supervised by the International Monetary Fund, sustaining what Menem himself referred to as "carnal relations" (*relaciones carnales*) between Argentina and the United States.

These changes entailed a radical modification of the country. On the one hand, Menem's Argentina, declared by this president as part of the "first-world", is indeed integrated into global capitalism. "Carnal relations" with the United States do not only imply the following of economic policies established by the IMF, but also the intervention in those military conflicts in which the Northern country might be involved. On the other hand, Argentina has adopted a clear neoliberal policy in economic and social matters, which continues even after Menem's ten years in power.

In his inauguration speech, Carlos Menem announced the need for "una solución definitiva a las heridas que todavía deben ser cicatrizadas". In the context of a "national reconciliation", on 1 October the remains of Juan Manuel de Rosas, who had been buried in England, were taken back to Argentina and laid in the Recoleta Cementery in Buenos Aires.

As part of the same pacification policy, a few days later Menem decreed a series of pardons for 277 civilians and military men. He also announced the possibility that, at a later stage, this could be extended to former members of the *Juntas*. Among those benefiting from the pardons were military authorities still under prosecution for human rights' violations, guerrilla group leaders, members of the Armed Forces who had participated in the uprisings of Easter Week, Monte Caseros and Villa Martelli and also those officers responsible for the Falklands / Malvinas war. The pardons, dated 6 October, were announced the following day and gave rise to a debate about presidential powers regarding the interruption of legal processes before a verdict had been attained. At the root of this debate was a certain reading of the National Constitution, given that, although article 86 establishes that the Executive Power shall have the power to exonerate or commute charges, it does not grant the president the capacity to interrupt cases still under way.

The second series of pardons was effectively sanctioned in December of the following year and affected the military leaders. The measure produced a strong from reaction of human rights organisations and part of the rest of the population. However, under the new political and economic conditions, demonstrations against the pardons did not have the strength that might have been expected. The government found in this modest — albeit not absent — popular participation a strategy to validate its policy. Indeed, people would appear to have been more worried about economic problems than about being involved in the defence of human rights. Nevertheless, official discourse postulating the need to leave the past behind met with strong demands against forgetting and in favour of memory.

II.   THE DISCOURSES OF MEMORY

It could be claimed, at least as a hypothesis, that the insistence on the topic of memory is characteristic of social discourse in the Argentina of the 90s. This hypothesis could find a source of confirmation in the names, slogans and expressions of several groups and organisations that emerged in the decade such as H.I.J.O.S. (*Hijos por la Identidad y la*

Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio), *Memoria Activa*[1], the project *Muro de la Memoria*[2], or the demonstrations highlighting the murder of graphic reporter José Luis Cabezas[3].

> No olvidamos, no perdonamos, no nos reconciliamos. (Wall graffiti from H.I.J.O.S. University Campus, Córdoba)
>
> Todos los lunes son 18 de julio de 1994 y lo seguirán siendo hasta que se esclarezca la masacre de la AMIA, se conozca la identidad de los asesinos de nuestros familiares y amigos y se haga justicia. (Prologue of the first document of *Memoria Activa* published in *Página 12*, July 1996)
>
> Fahrenheit es el nombre de un grupo de militantes de la vida que no se resigna a la desmemoria. El muro de la memoria es un lugar donde conocer a los desaparecidos; ver sus rostros y recordarlos. (*Grupo Fahrenheit*, 24 March 1998. Internet)
>
> No se olviden de Cabezas. (Slogan reproduced in posters, stickers and in the media, regarding the murder of José Luis Cabezas).

The hypothesis postulated above could also be sustained in relation to a number of legal proposals which had memory as their goal. In March 1994, Senator Luis Pérez Luzuriaga presented a project to the Senate of the Province of Buenos Aires for the construction of a wall with the name of all the people who remained "missing". Another proposal, this time submitted to the City Council of Buenos Aires by Counsellor Jorge Tula, intended to convert the illegal detention centre known as *El Olimpo* into a memorial museum similar to those built in Germany in former detention camps. Congressmen Alfredo Bravo and Carlos Chacho Alvarez (now vice-president of Argentina), among others, elaborated a project for the construction of a monument in memory of the *desaparecidos*[4].

Whether as a general hypothesis or limited to cinematographic discourse, the insistence on memory — which can be linked to the presidential pardons and to the notion of impunity these convey — draws a complex scheme of relationships between this term

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[1] *Memoria activa* is an organization grouping family and friends of the victims of the bomb attack on the building of the AMIA (*Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina*) in July 1994.

[2] Project developed on the internet by a group named Fahrenheit.

[3] José Luis Cabezas was a graphic reporter assassinated in the city of Pinamar in January 1997. Provincial police forces were suspected of being involved in the crime, paid for by an influential businessman named Alfredo Yabrán. Yabrán committed suicide a year later.

[4] Projects enumerated in DUSSEL, FINOCCHIO & GOJMAN (1997: 120-121). The title of this publication could also be added to the list of texts taking memory as their topic: *Haciendo memoria en el país de Nunca Más*.

and its opposites that is worth scrutinising before attempting to analyse their emergence in the films of the period.

III.   MEMORY AND FORGIVENESS

Presidential pardons set up two topics: forgiveness and memory. Forgiveness is postulated by the national government as a way of achieving an eventual reconciliation. Those who oppose the former, mainly from human rights' organisms, pose memory as an alternative. These terms are set in mutual opposition in different contexts: faced with the official proposal of a *parque de la reconciliación* — in the old ESMA (*Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada*) building — the proposition of a *museo de la memoria*[5], asserted by its contrary terms in the phase "ni olvido, ni perdón", suggested in the designation of H.I.J.O.S., assumed in an article published in the magazine *XXI* (4 March 1999) entitled "La frontera del olvido" which comments on Simon Wiesenthal's book *Los límites del perdón*.

However, "perdón" does not mean or equal "olvido"; at least not in language. That is, the "equivalence" between the two terms which appears in social discourse is not incorporated into the system of language. If we understand pardon as the "remission of a deserved penalty" it does not exempt the accused of guilt but only of its consequences. It does not, therefore, entail forgetfulness or oblivion. In the Argentine legal system, there is a basic difference between "pardon" and "amnesty". In the context of human rights policies in postdictatorship Argentina this difference also establishes an important distinction between the laws of *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida* on the one hand, and the presidential pardons, on the other.

Neither does the term "memory" equate to "resentfulness" or "revenge" — assuming these to be the opposites of forgiveness. Through which operations, then, these terms come to be perceived as opposite to the point of becoming antithetical in the social discourse of Argentina of the 90s?

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[5] See Alfredo Bravo's statements regarding the demolition of the building of the ESMA, 23 January 1998 on the web page of the *Equipo Nizkor*.

Nicole Loraux in an article entitled "De la amnistía y su contrario" analyses the "model case" of Greek amnesty, for her, paradigmatic of all the amnesties in Western history:

> En 403 antes de nuestra era los demócratas, ayer hostigados, ahora de regreso en Atenas como vencedores, proclaman la reconciliación general recurriendo a un decreto y a la prestación de un juramento. El decreto proclama la prohibición: *mé mnesikakein*, "está prohibido recordar las desgracias"; el juramento compromete a todos los atenienses, demócratas, oligarcas consecuentes y gentes "tranquilas" que permanecieron en la ciudad durante la dictadura, pero los compromete a uno por uno: *ou mnesikakéso*, "no recordaré las desgracias". (Loraux: 31)

A decree and an oath through which to erase conflict. Loraux, an eminent helenist, reminds us that, in this context, "erasure" is not a metaphor but has instead a material meaning. In Ancient Greece oficial records are erased with a new layer of lime and left free for new inscriptions. Greek reconciliation in 403 thus has, according to Loraux, a double register: at once, material — based on the deletion of documents — and symbolic — based on the oath. In this procedure one can perceive,

> [...] la imagen de una escritura completamente interior, trazada en la memoria o en el espíritu, y con ello susceptible, como toda inscripción, de ser borrada, ya se trate de una borradura benéfica, cuando el pensamiento, en su progreso, se desembaraza de opiniones erróneas (Platón, *Teéto*), ya sea nefasta, cuando se trata de esquivar un duelo todopoderoso (Eurípides, *Hécuba*). (Loraux: 33)

Loraux takes her argument further by postulating that this is the proper meaning of politics for the Greek: to be able to overcome revenge, pretending nothing happened, leaving conflict behind, erasing it. Politics are built upon oblivion.

However, such an erasure is paradoxical given that the oath itself hides, behind the word "misfortune" ("desgracias" in the Spanish translation of the French original), something that resists oblivion. Through an etymological inquiry — not worth repeating here — Loraux encounters behind the term "misfortunes", a mourning that cannot be forgotten and that the Greeks knew as *alaston pénthos*. The *alaston pénthos* is the worst enemy of politics, given that not only does it not allow itself to be forgotten, but itself does not forget. It represents, in Loraux's words, "unforgetfulness"[6].

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[6] My translation of "*lo inolvidadizo*", in turn a translation of a neologism coined by Loraux to define "aquello mismo que, en la tradición poética griega, no olvida, y habita al enlutado hasta decir yo por su boca" (Loraux: 39). This is what makes "no-oblivion" particularly dangerous: it does not have any limits (Loraux: 45).

As the enemy of politics the *alaston pénthos* needs to be domesticated in favour of the *polis*. An example of this domestication appears at the end of the *Oresteia* with the transformation of the revengeful Erinyes into guardians of the city of Athens. However, this transformation is only possible, Loraux reminds us once again, through the intervention of the divine, in this case, of Palas Athene. A beautiful Greek myth that exhibits the female figures of an endless mourning. A myth that was paradoxically repeated at the National Congress in one of the sessions in which the law of *Punto Final* was discussed. After the irruption on the previous day of *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* into the chamber, Deputy A. L. Stubrin recounted:

> En una de las obras de Esquilo se habla de las Erinias, que son las madres de los soldados muertos en la Guerra de Troya. También se las conoce como Las Furias, porque tienen ese carácter y se dedican en la vida de la ciudad a impedir la concertación de la paz, como forma de perpetuar –por lo menos en su memoria– a sus hijos desaparecidos en la guerra. Pasado el tiempo y por intercesión de los dioses, estos mismos personajes reaparecen en otras obras bajo un nuevo nombre: las Euménides; no sólo reaparecen con un nuevo nombre sino también con un nuevo carácter y actitud, ya que se reincorporan a la ciudad, actúan en ella, son útiles, plantean la conciliación de los espíritus y, en definitiva, ayudan a la paz y prosperidad de la ciudad griega. Este proceso de transformación de las Erinias en Euménides, para quienes hemos seguido desde el primer momento la lucha, el coraje y la valentía de las madres de Plaza de Mayo en demanda de sus hijos, y de todas las organizaciones defensoras de los derechos humanos –donde hemos participado– en demanda de justicia, constituyen una esperanza y genera una inmensa expectativa para que el desenlace que tuvo esta tremenda pasión humana despertada por la muerte de los hijos en la antigua Grecia o en la mitología griega, se reitere en nuestro país, en la Argentina de esta democracia renacida. [*Diario de sesiones, Cámara de Diputados de la Nación*, 24 December 1986, p.7855]

But as has been mentioned such domestication could only have been possible through a divine intervention. Without it, the only thing left is the impossibility of oblivion, the "no oblivion" ("el *no-olvido*", in the Spanish translation). The persistence of the "unforgetful" in the *alaston pénthos* transforms the political operation of erasure — the oath — into an impossibility: the oblivion of the "no oblivion".

Something of this relationship between oblivion and erasure or, in its positive terms, between memory and writing, intervenes in the designation of H.I.J.O.S. In the construction *Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio* the two positive terms — identity and justice — do not match, term for term, the negative ones. If we consider the contrary terms of each of these positives, we can reconstruct a series of

oppositions that might account for policies and demands regarding human rights in the Argentina of the 90s:

Identity – Alienation
Justice – Injustice
Memory – **Oblivion**
Words / Writing – **Silence**

Placed in the social context in which they are produced, each of these antitheses reveals different conflicts surrounding the topic of memory.

In the reading we are proposing, the first term no longer refers exclusively to the identity of children kidnapped by the military during the dictatorship, but can also be extended, through its opposite, to society as a whole. Alienation signals a fault, a gap, in a society that needs to come to terms with its history. Boudon and Borricaud, in their dictionary of sociology, enumerate four different meanings of this word. The first one is a juridical one that attributes to it the idea of transference, negotiation. The second meaning of the word pertains to psychology and refers to madness, insanity. Both of these interpretations were already in the Latin root of the word *alienare*, which simultaneously refers to the acts of selling and of losing reason. According to Boudon and Borricaud, the word "alienation" also conveys a sociological meaning — as the rupture of bonds between an individual and others — and a religious one — as the rupture of bonds between the individual and the gods. One might read the "reconciliation" proposed by the national government in relation to these interpretations.

In its turn, the term "justice" assimilated to that of memory marks a difference regarding the previous demands. Memory appears as an act (of justice) against (the injustice of) oblivion. It is evident that the demands made of juridical power are not abandoned. However, alongside these demands a new type of sanction is proposed. This consists of the social condemnation of those responsible for human rights violations. In this respect the "escraches" carried out by H.I.J.O.S. demand from society a cognitive sanction — their main purpose, as postulated by the organisation, is that "people know who their neighbours are".

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[7] The "escraches" are a new form of political action created by H.I.J.O.S. They consist of demonstrating in front of former repressors's homes in order to make public something that remains hidden; namely, their
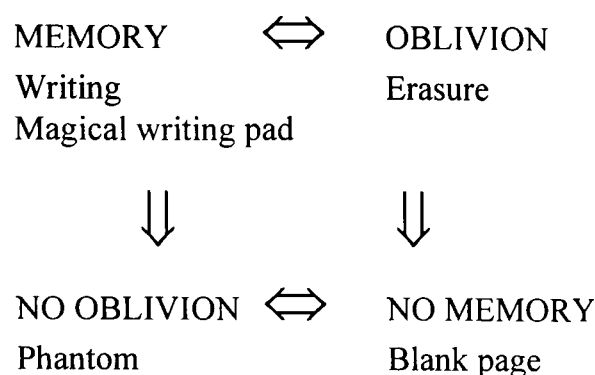
The goal of these actions does not end there. It is also expected that eventually this social condemnation might lead to a pragmatic sanction. However, this can also be realised through the civil population, independently of legal institutions:

> Hay que buscar la condena moral de los asesinos. Lograr el castigo social. Que el país sea una cárcel para ellos. Sabemos que será difícil a través de la Justicia. Esto no quiere decir que renunciemos a la derogación de las leyes perdonadoras y a que se haga verdaderamente justicia. (Campamento Nacional de H.I.J.O.S.).

In *Usos del olvido* (1989), Yosef Yerushalmi wondered if the antithesis of oblivion might not be justice instead of memory. A question that has, in this case, an affirmative answer. If, in another Greimasian procedure, we project the contradictory term of oblivion, we encounter once again — this time in a logical rather than mythological operation — "no oblivion" as the term implicated by justice. This suggests the possibility that justice in our societies could be the way of "domesticating" that which resists oblivion, surmounting revenge and opening the passage for an eventual reconciliation.

JUSTICE   ⟺   OBLIVION

⟱   ⟱

NO OBLIVION   ⟺   NO JUSTICE
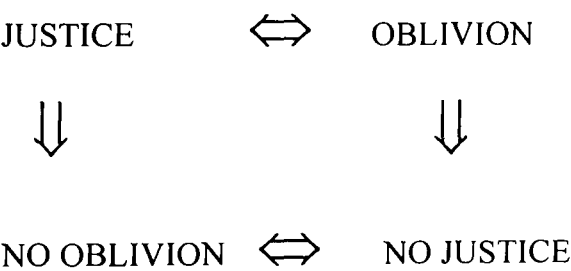
In the name of H.I.J.O.S., a last operation allows us to assimilate memory and writing. However, in this case too we can project four terms instead of just two: an active memory (*memoria activa*) as the trace of a writing; oblivion, the erasure imposed by pardon policies — an erasure which nevertheless cannot totally undo writing given that something of it inevitably persists as the hidden trace in the manner of Freud's "mystic writing pad"; "no memory", as a blank page in which no inscription has yet been made; and, once again, "no oblivion" — that which not having been written, finds a way to return as a phantom.

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activities during the dictatorship.

MEMORY   ⟺   OBLIVION
Writing   Erasure
Magical writing pad

⇓   ⇓

NO OBLIVION ⟺   NO MEMORY
Phantom   Blank page

Thus, if the presidential pardons, following the Greek model, seek an erasure, the main operation does not respect justice but memory. "Pardon" simultaneously stages these two topics and the relationships that have been described above. Cinema, among other discourses, participates in this scheme, proposing memory as writing against oblivion.

IV.   THE CINEMATOGRAPHIC TRAJECTORIES OF REMEMBRANCE

1. The "no-oblivion": The persistence of ghosts

It could not be affirmed that previous film production avoids completely the subject of memory. Indeed, if the period of the dictatorship reappears in the films that we have up to this point surveyed, it is with the intention that "what has happened" might be registered and recognised. In Loraux's terms, it is staged in order for it to become part of that interior writing "traced in the memory or in the spirit" of the people. However, this goal does not truly entail memory as a topic.

Insofar as the films are part of a testimonial cinema, the events depicted are set during the dictatorship, in a present time, simultaneous with it. However, many films postulate some instance of remembrance through references to missing characters (e.g. the grandmother's account or the photographs of Gaby's parents in *La historia oficial*). These reiterations could be related to that which haunts the characters without allowing them to forget and that we have referred to as the "no-oblivion". Even if one can perceive the "no oblivion" as that which seeks a way to be represented, in this first period, it only appears suggested by the plot rather than thematized within it.

Significantly, the only film of the period that installs memory as a topic, does so regarding events that are prior to the dictatorship. In *Memorias y Olvidos* (Feldman 1986), the three persons asked for a historical interpretation of Argentina's situation in the 80s do so taking as a starting point events from the previous century. Moreover, memory and forgetfulness appear in this film as voluntary, conscious, acts of manipulation of "actual" events in order to produce a biased political reading of history. The film rather than analysing the conflict between memory and oblivion, explores the difficulties of an "objective" historical writing — and also reading. In this new opposition memory is assimilated to objectivity, that is, on the condition that it be a "total memory", able to register everything — like the expert's computer. Behind this dream of absolute objectivity — eloquently attributed to the Swiss — the very notion of memory as writing is lost. If everything can be objectively registered by a machine, there is no need for either memory or writing.

During the second period, recollections are not only referred to but also screened. In some films this is done through recourse to flashbacks —black and white images in *Bajo otro sol* (D'Intino 1987), scenes of Carlos in *La amiga* (Meerapfel 1989). This use of flashbacks interrupting the development of the plot is different from the utilization of a narrative frame in which a scene set in the present of the enunciation structures the presentation of previous actions. Such is the case of *Los chicos de la guerra* (Kamín 1984) or of *Sentimientos... Mirta de Liniers a Estambul* (Coscia & Saura 1985).

Rather more significant are three films produced during this second period in which the figure of the phantom begins to take shape as a character: *El amor es una mujer gorda, Sur* and *La amiga*.

As has been previously mentioned, *El amor es una mujer gorda* (Agresti 1987) differs substantially — both at a technical and narrative level — from other films of the period. It also advances — like *La amiga* and *Sur* — problematics regarding the topic of memory. In this film, José wanders around the city looking for his girlfriend, Claudia, refusing to accept she has been "disappeared". Intercalated with the plot, we are shown the image of a young woman, which apparently has no connection with the narrative. In one

of the last scenes, José and Caferata get on the bus that will turn them into involuntary protagonists of the film, whilst the woman remains at the bus stop, waiting. Some loose papers fall out of her hands, and that action allows us to relate this image to Claudia's phantom, who was, according to José, a compulsive writer of poetry.

Sur (Solanas 1988) describes a series of imaginary characters who Floreal (Miguel Angel Solá) encounters on his first night out of prison. In this film, "no oblivion" takes on form via a series of ghostly figures but in particular via the character of "El muerto" (Lito Cruz), who recounts the story to the narrator and in turn guides Floreal in his return home. The relationship of this character to "no oblivion" is explicit in one of his final interventions:

> Y así nos despedimos esa noche. El volvía a la vida, y yo, a la muerte. Desde entonces sigo siendo una ausencia, un recuerdo, condenado a ser la memoria de ustedes. (El muerto in *Sur*)

The character of "El muerto" materialised in the actor's body or in a voice-over also appears in a more suggestive manner. At the end of the first episode, in Floreal's and María's last encounter before she moves to the south, there is a revolving chair that mysteriously turns around in front of the camera, whilst the last notes of the tango "María" close this first narrative.

In *La amiga* (Meerapfel 1988) there is a similar situation in which the emptiness represented by the figure of the "desaparecido" — a phantom predestined to "re-appear" — finds a way into representation. In this film there is a scene, that has already been described, in which María (Liv Ullman), the mother of a "desaparecido", accidentally meets one of the para-military men who took part in her son's kidnapping. María approaches the table where he is having lunch with his wife and children and pulls up an empty chair. This symbolic representation of absence can be seen as an attempt at making present the absence of her son, an attempt at writing the phantom of "no oblivion".

2. The writing of the phantom

If films in the 80s suggest "no-oblivion" under the form of a phantom that demands to be written, cinema of the 90s clearly appears as a writing against oblivion. Such an aim can be read at the beginning of *Un lugar en el mundo* (Aristarain 1992):

> No se puede ser tan imbécil como para dejar que las cosas se borren. Hay cosas de las que uno no puede olvidarse. No tiene que olvidarse. Aunque duelan. (Ernesto in *Un lugar en el mundo*)

Ernesto cannot define the reason that has taken him back to the Province of San Luis "eight or nine years later" ("No sé por qué vuelvo. [...] Tengo unas horas para recorrer en bicicleta los viejos lugares y tratar de saber por qué vine."). We could see it, as a form of "no-oblivion" — not being able to forget something that one is not aware of. This search finds an answer in the film itself. The movement of Ernesto from "no-oblivion" to "memory" coincides with the development of the film — we are only shown his recollection of events. The film itself becomes the space for memory.

In the same way that Ernesto's return to San Luis frames the action, the film *Amigomío* (Meerapfel 1993) starts and finishes with the image of Carlos and his teenage son watching old home movies. This scene constitutes the temporal setting of the present of the enunciation from which previous events are remembered. The journey that has taken both protagonists from Argentina to Ecuador is narrated through Carlos's and Amigomío's recollections, with these characters acting as focalizers.

In both films, narration takes place in the past, whilst the action in the present of the enunciation is frozen — Ernesto in the cemetery, Carlos in front of the film screen. Thus, what the films sketch is a journey through memory. The 8mm films which register Carlos's parents's arrival in Buenos Aires as German immigrants escaping nazism and images of "La negra", Carlos's partner, before her "disappearance", reveal within the plot the possibility that film might become a privileged space for the writing of memory.

The importance of cinema as a medium for the writing of the phantom is the structuring idea in *Un muro de silencio* (Stantic 1992). The plot recounts the shooting of a film about the dictatorship by British filmmaker Kate Benson (Vanessa Redgrave). This

first level of narration is interrupted by images from two secondary narratives: the story being developed in the film that Kate Benson is shooting ("La Historia de Ana") and the life of the woman upon whom the plot was based (Silvia, Ana's name in real life). At the beginning of *Un muro de silencio*, the filmmaker asks a reporter interviewing her:

> What I would like you to emphasise, please, is that our making **this story** is important so that horror won't be repeated. (Kate Benson in *Un muro de silencio*, my emphasis).

The use of the deictic ("THIS story") indicates the intersection between the metanarrative ("*La historia de Ana*") and the narrative (the film the spectator is watching). Kate Benson could thus be considered a "shifter character"[8], which duplicates in the film the role of Stantic herself. As in the film *La amiga* — which was analysed in the previous chapter — there is a displacement from the characters of the *énoncé* to the subjects of the enunciation.

However, whilst Kate Benson and Bruno (Lautaro Murúa), the author of the script, assert the need for cinema to become a place for the writing of memory, the rest of the characters can be distributed across the other terms of the square projected above: Jaime, Silvia's first husband, who is now missing, appears to her several times as a phantom, an example of "no oblivion". Her new husband (Lorenzo Quinteros) defends the need for oblivion ("Silvia era una mujer feliz hasta que empezó todo esto"). Silvia herself could be seen as sustaining a space of "no memory" by refusing to accept what has happened ("Está vivo. Lo vi. Estoy segura que era él").

Through the shooting of the film "La historia de Ana", all these characters will be compelled to inscribe, each in their own manner, what has happened, consequently operating the displacement from the different terms of the semiotic square to "memory". Alongside them, the spectator is asked to follow the same trajectory.

The first scene of the film takes place in the illegal detention centre where Silvia and Jaime had been confined. A subtitle establishes the spatial and temporal setting: *Buenos Aires 1990*. In this first scene, Kate Benson asks Bruno: "¿La gente sabía lo que estaba pasando por aquí?", to which the writer answers "y los que no sabían, sospechaban". In the final scene, shot in the same location, María Elisa, Silvia's daughter who as a little child

lived through the events recounted, poses the same question to her mother. The camera holds on silence for a couple of minutes before the answer: "Todos sabían".

The film's development between the first and final scene is thus not circular but cyclical. Silvia has been able to face her husband's ghost. Now it is the turn of the spectator: obliged to participate in the "minute of silence", necessarily included in the word "todos" of the final sentence, directly interpellated by María Elisa's frozen image looking into the camera.

3. Making memory: The memory of the present

Buenos Aires viceversa (Agresti 1996) can also be seen as the staging of a woman's encounter with the phantom of "no-oblivion". However, the film proposes cinema as a form of "making memory", not only as remembrance but also as construction; that is "making memory" as a way of "making history". In the new context of the 90s this making / writing of memory does not involve exclusively the screening or denunciation of the military's crimes but rather the analysis of the way its inscription persists in society. The continuity of repression can be seen in this film at various levels: in the manipulation of information by the media (the character of Mirta Busnelli), the persisting efficiency of terror (the old couple that remain locked up in their apartment as a consequence of fear), the repressive apparatus still unmodified (the security man who abuses the blind woman).

At the beginning of Buenos Aires viceversa, a caption establishes the relationship between the events taking place during the dictatorship and the society in which — and to which — these events occurred:

> 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 story of Daniela (Vera Fogwill) is constituted by this search for answers, among others. She looks for a place to live in what used to be her father's workplace — a garage which was left intact after his disappearance, in that time out of time ("out of joint" in Derrida's

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[8] Following once again, Philip Hamon's categories.

terms) of the phantom. She looks for a melody which she remembers that her mother used to listen to; she looks for her mother's ghost in the streets of Buenos Aires.

Having being offered a job by the old couple who have remained locked up in their apartment since their grand-daughter's disappearance and their daughter's exile, Daniela sets out to film her vision of the city. These images will eventually produce, on the one hand, her split with her boyfriend (Fernán Mirás); on the other, her meeting with Bocha, who is himself involved in a search for a way of living and for some kind of roots. These multiple searches will eventually lead her to having to face her past and accept the violence of which her mother has been the object[9].

In *El amor es una mujer gorda*, José asserts the conflictive relationship between memory and its control by political power:

> Y si ahora grito no me escucha nadie, porque primero nos dijeron que no teníamos memoria, como si fuéramos boludos, y ahora quieren que nos olvidemos de todo. (José in *El amor es una mujer gorda*).

In José's recounting of the military government's actions to the blind man, the latter's interventions reproduce a series of connative formulas ("no me digás", "mirá vos", "así es", "y claro"), which reveal his ignorance regarding recent history. José's monologue finishes with a direct interpellation ("¿Y vos, qué opinas de todo esto?") to which the blind man replies with another formula: "Yo argentino". This formula — common at the time of the dictatorship — was used to justify the population's lack of involvement or commitment as part of a "national character".

In *Buenos Aires viceversa*, by contrast, the character played by Mario Paolucci, in the role of a self-taught intellectual (a typical *intelectual de barrio*), expresses his desire for oblivion. However he also makes clear that this wish is not only a personal aspiration but that it has a social root:

> Que yo sepa un mate no puede traer amnesia, ¿no? Yo quisiera tener amnesia y olvidar esto. Olvidar el recuerdo reciente, disolverlo como un ramo, tirarlo a la calle, disiparlo una tarde a la hora del

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[9] At the end of the film, there is a rather disconcerting scene, in which we see a young woman trying to escape from a man following her. The man finally reaches her and hits her in a public toilet. Parallel editing and the physical resemblance between this woman and Daniela allow us to associate her with Daniela's mother.

crepúsculo. [...] En definitiva, el naufragio cotidiano en que estamos inmersos [...], naufragio personal y naufragio colectivo.

In the following scene, this character goes out into the street carrying a sign stating "yo no fui". This statement, which could in a sense be compared to the blind-man's "yo argentino", can also be read as pointing out the difference between participation and responsibility. That is, whilst the "shipwreck" collectively involves everyone, not every person is equally responsible for it.

The transition from José's inflexible act of denunciation and this "collective shipwreck" reveals an important transformation that could be extended to social discourse as a whole. From José to Paolucci, disappointment substitutes denunciation. In this respect, whilst denunciation still presupposes trust in certain institutions — such as justice —, disappointment is the result of a collective disillusionment faced with the end of "la ilusión democrática" (to use Romero's terms). However, it is precisely from this disenchantment — with the legitimate institutions — that memory will acquire its value as a means of resistance.

4. Memory and identity: The memory of the future

As opposed to the other films surveyed, *El censor* (Calcagno 1995) and *La sonámbula* (Spiner 1997) show complex temporal operations that take these films close to the fantastic genre, a genre that could be seen as the antithesis of the *documelodrama*[10]. On the one hand, the films propose a certain reading of recent Argentine history, showing many of the characteristics assigned to the *documelodrama*. On the other, in both cases what appears to be a recuperation of the past turns out to be anticipations, or "memories of the future" as the subtitle of the film *La sonámbula* suggests[11].

El censor recounts the story of Raúl Veiravé (Ulises Dumont), director of the Cinematographic Qualification Board (*Ente de Calificación Cinematográfica*) during the

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[10] For example, in the use of flashforwards.
[11] These films also indicate an interesting relationship between literature and cinema given that their scripts were written by well-known modern Argentine authors: Alan Pauls in the first case and Ricardo Piglia in the

dictatorship[12]. The film describes Veiravé's daily activities during 1976-77 until he suffers

a collapse while watching the last film of his friend, filmmaker Ramos Larsen. A temporal

ellipsis of eight years follows this scene. In the following shot Veiravé wakes up in *Plaza*

de Mayo, in the middle of a gay groups's demonstration for equal rights, in the democratic

period. His old office now belongs to the National Senate, and his former activities have

obviously changed, although neither the character, nor the enunciatee, can really know in

what sense. The only point of continuity is a group of cuts from films featuring Laura, a

woman whose images Veiravé has carefully compiled while censoring films.

Since Laura is the only thing Veiravé has from his past he sets out to find her.

However, when he finally reaches her, he discovers she is gay and, after some efforts to

"save" her, decides to kill her. After this scene, narration returns to the main narrative,

following on from the point before the ellipsis: Veiravé sitting in the projection room

watching Ramos Larsen's movie.

Regarding our analysis, it is particularly interesting to observe the blank Veiravé

encounters on awakening. This relates to an empty space in which nothing has been written.

It is not written in the film — given that whatever happened has been bridged over by the

temporal ellipsis — but it has not been written in the character's memory either. It does not

imply a mere disregard but instead a hole, a blank page in which nothing has been

registered, a place of "no memory". This is visible in the dialogue that Veiravé maintains

with his colleague Víctor (Ruben Szchumacher), soon after recovering consciousness:

> VEIRAVÉ: ¿No me creés, no?
> VICTOR: Sí, te creo; pero no sos el único. A mucha gente le pasa lo mismo.
> VEIRAVÉ: Pero, ¿qué es? ¿Qué mierda es?
> VICTOR: No sé. Amnesia... Culpa...
> VEIRAVÉ: ¡No, pará, pará! Pará que yo no me arrepiento de nada, ¿entendés? No, es otra cosa. Es algo mucho más terrible. Es como acostarte una noche y levantarte años después. Tengo un agujero de ocho años en mi vida. Sos el único que me puede ayudar, Víctor.
> VICTOR: Pasaron muchas cosas en estos años... Puede que no te guste enterarte.
> VEIRAVÉ: ¿Qué otra me queda, Víctor?

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second.

[12] Although a fictional character, Veiravé is based on a famous censor, Miguel Paulino Tato, who was in charge of the Cinema Censorship Board between 1974 and 1978.

Veiravé needs to write something in that blank space. He needs not only to reconstruct but also to construct a story in the empty spaced of the ellipsis. In order to achieve this he also sets out on a search on which he questions those people who knew him before his blackout. This includes an old friend, owner of a cinema, and Ramos Larsen's son. However, during the eight years that Veiravé has no memory of, the former has lost a son at the hands of the military without receiving any help from Veiravé. Likewise, Ramos Larsen has died in exile after refusing to accept the cuts imposed by Veiravé to his last movie.

Laura's images, which Veiravé has carefully edited before his blackout, constitute the only point of continuity between his present and his past. They are the only things that have found a way to be written and, in this case too, as in the other films, this writing has been done upon film.

La sonámbula presents at a first level of reading the crossing of two temporalities: the first one in Eva Rey's (Sofía Viruboff) dream — filmed in black and white — and the second in her waking life — in colour. In this reading, the two temporalities never meet, except for certain things from Eva's waking life that enter her dream as memories. This interpretation is confirmed in one of the last scenes of the film in which one of the characters, suddenly understanding the relationship between his own existence and Eva's dream, tries to prevent her waking up:

> ¿Yo soy el único que entiende? [...] Eva, ¡contale la verdad! Decile la verdad! Decile que vas a despertar, que vas a estar en tu verdadera casa. ¡Si ella sale, si ella logra salir, es el fin, el fin del mundo! El fin del mundo no es un meteorito que choca contra la tierra, no es una explosión nuclear. ¡El fin del mundo es una mujer que despierta!.

However, besides this relationship between dream and waking life — explicit in the title *La sonámbula* — there is a series of operations regarding temporal manipulation which involve memory — explicit in the subtitle *Memorias del futuro*.

The first shots of the film show images in colour of a house in the countryside, accompanied by pleasant music, which emphasise the peacefulness and tranquillity of this time and place. A backward travelling slowly moves away — leaving behind the images of the house, its garden, the train station — and projects itself upon the railways. This camera movement stresses the feeling of a transition from one reality to a new one.

This opening scene is followed by a series of images in black and white, edited in parallel with electronic music, which produces the feeling of a forward travelling through an underground tunnel. The sequence of shots thus establishes a temporal relationship between a peaceful past at the country house and a grim present in the city of Buenos Aires in the year 2010 (the time the enunciation is set).

In this present time, the government has been experimenting with a pacifying gas (named "nihil 2"[13]) for the control of people at demonstrations. During this research, an experiment designed to test the gas has as an unexpected consequence the collective loss of memory of 300.000 people. Due to this, the government establishes a "rehabilitation" plan for those who have been "affected" by the gas to reconstruct their past. Nevertheless some of these persons — among them, a "social control agent" named Ariel Kluge (Eusebio Poncela) — suspect that the history they are compelled to return to is not really their own. This generates a resistance movement, which has as its main objective the flight from the city to meet a mythical leader named Gauna.

A year and a half after the "accident", Eva appears wandering through the city without knowing who she is. She is apprehended by security forces and taken to the Research Centre responsible for the rehabilitation programme (the *Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas*). There, her memories are recorded on a computer, reproducing in colour the first scenes of the films. However, this time they are shown in a forward travelling, thus giving the idea of a return to the country house.

The director of the Centre discovers that these images — in which Gauna appears — are not memories but anticipations of the future. He then decides to free Eva so that she might lead him to Gauna. The agent chosen to follow her is Ariel Kluge.

The resignification of the first shots of the films — first attributed to a past and now to a future — establishes a new frame for the conception of memory as the necessary temporal continuity for identity. As for Veiravé in *El Censor*, the only continuity between Eva and her past / future is made up of images. These images are handed out to Ariel at the

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[13] This is the name that appears in the catalogues of the INCAA, but is not mentioned in the film.

Research Centre: "Llévese éstos. Son sus sueños, sus imágenes". Images belong to someone as do his/her dreams. When Ariel analyses these images at home, his little son associates them with a movie.

Ariel and Eva are the only two characters who pass from one dimension to the other — from dream to waking, from black and white to colour, from the future to the past. The relationship is inverted: whilst at the beginning of the film Eva finds herself in an extraneous space; at the end, it is Ariel who cannot find his history in this new dimension. At the end of the film, Ariel reaches Eva's — and Gauna's — house only to find out that she does not remember anything of her dream. When he tries to recover his own time, by phoning his wife, a message indicates that the number dialled does not exist. Ariel thus ends imprisoned between two temporalities: a dream, of which he is the only survivor with any recollection, and a reality, of which he does not remember anything. This is the same situation in which Eva found herself at the beginning of the film.

Eva's amnesia, which prevents her from remembering the most elementary signs of her identity, does not entail oblivion as such, but rather, "that which cannot be forgotten" even if she does not know what it is. It is precisely this "not being able to remember something that one does not know" which we have referred to as "no oblivion". When Eva is asked about the location of the country house she replies: "no lo sé; pero tengo que ir allá" and Gauna is designated by Ariel as a ghost ("No quiero seguir a ningún fantasma"). Paradoxically, at the end of the film, Gauna acquires body and Ariel is displaced to the space of "no oblivion", as a memory of that which the others do not remember.

The government's experiments with the population's memory (the "nihil 2") and the number of victims (300.000) in the year 2010 — in a travelling forward, one could say — could also be read — in a travelling backwards — in relation to Argentina's recent experience of the absolution laws and pardons and the "30.000 desaparecidos". The past repeats itself with small alterations in a cyclical movement. The memories of the past become *memories of the future*.

In 1996, twenty years after the military coup, Eduardo Aliverti shot a documentary entitled *Malajunta*. This ends with a similar reflection regarding the relationship between memory and the future:

> No olvidar: porque todo tiempo pasado no fue mejor y porque mejor estar alertas y activos, para no vivir entre *recuerdos del futuro*.

V.   CINEMA AS MNEMONIC MACHINE

The films that have been surveyed in this chapter are not the only cultural manifestations of the 90s that take memory as their topic. As has been mentioned, the remarks made regarding cinema could, at least in some aspects, be extended to the social discourse of *fin-de-siècle* Argentina. However, cinema reveals this relationship in a distinct manner. And it does so, not because of occupying a privileged position in relation to the "social imaginary" of a period — as Sigfried Kracauer proposed regarding pre-nazi German cinema[14] — but instead, because the texts themselves propose a relationship between memory and film. In the plots of the films, the only way the characters have to recuperate a (hi)story which has been erased or not even written is through images. In this sense, cinema not only takes on the topic of memory to thematize it, but the medium itself is postulated as a space for the construction of memory.

One could ask: what else is writing but an attempt at making present what is absent and how could this be avoided in relation to those deaths that have not been written in any form (insofar as "disappearance" consists precisely of that). If, as Slavoj Žižek points out following Lacan, funeral rites exemplify symbolization at its purest, this is the only way the dead can be assigned a place in society, thus assuring that they remain dead, that is, that they do not return. In the analysis of contemporary mass culture cinema, Žižek finds that "the return of the living dead" — in such films as *Halloween* (Carpenter), *Friday the Thirteenth* (Cunningham) or *The Night of the Living Dead* (Romero)— has a psychoanalytical explanation:

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[14] As was pointed out in the first chapter, Kracauer considers that films reflect the mentality of the society in which they are produced for two reasons: the collective character of cinematographic production and its mass reception.

Apropos of this phenomenon, let us then ask a naive and elementary question: why do the dead return? The answer offered by Lacan is the same as that found in popular culture: *because they were not properly buried*, i.e., because something went wrong with their obsequies. The return of the dead is a sign of a disturbance in the symbolic rite, in the process of symbolization; the dead return as collectors of some unpaid symbolic debt. [...] The two great traumatic events of the holocaust and the gulag are, of course, exemplary cases of the return of the dead in the twentieth century. The shadows of their victims will continue to chase us as "living dead" until we give them a decent burial, until we integrate the trauma of their death into our historical memory. (Zizek 1991: 23; italics in the original).

Without the rite the dead are not yet in death but instead in that intermediate space of the apparition (Lacan), of the spectre (Derrida), of the "no oblivion"(Loraux). In Argentine society, the permanence of these spectres has been sought by certain human rights groups as a way of resisting oblivion and as an instrument in the demand for justice[15]. Cinema holds on the screen a place where these apparitions can be staged, a space in which they can be written, not to overcome them but to perpetuate them. In memory.

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[15] This has been the policy of *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in the trend presided over by Hebe de Bonafini, which still demands "aparición con vida". See Triquell 1997.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this study we spoke of a certain "mark of the dictatorship" which previous critics had observed in postdictatorship Argentine cinema. We also mentioned that this mark could be related to a rather more general discussion surrounding the relationship between cinema and "the extra-cinematographic" — be it of a political, social or historical order. This relationship — which the films postulated in their opening titles and notices — allowed us to relate aesthetic processes to certain events of a political or historical order.

The analysis was limited to the consideration of a "series". From it, it was possible to establish a genre, which could account for certain narrative, rhetorical or stylistic options in the corpus. However, although the genre established as *documelodrama* can indeed account for the films of the series, its extent is larger, insofar as many films not considered in the series could be included in its scope. Within the series — defined at first through a common thematic — the *documelodrama* genre establishes a certain form of relationship between the represented and its representation under the form of a specific enunciational contract which, though characteristic of the series analysed, is not exclusive to it. This means that the conventions of the genre could also be found within other thematics and in other cinematographies.

Regarding the relationship between that which is being represented and its representation, certain semiotic developments allowed us to transpose this problematic to that of the "reality effect" which certain texts produce in their reception. This first displacement of the problem establishes a distance from those theories which, in one way or another, rely on the notion of mimesis, whether in its classical meaning — as a certain kind of realism would when speaking of a work as "mirror" or "window on the world".

Thus, rather than searching for a relationship — of correspondence, homology, reflection, etc. — between a given *énoncé* and its referent, we opted for considering the enunciational *dispositif* of a text as the point of articulation between two different systems: the textual and the social. The particular ambiguity that this notion carries since Benveniste's first formulations can be thought in positive terms as a mode of pointing out the necessary relationship between the textual subjects — constructed by the text — and the social subjects — equally constructed as social agents but from outside the text. If such an ambiguity has something to teach us it is that one should look for the relationship between both systems in this inflection and not, as has been the norm, at the level of the *énoncé*. In this respect, the multiple instances of both textual constructions and social subjects involved in the production of a film, make of cinema a fertile ground for the analysis of textual enunciation in general.

Enunciational *dispositifs* allow for the projection of texts upon the extratext, articulating the positions of the textual subjects — enunciator and enunciatee — upon those of the social subjects involved — producers and receptors, filmmakers and spectators. At the same time, in the social circulation of texts, these *dispositifs* are closely related to the second notion that has been analysed: that of cinematographic genre.

By considering the definition of cinematographic genres in relation to the texts's enunciational *dispositifs* and in particular to the place assigned to the spectator in the latter, it is possible to surmount both the immanentist perspective — according to which a genre would be defined by the texts's intrinsic characteristics — as well as its sociological counterpart — according to which such a definition would depend, almost exclusively, on the commercial circulation of the industry's product.

Thus, if cinematographic genres can be defined through the enunciational *dispositifs* present in texts, it is possible to establish a certain continuity between text and extratext. This continuity can also be perceived through the subjects involved in each of these levels — at least as a choice of the social subject regarding the

acceptance or rejection of the place assigned in the reading contract under the form of textual subjects. That is, if the notion of genre can simultaneously define certain intrinsic characteristics of the texts and a particular mode of social circulation it is only insofar as there is the possibility of establishing both a continuity and a difference between the empty space represented by textual subjects and the social subjects called upon to fill them. These blank spaces appear, from the theory we postulate, defined only by a certain competence, in the construction of which passions play a fundamental role.

As can be deduced from the analysis of the *docudrama* genre within postdictatorship Argentine cinema, the possibility of assigning social effects to certain films largely depends on the places assigned to spectators within the texts and on the ways they are occupied. In this respect, the present work has not tried to develop research on audiences, but has, instead preferred to focus on the rather more general figure of the spectator. This does not entail ignoring the contributions which could be obtained from other perspectives. Moreover, a theory of cinematographic genres as outlined in this thesis might assist the development of further research seeking to analyse the place of particular social actors in certain textual constructions in respect of gender, sex, race, ethnicity, etc.

Through the scheme outlined above, which articulates, as has been mentioned, two different systems — the social and the textual — it was possible to approach the films of the corpus in terms of a specific genre and thematic — the dictatorship in the *documelodrama*. The relationship between these two systems also allowed us to relate the different positions assigned to the spectator to different socio-political moments.

However, besides the periodization established for the specific context of production of the films under analysis, the displacement observed in the positions of the subjects of enunciation — both enunciator and enunciatee — cannot only describe specific modifications within Argentine cinema but also suggest

potentialities in the cinematographic apparatus as such. This is the case of the figures analysed under the terms "testimony", "denunciation" and "memory".

In the first case, the figure of testimony appears, in the films produced in Argentina during the first two years of democracy, as the construction of a place for the spectator as witness. This particular characteristic of the films of the corpus could be extended, as has been suggested in the corresponding chapter, to cinema as a whole. Indeed, in this medium, the fiduciary contract between enunciator and enunciatee necessarily involves a practice of testimony. As pointed out, the spectator's identification — in the form of the enunciatee — with the eye and the ear of the camera constitutes him/her as *Histor*, the witness who knows because s/he has seen.

In the second period, the functions assigned to the spectator in the particular group of films analysed could also be extended to the medium in general. The films examined construct the enunciatee as a subject of action, a subject with the competence to operate transformations at an extratextual level. This possibility of transforming the social space through cinema — and also through other arts — grounds a whole line of artistic production which believes in the possibility of art's modifying social or political conditions. Denunciation cinema, as we have termed it, adds to a list of artistic movements that sought these transformations, from socialist realism to the New Latin American Cinema.

Finally, texts analysed in the third period propose a relationship of continuity between images — and cinema as a way of registering them — and memory. Leaving aside the connections that certain critics would establish between cinema and the "social imaginary" of a given time, in these films one can read an attempt at projecting the particular relationship between the protagonists and their memories to cinema as a medium and, if not a collective memory, at least a collective notion of memory. The intersection between cinema and memory produces interesting displacements from the texts to the extratext. In order to explore this relationship, the films make explicit their mechanisms of enunciation in different ways. The images that the characters observe and upon which they construct their memory —

photographs, 8 mm. movies, films, digital recordings — have a correlation in the film that the spectator is watching. The figure of memory is closely related to this game of Chinese boxes in which the spectators are asked — through the construction of the enunciatee — to do with " their own images" as the characters do with theirs. That is, to turn them into memory.

A last word might be necessary regarding the results expounded in these pages. Although the main line of development of the thesis consisted in the analysis of Argentine cinematographic production during the postdictatorship period. in the course of this analysis, several other possible areas of research were encountered. These refer to a theory of discourse, a theory of cinematographic enunciation, a theory of cinematographic genres and, finally, a theory of spectatorship. Not being able to pursue all of them a choice was necessary. For this reason, although the main theoretical line that ends in these conclusions is sustained upon the analysis of the specific corpus, the consequences deriving from it leave scope for future developments which, as opposed to the former, are far from concluded here.

APPENDIX 1: FILMS*

DOCUDRAMA

La noche de los lápices (Olivera 1986)
Pasajeros de una pesadilla (Ayala 1984)
El caso María Soledad (Olivera 1993).

TESTIMONY

La historia oficial (Luis Puenzo 1984)
Los chicos de la guerra (Bebe Kamin 1984)
En retirada (Juan Carlos Desanzo 1984)
Cuarteles de invierno (Lautaro Murúa 1984)
Sentimientos... Mirta de Liniers a Estambul (Jorge Coscia & Guillermo Saura 1985)
El exilio de Gardel (Fernando Solanas 1985)
Contar hasta diez (Oscar Barney Finn 1985)
El rigor del destino (Gerardo Vallejo 1985)
Los días de junio (Alberto Fischerman 1985)
Sofía (Alejandro Doria 1986)
El dueño del sol (Rodolfo Mórtola 1986)
A dos aguas (Carlos Olguín 1986).
Made in Argentina (Juan José Jusid 1986)

DENUNCIATION

Memorias y olvidos (Feldman 1986-87)
Los dueños del silencio (Carlos Lemos 1986-1987)
La deuda interna (Miguel Pereira 1987)
Revancha de un amigo (Santiago Carlos Oves 1987)
Bajo otro sol (Francisco D'Intino 1987)
El amor es una mujer gorda (Alejandro Agresti 1987)
La amiga (Jeanine Meerapfel 1988)
Sur (Fernando Solanas 1988)

MEMORY

Un lugar en el mundo (Adolfo Aristarain 1992)
Un muro de silencio (Lita Stantic 1992)
Amigomío (Jeanine Meerapfel 1993)
Buenos Aires viceversa (Alejandro Agresti 1996)
El censor (Eduardo Calcagno 1995)
La sonámbula (Fernando Spiner 1997)

LA NOCHE DE LOS LÁPICES (THE NIGHT OF THE PENCILS)

The title of the film recalls an event that took place on 16 September 1976 in the City of La Plata. On this date security forces kidnapped seven high school students who were demanding a reduction in bus fares. The film describes — following the testimony of Pablo Díaz, the only survivor — the life of the youth before being kidnapped, their detention, and their suffering at a *Centro de detención clandestino*.

YEAR: 1986
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Aries Cinematográfica Argentina S.A. (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Fernando Ayala
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Alejandro Sessa
SCREENPLAY: Daniel Kon, Héctor Olivera, based on the book of the same title by María Seoane and Héctor Ruiz Nuñez
DIRECTOR: HÉCTOR OLIVERA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Lizzie Otero
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Leonardo Rodríguez Solís
SET DECORATOR: María Julia Bertotto
COSTUME DESIGN: María Julia Bertotto
MUSICAL SCORE: José Luis Castiñeira de Dios
EDITOR: Miguel López
SOUND: Norberto Castronuovo
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Carlos Latreyte
LENGTH: 105 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 4 Sept. 1986, Cine Broadway (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Alejo García Pintos, Vita Escardó, Pablo Novarro, Adriana Salonia, Pablo Machado, José María Monje Berbel, Leonardo Sbaraglia, Héctor Bidonde, Tina Serrano, Lorenzo Quinteros, Alfonso De Gracizia, Manual Callau, Francisco Cocuzza, Juan Manuel Tenuta, Andrea Bonelli.

PASAJEROS DE UNA PESADILLA (PASSENGERS OF A NIGHTMARE)

The film develops a story of corruption, abuse and death in a high-class family of Buenos Aires. The script is inspired by the book *Yo, Pablo Schocklender*, written in the prison of Villa Devoto by Pablo Schoklender, who was accused, together with his brother, of the murder of his parents.

YEAR: 1984
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Aries Cinematográfica Argentina S.A. (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Luis Osvaldo Repetto
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Héctor Olivera, Alejandro Sessa
SCREENPLAY: Jorge Goldemberg
DIRECTOR: FERNANDO AYALA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Alberto Lecchi
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Victor Hugo Caula
SET DECORATOR: Emilio Basaldúa
COSTUME DESIGN: Horace Lannes
MUSIC SCORE: Oscar Cardozo Ocampo
EDITOR: Eduardo López
SOUND: Norberto Castronuovo
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Mario Faroni
LENGTH: 95 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: June 14 1984, Cine Gran Rex (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Federico Luppi, Alicia Bruzzo, Gilda Lousek, Gabriel Lenn, Lydia Lamaison, German Palacios, Gabriela Flores, Nelly Promo, Dalma Millevos, Esteban Massari, Golde Flami, Héctor Maselli, Ignacion Finder, Jacques Arndt, Salo Pasik.

EL CASO MARÍA SOLEDAD (THE CASE "MARÍA SOLEDAD")

The title of the film refers to a case that took place in the Province of Catamarca in the north of Argentina, in which a teenage girl was murdered. Among the suspects was the son of a highly influential politician, from a very traditional family. The film relates the life and death of the girl and the activities of her friends and family in their quest for truth and justice.

YEAR: 1993
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Tercer Milenio & Aries Cinematográfica Argentina S.A.
PRODUCER: Fernando Ayala
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Alejandro Sessa
SCREENPLAY: Graciela Maglie & Héctor Olivera
DIRECTOR: HÉCTOR OLIVERA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Alberto Lecchi
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Juan Carlos Lenardi
SET DECORATOR: Aldo Guglielmone
COSTUME DESIGN: Alicia Macchi
MUSIC SCORE: Osvaldo Montes
EDITOR: Eduardo López
SOUND: Jorge Stavrópulos
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Mario Faroni
LENGTH: 125 minutes
DATE OF RELEASE: 25 March 1993
ACTORS: Carolina Fal, Valentina Bassi, Juana Hidalgo, Rosario Paula Moyano, Ramona Farinatti, Lidia Catalano, Francisco Cocuzza, Juan Palomino, Silvina Ponzetti, Mariana Alonso, Marilyn Varela, Valeria Schwalb, Balén Blanco, Jovita de Rodríguez, Alfonso de Grazia, María José Demare, Luis Medina Castro.

LA HISTORIA OFICIAL (THE OFFICIAL VERSION)

In 1983, during the final days of the military dictatorship, Alicia, a highschool teacher, who has up to then lived happily with her husband and their adoptive daughter, starts questioning herself about the possibility that the girl might be the child of a "missing" couple. A series of encounters with different people compel her to gain consciousness of what has been going on in the country during the years of the so call "dirty war".

YEAR: 1984
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Cinemanía S.A. – Historias Cinematográficas S.A. (Buenos Aires), in association with Progress Communications (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Marcelo Piñeyro
SCREENPLAY: Aída Bortnik, Luis Puenzo
DIRECTOR: LUIS PUENZO
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Raúl Outeda
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Félix Monti
SET DECORATOR: Abel Facello
COSTUME DESIGN: Ticky García Estévez
MUSICAL SCORE: Atilio Stampone
EDITOR: Juan Carlos Macías
SOUND: Abelardo Kuschnir
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Carlos Latreyte
LENGTH: 112 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 3 April 1985, Cine Monumental (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Héctor Alterio, Norma Aleandro, Chunchuna Villafañe, María Luisa Robledo, Jorge Petraglia, Analía Castro, Hugo Arana, Guillermo Battaglia, Chela Ruiz, Patricio Contreras, Aníbal Morixe, Daniel Lagos, Augusto Larreta, Laura Palmucci, Leal Rey.

LOS CHICOS DE LA GUERRA (BOYS OF THE WAR)

The title of the film refers to the young men (18 years old) who were sent to fight in the Falklands/ Malvinas war. Through the lives of three of them, belonging to different cultural and social backgrounds, the film attempts to reconstruct the history of a generation that grew up under the military government and were sent, badly equipped and poorly trained, to fight, and in some cases die, in the islands.

YEAR: 1984
PRODUCTION COMPANY: K-films SRL (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Kiko Tenebaum
SCREENPLAY: Daniel Kon, Bebe Kamín, with María Teresa Ferrari, from the book by Daniel Kon.
DIRECTOR: BEBE KAMÍN
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Ladislao Hlousek
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Yito Blanc
SET DECORATOR: María de los Ángeles Favale
COSTUME DESIGN: María Albertinazzi, Nora Renán
MUSICAL SCORE: Luis María Serra
EDITOR: Luis Mutti
SOUND: José Luis Díaz
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Perla Lichtenstein
LENGTH: 110 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 2 Aug. 1984, Cine Monumental (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Héctor Alterio, Carlos Carella, Ulises Dumont, Marta González, Tina Serrano, Miguel Ángel Solá, Alfonso de Grazia, juan Leyrado, Boy Olmi Jr., Eduardo Pavlovsky, Elvira Vicario, Lizardo Laphitz, Gabriela Giardino, Luis Agustoni, María Socas.

EN RETIRADA (RETREATING)

After the military dictatorship, a sinister character, named "El Oso", formerly part of the non-official police forces, finds himself suddenly unemployed. Abandoned by his previous bosses and friends, he needs to find a new way to earn a living in a democratic period. However, his old ways and modes have not changed.

YEAR: 1984
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Arte 10 S.A. (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Hugo Lamónica y Asociados (Bs. As.)
SCREENPLAY: José Pablo Feinmann, Santiago Carlos Oves, Juan Carlos Desanzo
DIRECTOR: JUAN CARLOS DESANZO
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Santiago Carlos Oves
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Juan Carlos Lenardi
SET DECORATOR: Osvaldo Rey
COSTUME DESIGN: Angélica Fuentes
MUSIC SCORE: Baby López Fürst
EDITOR: Sergio Zóttola
SOUND: Carlos Abatte
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Ricardo Feliú
LENGTH: 87 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 28 June 1984, Cine Monumental (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Rodolfo Ranni, Gerardo Sofovich, María Vaner, Julio de Grazia, Osvaldo Terranova, Lydia Lamaison, Villanueva Cosse, Edda Bustamante, Osvaldo Tesser, Jorge Sassi, Pablo Brichta, Max Berlinger, Lita Fuentes, Theodoro McNabel, Charly García Nieto.

CUARTELES DE INVIERNO (WINTER HEADQUARTERS)

During the military dictatorship, a decaying boxer and a musician are invited to take part in a popular festival organised by the authorities of a small provincial town. Being both victims of the military repression, a solid friendship grows between the two men.

YEAR: 1984
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Guillermo Smith producciones SA (Bs. As.) in association with Totalfilms SRL (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Guillermo Smith

SCREENPLAY: Pablo Murúa Tolnay, Lautaro Murúa from the novel by Osvaldo Soriano.
DIRECTOR: LAUTARO MURÚA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Alicia Miguez Saavedra, Pablo Murúa Tolnay
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Aníbal González Paz
MUSICAL SCORE: Astor Piazzolla
EDITOR: Sergio Zóttola
SOUND: Roberto Bozzano
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Pedro Pereyra
LENGTH: 115 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 6 Sept. 1984, Atlas Belgrano (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Oscar Ferrigno, Eduardo Pavlovsky, Ulises Dumont, Arturo Maly, Enrique Almada, Adriana Ferrer, Patricio Contreras, Luis Luque, Gogó Andreu, Jorge Morales, Aldo Romero, Oscar Acosta, Eduardo Nóbili, Reneé Roxana, Santos Zacarías.

SENTIMIENTOS. MIRTA... DE LINIERS A ESTAMBUL (FEELINGS
MIRTA... FROM LINIERS TO ISTANBUL)

Mirta, born in Liniers, narrates the journey that took her from this neighbourhood to the city centre and from there to Sweden and finally Istanbul. The first part of the journey as a student in the highly politicised Argentine university of the seventies; the second, following her boyfriend, Enrique, as a political exile after the military coup of 1976, and the third with a young Turkish emigrant, with whom she decides to share her life.

YEAR: 1985
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Clip SCI (Bs. As.) in association with Víctor Bó
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: Guillermo Saura
SCREENPLAY: Jorge Coscia, from an idea by Julio Fernández Baraibar
DIRECTOR: JORGE COSCIA, GUILLERMO SAURA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Roberto Aschieri
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Diego Bonacina
SET DECORATOR: Guillermo Palacios
COSTUME DESIGN: Guillermo Palacios
MUSICAL SCORE: Leo Sujatovich
EDITOR: Dario Tedesco, Liliana Nadal
SOUND: José María Silva
PRODUCTION MANAGER: José Luis Rey Lago
LENGTH: 100 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 21 May 1987, Cine Monumental (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Emilia Mazer, Norbereto Díaz, Víctor Laplace, María Vaner, Guillermo Battaglia, Arturo Bonín, Cristina Banegas, Ricardo Bartis, Saim Urgay, Elvia Andreoli, Marcelo Alfaro, Mercedes Morán, Fernando Alvarez, Alberto Busaid, Claudio Gallardou.

EL EXILIO DE GARDEL. TANGOS (GARDEL'S EXILE. TANGOS)

The film portrays a group of Argentine exiles living in Paris, reflecting on their problems, sorrows, and dreams. One of them, a *bandoneon* player, "Juan Dos", attempts to stage a "*tanguedia*" (a mixture of tango and tragedy); but the script is being written by "Juan Uno", who remains in Buenos Aires. The final act never arrives and therefore the tanguedia can not be finished.

YEAR: 1985
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Cinesur S.A. (Bs. As.) / Tercine Sarl (Paris)
PRODUCER: Fernando E. Solanas, Envar El Kadri
SCREENPLAY: Fernando E. Solanas
DIRECTOR: FERNANDO E. SOLANAS
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Teo Kofman
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Félix Monti
SET DECORATOR: Luis Diego Pedreira, Jimmy Vansteenkiste
COSTUME DESIGN: Judy Shrewsbury, Luis Diego Pedreira
MUSICAL SCORE: Astor Piazzolla
EDITOR: Luis César D'Angiolillo, Jacques Gaillard
SOUND: Adrián Nataf
COREOGRAPHER: Susana Tambutti & Margarita Balli, Robert Thomas & Adolfo Andrade
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Sabina Sigler
LENGTH: 130 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 20 March 1986, Cine Broadway (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Marie Láforet, Philippe Léotard, Miguel Ángel Solá, Marina Vlady, Georges Wilson, Lautaro Murúa, Ana María Picchio, Gabriela Toscano, Michel Etcheverry, Claude Melki, Gregorio Manzur, Leonor Galindo, Eduardo Pavlovsky, Jorge Six, Guillermo Núñez.

CONTAR HASTA DIEZ (COUNTING UP TO TEN)

The film tells the story of two brothers. One of them, Pedro, is seriously involved, as his father was before him, in politics; the other, Ramon, is a scientist. After the military coup, Pedro disappears and Ramón travels from Viedma, in the south of Argentina, to Buenos Aires, to try to find him. The search eventually leads him, not only to his brother but also to his own history.

YEAR: 1985
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Oscar Barney Finn Producciones (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Paik de la Torre
SCREENPLAY: Oscar Barney Finn
DIRECTOR: OSCAR BARNEY FINN
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Alicia Girbal
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Juan Carlos Lenardi
SET DECORATOR: Alfredo Iglesias
MUSICAL SCORE: Luis María Serra
EDITOR: Julio Di Risio
SOUND: Jorge Stravopoulos
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Mario Vitali
LENGTH: 100 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 2 May 1985, Iguazú
ACTORS: Oscar Marínez, Héctor Alterio, Arturo Maly, María Luisa Robledo, Julia von Grolman, Eva Franco, Arturo Puig, Selva Alemán, Olga Zubarry, China Zorrilla, Osvaldo Bonet, Arturo Bonín, María José Demare, Susana Lanteri, Elena Tasisto.

EL RIGOR DEL DESTINO (DESTINY'S INEVITABILITY)

A young boy returns to Tucumán, in northern Argentina, after seven years of exile. He meets his grandfather, and finds a diary written by his father, a labour lawyer who died of a heart attack in 1976. With these elements he reconstructs his father's struggle for better conditions for sugar cane workers.

YEAR: 1985
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Producciones Gerardo Vallejo, Eduardo Carey y Asociados
PRODUCER: Roque Marull
SCREENPLAY: Gerardo Vallejo
DIRECTOR: GERARDO VALLEJO
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Jaime Lozano
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Yito Blanc
SET DECORATOR: Abel Facello
COSTUME DESIGN: Beatriz Di Benedetto
MUSIC SCORE: José Luis Castiñeira de Dios
EDITOR: Luis Mutti
SOUND: Miguel Babuini
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Carlos Olveira
LENGTH: 100 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 29 August 1985, Cine Broadway (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Carlos Carella, Alberto Benegas, Víctor Laplace, Leonor Manso, Ana María Picchio, Alejandro Copley, Francisco Galíndez, Rafael Desantis, Alejo Avila, Rosa Avila, Silvia Quintana, Fernando Arce, Liliana Barrionuevo, Alfredo Fénix, Susana Romero.

LOS DÍAS DE JUNIO (JUNE DAYS)

In June 1982, during the Falklands / Malvinas war and the Pope's visit to Argentina, a man returns from exile and meets with his old friends. The four of them have suffered, in different ways, the violence of the dictatorship. Facing a new violence together they are able to come to terms with the past and the present and look forward to a new beginning.

YEAR: 1985
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Fischerman-Santos Productores Asociados de Cine y TV SRL (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Quique Santos
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Natalio Koziner
SCREENPLAY: Alberto Fischerman with Gustavo Wagner, Marina Gaillard
DIRECTOR: ALBERTO FISCHERMAN
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Santiago Carlos Oves
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Marcelo Camorino
SET DECORATOR: Jorge Sarudiansky
COSTUME DESIGN: Mirta Tesolín, Beatriz Trento
MUSIC SCORE: Luis María Serra
EDITOR: Juan Carlos Macías, Carlos Márquez
SOUND: Norberto Castronuovo
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Eduardo Aparicio
LENGTH: 90 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 13 June 1985, Cinema Uno (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Norman Briski, Víctor Laplace, Arturo Maly, Lorenzo Quinteros, Julia von Groiman, Ana María Picchio, Inda Ledesma, Guillermo Battaglia, Aldo Braga, Mercedes Alonso, Joaquin Bonet, Mónica Galán, Ricardo Fasán, Gustavo Garzón, Agustina Herrera.

SOFÍA (SOFÍA)

Sofía is a middle-aged woman whose husband has been kidnapped by the military. Ill and frighten, she wanders around the city looking for a place to hide. In these circumstances she meets Pedro, a teenager, who will fall in love with her and try to help her.

YEAR: 1985
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Rosafrey SRL – Susy Suranyi & Asociados (Buenos Aires.)
PRODUCER: Diana Frey
SCREENPLAY: Jacobo Langsner, Alejandro Doria based on idea by Miguel Rodríguez
DIRECTOR: ALEJANDRO DORIA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Felipe López
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Miguel Rodríguez
SET DECORATOR: María de los Ángeles Favale
COSTUME DESIGN: María de los Ángeles Favale
MUSICAL SCORE: Edvard Grieg (The Last Spring)
EDITOR: Silvia Ripoll
SOUND: Abelardo Kuschnir
LENGTH: 98 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 16 April 1987, Broadway Cinema (Buenos Aires)
ACTORS: Dora Barei, Héctor Alterio, Graciela Dufau, Alejandro Milrud, Oscar Cruz, Mónica Villa, Nicolás Frei, Rafael Rodríguez, Alberto Busaid, Ana Sadi, Damián Canavezzio, Marcelo Serre, Fabián Gianola, Walter Peña, José Andrada.

EL DUEÑO DEL SOL (THE OWNER OF THE SUN)

A powerful landowner, close to dying, observes how his four children fight for his legacy, encouraging the dispute. A political allegory, each of the four children might be seen as representing a sector of Argentine society.

YEAR: 1986
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Rodolfo Mórtola Producciones (Bs. As.) in association with Horacio R. Casares Porducciones S.A. (Bs. As.)
PRODUCER: Isidro Miguel
SCREENPLAY: Rodolfo Mórtola in collaboration with Jorge Zanada, Daniel Fernández
DIRECTOR: RODOLFO MÓRTOLA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Roberto Aschieri
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Aníbal Di Salvo
ART DIRECTOR: Aníbal Di Salvo
SET DECORATOR: Miguel Ángel Lumaldo, Enrique Bordolini
COSTUME DESIGN: Pepe Uría
MUSICAL SCORE: Mario Ferré
EDITOR: Jorge Pappalardo
SOUND: Miguel Babuini
LENGTH: 110 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 11 June 1987, Cine Metro (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Alfredo Alcón, Gustavo Belatti, Noemí Frenkel, Luis Luque, Emilia Mazer, Cristian Díaz, Elisa Livolsi, Marcos Bauer.

A DOS AGUAS (NEITHER HERE NOR THERE)

Rey returns to Argentina in 1976. The first Christmas Eve of democracy in 1983, he meets by chance with Isabel, who has just returned from exile. Their stories intersect with the country's history, making evident the difficulties of coming to terms with the past and its consequences in the present.

YEAR: 1986
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Avica Producciones SRL – Jorge Estrada Mora Producciones
PRODUCER: Carlos Olguín
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Sabina Sigler
SCREENPLAY: Carlos Olguín, Martha Gavensky
DIRECTOR: CARLOS OLGUÍN
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Jaime Graschinsky
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Rodolfo Denevi
SET DECORATOR: Julio Lavallén
MUSIC SCORE: Rodolfo Mederos
EDITOR: Armando Blanco, Jorge Valencia
SOUND: Mario Antognini
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Mercedes Frutos
LENGTH: 80 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 28 April 1988, Maxi 1 (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Miguel Angel Solá, Bárbara Mujica, Jorge Sassi, Cipe Lincovsky, Aldo Braga, Osvaldo Tesser, Mónica Lacoste, Mario Sánchez Rivera, Lucía Elli, Miguel Ruiz Díaz, Antonio Ugo.

MADE IN ARGENTINA (MADE IN ARGENTINA)

The film recounts the story of Osvaldo and Mabel who return to Argentina for a short visit after several years of exile in the USA. In Argentina they meet Mabel's brother, "El Negro" and his wife, "La Yoli", who still live in Lanús, in the Province of Buenos Aires. Each of these characters will assume a different position in relation to staying or leaving the country.

YEAR: 1986
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Juan José Jusid Cine SA (Bs. As.) in association with Progress Communications (Bs. As.)
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Isidro Miguel, Alberto Trigo, Rolando Epstein
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Oscar Kramer
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Eduardo Chappa
SCREENPLAY: Nelly Fernández Tiscornia from his play Made in Lanús
DIRECTOR: JUAN JOSÉ JUSID
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Hugo Colace
SET DECORATOR: Luis Diego Pedreira
MUSICAL SCORE: Emilio Kauderer
EDITOR: Juan Carlos Macías
PRODUCTION MANAGER: José Luis Rey Lago, Juana Sapire
LENGTH: 86 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 14 May 1987, Cine Normandie (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Luis Brandoni, Marta Bianchi, Leonor Manso, Patricio Contreras, Jorge Rivera López, Hugo Arana, Frank Vincent, Alberto Busaid, Mario Luciani, Gabriela Flores, Alejo García Pintos, Paula Natalicio, Debbie Better.

LOS DUEÑOS DEL SILENCIO (THE OWNERS OF SILENCE)

The film is set in 1977, during the military dictatorship. A Swedish journalist goes to Argentina to inquire into the "disappearance" of a young woman. There, he gets involved with a resistance group and tries to take an important document out of the country. However, he is caught by the military and is forced to leave the country.

YEAR: 1986-87
PRODUCTION COMPANY: GC Producciones (Rosario) / Svenska Filminstitutet – Crescendo Filme AB (Estocolmo)
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Gören Lindström, Willy Caligari
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Ricardo Feliú, Hans Llonerheden
SCREENPLAY: Carlos Lemos
DIRECTOR: CARLOS LEMOS
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Mario Mittelman, Erico-Oller Westerberg
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Juan Carlos Lenardi
SET DECORATOR: Miguel Ángel Lumaldo, Niklas Hagve
COSTUME DESIGN: Angélica Fuentes, María Gever
MUSIC SCORE: Luis Di Matteo
EDITOR: Luis Mutti
SOUND: José Grammatico, Mikael Lindgren
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Guillermo Fernández, Lars Blomberg
LENGTH: 98 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 12 April 1987, Cine Broadway (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Thomas Hellberg, Arturo Bonín, Bibi Anderson, Soledad Silveyra, Peter Falk, María del Carmen Valenzuela, Grynet Molvig, María Vaner, Oscar Martínez, Víctor Laplace.

LA DEUDA INTERNA (VERÓNICO CRUZ)

The film recounts the encounter between a rural teacher and a young coya boy living in Chorcán, a small village lost in the North of Argentina. Verónico Cruz was born in 1964 and, although living in a forgotten place, he is enlisted to fight in the Falklands/Malvinas war, where he loses his life in the sinking of the Belgrano. Through this story the film presents a reflection on recent Argentine history and on the marginality of people living in rural communities.

YEAR: 1987
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Yacorite Film Ltd. Cooperativa de Trabajo (San Salvador de Jujuy) / Mainframe Films (London) / Sur
PRODUCER: Julio Lencina, Sasha Menocki
SCREENPLAY: Miguel Pereira, Eduardo Leiva Müller, based on stories by Fortunato Ramos.
DIRECTOR: MIGUEL PEREIRA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Ariel Piluso, Rodolfo Durán
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Gerry Feeny
SET DECORATOR: Kiki Aguiar
COSTUME DESIGN: René Olaguivel
MUSICAL SCORE: Jaime Torres
EDITOR: Gerry Feeny
SOUND: Juana Sapire
LENGTH: 90 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 8 August 1988, Cine Libertador (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Juan José Camero, Gonzálo Morales, René Olaguivel, Guillermo Delgado, Leopoldo Abán, Ana María González, Fortunato Ramos, Juana Daniela Cáceres, Titina Gaspar, Raúl Calles, Leo Salgado, Luis Uceda, Juan Carlos Ocampo, Adolfo Blois.

REVANCHA DE UN AMIGO (A FRIEND'S REVENGE)

After returning from exile in 1982, Ariel starts investigating his father's death and its relation to the military power. This search will eventually lead him to his own past: meeting his former girlfriend, inquiring into the "disappearance" of an old friend, and confronting the reasons that lead him into exile.

YEAR: 1987
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Victor Bó Producciones (Buenos Aires)
PRODUCER: Víctor Bó
SCREENPLAY: Santiago Carlos Oves
DIRECTOR: SANTIAGO CARLOS OVES
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Gabriel Arbós
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Torlaschi
SET DECORATOR: Santiago Elder
COSTUME DESIGN: Trinidad Muñóz Ibáñez
MUSICAL SCORE: Ulises Bultrón
EDITOR: Darío Tedesco
SOUND: Miguel Babuini
LENGTH: 95 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 11 June 1987, Alfa Cinema (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Ricardo Darín, Luisa Kuliok, Rodolfo Ranni, Juan Leyrado, Marcela Ruiz, Golde Flami, Lorenzo Quinteros, Alicia Aller, Adriana Aizenberg, Armando Capó, Rubén Stella, Alberto Busaid, Esteban Massari, Ariel Keller, Felipe Méndez.

BAJO OTRO SOL (UNDER ANOTHER SUN)

After the law of Punto Final, Miguel Ojeda decides to take justice into his own hands, avenging the death of his friend "el Petizo". The film narrates the return of Miguel from an "internal exile", lost in a small village of the Province of Córdoba, the encounters with his old friends and the coming to terms with his past.

YEAR: 1987
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Centro para el Desarrollo de la Cultura Popular & Grupo Nuestra Cultura (Córdoba), in association with Sociedad de Video Independiente
PRODUCER: Belie Muzzo, Ana Charcón, María Arrigoni, Mario Re, Susana Mori, Gladys Suez, Graciela Pizano
SCREENPLAY: Francisco D'Intino, Guillermo López, Federico Nieves, Juan Oliva, upon an idea by Francisco D'Intino
DIRECTOR: FRANCISCO D'INTINO
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Jaime Lozano
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Eduardo Sahar
SET DECORATOR: Fernando Boschetti
MUSICAL SCORE: José Luis Castiñeira de Dios
EDITOR: Enrique Muzio
SOUND: José Grammático
LENGTH: 93 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 11 August 1988, Premier (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Jorge González, Virgini Lago, Miguel Ángel Solá, Ulises Dumont, Carlos Centeno, Laura Cikra.

EL AMOR ES UNA MUJER GORDA (LOVE IS A FAT WOMAN)

José wanders round the city searching for his girlfriend who has "disappeared". In a highly contestatory mood he refuses to accept her death and strongly demands a response from society as a whole. Part of his objectives is to prevent the shooting of a film by an American director, significantly entitled "Punto Final".

YEAR: 1987
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Movimiento Falso (Argentina), Allart's Entreprises B.V. (Holland)
PRODUCER: Osvaldo Pena y Eduardo Alvarez
SCREENPLAY: Alejandro Agresti
DIRECTOR: ALEJANDRO AGRESTI
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Roberto Aschieri, Ignacio Garassino
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Néstor Sanz
SET DECORATOR: Eduardo Fasulo
COSTUME DESIGN: Noemí Bono
MUSICAL SCORE: Paul Michael Van Brugge
EDITOR: René Wiegmans
SOUND: René Wiegmans
LENGTH: 80 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 2 June 1988, Cine Luxor (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Héctor Alterio, Norma Aleandro, Chunchuna Villafañe, María Luisa Robledo, Jorge Petraglia, Analía Castro, Hugo Arana, Guillermo Battaglia, Chela Ruiz, Patricio Contreras, Aníbal Morixe, Daniel lagos, Augusto Larreta, Laura Palmucci, Leal Rey.

LA AMIGA (THE FRIEND)

The film begins with an act of solidarity, of a little girl, María, towards her Jewish schoolmate, Raquel. As time goes by, the two girls grow to become close friends. After the military coup of 1976, María's eldest son "disappears" and she assumes a militant position as a *"Madre de Plaza de Mayo"*. Raquel, after being threatened, decides to go into exile.

YEAR: 1988
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Jorge Estrada Mora Producciones (Argentina), Journal Film (Germany), Alma Film (Germany)
PRODUCER: Jorge Sabaté, Sabina Sigler, Adrián Eduardo Solar, Jorge Estrada Mora
SCREENPLAY: Jeanine Meerapfel, Alcides Chiesa in collaboration with Osvaldo Bayer and Agniezka Holland. Advice from Beda Docampo Feijóo and Juan Bautista Stagnaro.
DIRECTOR: JEANINE MEERAPFEL
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Alcides Chiesa, Alberto Lecchi
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Axel Block
SET DECORATOR: Jorge Marchegiani, Rainer Schaper
COSTUME DESIGN: Jorge Ferrari
MUSICAL SCORE: José Luis Castiñeira de Dios
EDITOR: Juliane Lorenz
SOUND: Dante Amoroso, Gunter Kortwich
LENGTH: 108 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 27 April 1989, Normandie (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Liv Ullman, Cipe Lincovsky, Federico Luppi, Víctor Laplace, Harry Baer, Oscar "Lito" Cruz, Fernán Mirás, Cristina Murta, Nicolás Frei, Amancay Espíndola, Jorge Sabaté.

SUR (SOUTH)

Set in 1983, just after the military dictatorship the film narrates de journey of Floreal, out of prison and back to his home. Guided by "el negro", the ghost of a dead friend, he wanders around the city and encounters several other ghosts, which he must finally faced in order to return to live after seven years of confinement.

YEAR: 1988
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Cinesur (Argentina), Pacific Productions (France)
PRODUCER: Fernando Ezequiel Solanas, Envar el Kadri, Pierre Novat
SCREENPLAY: Fernando Ezequiel Solanas with advise from Mauricio Kartum and Horacio González
DIRECTOR: FERNANDO EZEQUIEL SOLANAS
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Horacio Guisado
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Félix Monti
SET DECORATOR: Fernando Ezequiel Solanas
COSTUME DESIGN: Nené Murúa
MUSICAL SCORE: Astor Piazzolla
EDITOR: Juan Carlos Macías
SOUND: Aníbal Líbenson, Daniel Fainsilberg, Víctor Melillo
LENGTH: 129 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 5 June 1988, Cine Monumental (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Susú Pecoraro, Miguel Ángel Solá, Philippe Leotard, Oscar "Lito" Cruz, Roberto Goyeneche, Ulises Dumont, Gabriela Toscano, Mario Lozano, Nathán Pinzón, Inés Molina, Fito Paéz.

UN LUGAR EN EL MUNDO (A PLACE IN THE WORLD)

After returning from exile, a family settles in the province of San Luis. Following their previous ideals they produce strong changes in a rural community. The mother is a doctor and sets up a health centre. The father forms a cooperative for small farmers and a school for their children. But their world is threaten by the arrival of a German geologist, who is measuring the grounds for a multinational enterprise. The story is told through the eyes of Ernesto, their 12-year-old son.

YEAR: 1991
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Cooperativa de Trabajo La Colmena
PRODUCER: Adolfo Aristarain, Osvaldo Papaleo
SCREENPLAY: Adolfo Aristarain in collaboration with Alberto Lecchi, from an idea by Adolfo Aristarain and Kathy Saavedra
DIRECTOR: ADOLFO ARISTARAIN
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Fernando Bassi
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Ricardo De Angelis (h)
SET DECORATOR: Abel Facello
COSTUME DESIGN: Kathy Saavedra
MUSICAL SCORE: Emilio Kauderer
EDITOR: Eduardo López
SOUND: José Luis Díaz
LENGTH: 120 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 9 April 1992, Ambassador and Atlas Santa Fé (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: José Sacristán, Federico Luppi, Leonor Benedetto, Cecilia Roth, Rodolfo Ranni, Hugo Arana, Gastón Batyi, Mario Alarcón, Lorena del Río, Juan José Ghisalberti, Marcos Woinsky, Hugo Perroni, Eduardo Arias, Roberto Rizzotti, Santiago Chade.

UN MURO DE SILENCIO (A WALL OF SILENCE)

A British filmmaker arrives in Buenos Aires to make a film about the military dictatorship. The script is based on the real life of Silvia and of her first husband, who has "disappeared". Silvia has married again and wants to leave the past behind. The making of the movie will force her, and other characters, to come to terms with their past.

YEAR: 1992
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Aleph Producciones (Argentina), Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía (Mexico), Channel 4 (Great Britain)
PRODUCER: Lita Stantic
SCREENPLAY: Lita Stantic, Graciela Maglie in collaboration with Gabriela Massuh
DIRECTOR: LITA STANTIC
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Claudio Reiter
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Félix Monti
SET DECORATOR: Margarita Jusid
COSTUME DESIGN: Patricia Pernía
MUSICAL SCORE: Néstor Marconi
EDITOR: Juan Carlos Macías
SOUND: Abelardo Kuschnir
LENGTH: 105 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 10 June 1993, Cine Normandie (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Ofelia Medina, Vanessa Redgrave, Lautaro Murúa, Julio Chávez, Lorenzo Quinteros, Soledad Villamil, André Melancon, Marina Fondeville, Ximena Rodríguez, Alberto Sagado, Vita Escardó, Graciela Araujo, Niní Gambier, Aldo Barbero, Rita Cortese.

AMIGOMÍO (AMIGOMÍO)

After the military coup of 1976, and following the "disappearance" of his wife, Carlos is forced into exile with his small son, Amigomío. They start a long journey across South America, which eventually leads them to Ecuador.

YEAR: 1993
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Chelko Producciones (Argentina), Telefilm Saar GmbH (Germany), Malena Films GmbH (Germany), in association with Aleph Producciones (Argentina)
PRODUCER: Martín Buchhorn, Paul Müller, Mirta Reyes
SCREENPLAY: Jeannine Meerapfel and Alcides Chiesa, upon the book "Historias de Papá y Amigomío" by Pablo Bergel.
DIRECTOR: JEANNINE MEERAPFEL and ALCIDES CHIESA
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Marcelo Rembado
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Víctor González
SET DECORATOR: Abel Facello, Dolores Ezcurra
COSTUME DESIGN: Valentina Bari
MUSICAL SCORE: Osvaldo Montes
EDITOR: Andrea Wenzler
SOUND: Paul Oberle, Jorge Stavrópoulos
LENGTH: 114 minutes
DATE AND PLACE OF RELEASE: 6 June 1994, Cine Normandie (Bs. As.)
ACTORS: Daniel Kuzniecka, Diego Mesaglio, Atilio Veronelli, Manuel Tricallotis, Gustavo Luppi, Debora Brandwajnman, Cristoph Baumann, Hugo Pozo, Gabriela Salas, Mario Adorf.

BUENOS AIRES VICEVERSA (BUENOS AIRES VICEVERSA)

Through the story of Daniela, a girl whose parents "disappeared" during the 1976-1983 military government, the film analyses the consequences of the dictatorship in a society where impunity, repression and fear still subsist.

YEAR: 1997
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Agresti – Harding (Buenos Aires), Staccato Films (Holland)
SCREENPLAY: Alejandro Agresti
DIRECTOR: ALEJANDRO AGRESTI
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Ramiro Aisenson
ART DIRECTOR: Constanza Novick, Guillermo Kohen
MUSICAL SCORE: Paul Michael Brugge, Alejandro Agresti, Luis Alberto Spinetta, Pescado Rabioso, Almendra, Sui Generis
EDITOR: Alejandro Agresti, Alejandro Brodersohn
SOUND: Horacio Almada
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Paula Zyngierman
LENGTH: 90 minutes
ACTORS: Vera Fogwill, Fernán Mirás, Nicolás Pauls, Mirta Busnelli, Carlos Roffé, Mario Paolucci.

EL CENSOR (THE CENSOR)

The story vaguely recalls the life of Miguel Paulino Tato, director of the Film Classification Board from 1974 to 1978. The protagonist, called Raul Veiravé, carries out this function normally, but suddenly suffers a blackout in 1976 while watching a film he is supposed to censor. He wakes up in 1984, during democracy, without remembering anything of the eight previous years. He will try to fill this gap in his memory resorting to different characters.

YEAR: 1995
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Eduardo Calcagno and INCAA
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Migual Ángel Fernández Alonso
SCREENPLAY: Alan Pauls upon idea by Eduardo Calcagno, with the collaboration of Jorge Goldemberg
DIRECTOR: EDUARDO CALCAGNO
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Rodolfo Durán
ART DIRECTOR: María Julia Bertotto
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: José María Hermo
MUSICAL SCORE: Luis María Serra
EDITOR: Julio di Risio
SOUND: Marcos de Aguirre
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Miguel Dedovich
ACTORS: Ulises Dumont, Lorenzo Quinteros, Alberto Segado, Rubén Szchumacher, Kika Child, Margara Alonso, Boy Olmi, Mauricio Dayub, Miguel Dedovich, Diego Jalfen, Lucía Zulueta, Patricio Contreras.

LA SONÁMBULA: MEMORIAS DEL FUTURO (SLEEPWALKER: MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE)

The film is set in a futuristic Buenos Aires: It is the year 2010 and a despotic State controls peoples' lives completely. The authorities have been carrying out experiments with a new psychological weapon, which leaves as its result the loss of memory in 300.000 people. Eva Rey appears a year and a half after the "accident" without knowing who she is but with strong memories of a house in the countryside and of a man, who the authorities suspect to be a mythical resistance leader they are searching for, Gauna.

YEAR: 1997
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Guillermo Otero, Jorge Poleri
SCREENPLAY: Ricardo Piglia, Fernando Spiner
DIRECTOR: FERNANDO SPINER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: José Luis García
MUSIC SCORE: Leo Sújatovich
EDITOR: Alejandro Parisow
SOUND: Marcos de Aguirre
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Rolo Azpeitía
ACTORS: Eusebio Poncella, Lorenzo Quinteros, Patricio Contreras, Gastón Pauls, Sofía Viruboff, Pastora vega, Alejandro Urdapilleta, Norman Briski, Noemí Frenkel, Belén Blanco, Martin Adjemián, Walter Santana.

APPENDIX 2: TABLES

The following tables summarize the analysis of the films exposed in chapter 5. They present a synthesis of the characteristics observed in the analysis and expose the main considerations referred to in chapters 6, 7 and 8 regarding enunciational *dispositifs*.

FILM		*LA HISTORIA OFICIAL* (Puenzo 1984)	*LOS CHICOS DE LA GUERRA* (Kamín 1984)	*EN RETIRADA* (Desanzo 1984)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements	"A Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo"	Soldiers' list	A.T.C. (Argentina Televisora Color)
	dedication	"A Nora"	"A Vera y Hernán"	
	others		"Esta película fue posible gracias al Estado de Derecho en Argentina" "Adaptación de *Los chicos de la guerra* de Daniel Kon, Editorial Galerna" Final warning regarding fictionalization of events	
Enunciator / Narrator		Objective Camera	Objective camera Temporal manipulation (frame in the war and flashbacks introduced by subtitles)	Objective Camera
Spatial and temporal setting		Hand writing the date: "14 de marzo de 1983" First scene: flag and National Anthem	Frame set during the war and flashbacks introduced by subtitles (1968, 1975, 1979, 1982)	First scene: TV programmes. Temporal setting established through TV footage in 1983 (demonstrations, Alfonsín, Luder).
References to other texts	Press	Newspapers cuttings about "missing" people (on the blackboard)	Magazine report about the sending of troups to the islands	Magazines and newspapers belonging to the democratic period
	Military government propaganda		Poster: "Unidos es más fácil" Sticker: "Los argentinos somos derechos y humanos"	
	Radio or TV	TV footage of newspaper report about guerrilla groups ("subversión")	Footage from Argentine radio (beginning of the war) and British radio (end of the war). TV programme about young people (fictional)	Electionary campaigns (footage) Scenes of a trial to a fictional military character
	Others	Human Rights organizations' demonstrations Song "En el país de nomeacuerdo"	Former soldiers demonstration in the epilogue Argentine rock music (Charly García & Juan Carlos Baglieto)	Human rights demonstrations (footage) on TV. Assembling of signatures agains the amnisty law.
Enunciatee		Identification with Alicia (focalising character): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge. TESTIMONY	Identification with the three survivors (variable focalization) TESTIMONY	Identification with the father of the missing boy (internal ocularization from his perspective). One scene of internal auricularization from Oso's perpective. TESTIMONY (surmounting of revenge)

FILM		CUARTELES DE INVIERNO (Lautaro Murúa 1984)	SENTIMIENTOS... MIRTA DE LINIERS A ESTAMBUL (Coscia y Saura 1985)	EL EXILIO DE GARDEL (Solanas 1985)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements			
	dedication		"A nuestros padres. A Roland Fustiñana."	"A mes parents."
	others	"Según novela homónima de Osvaldo Soriano" Final warning regarding fictionalization of events and characters		
Enunciator / Narrator		Objetive Camera	Intradiegetic narrator: Mirta Narrativo frame: Istanbul 1980 Temporal manipulation	Unreal Objective Camera Intradiegetic Narrator: María (looking into the camera and in songs)
Spatial and temporal setting		1976. Established by footage (News report's reference to the coup of March 24).	Frame in Istanbul with flashbacks: Buenos Aires 1975 (subtitle), return to frame, Buenos Aires (*Comunicado* of the Junta), frame, lineal development from then onwards.	First scenes in Paris Narrator: "Me llamo María y voy a cumplir 20. Vine con mi madre desde Bs. As. hace ocho años y aún estoy aquí".
References to other texts	Press			
	Military government propaganda			
	Radio or TV	*Comunicado* from the Military Junta on TV (footage)	Radio: First *Comunicado* of the Junta (footage).	
	Others	Graffities: "Galván, cantor de asesinos", "En cada Rocha un torturador".	Banners at the univerity: "Basta de represión", "Viva Perón", "Por la revolución y el socialismo"	Human Rights' demonstrations in Paris (fictional)
Enunciatee		Identification with Galván and Rocha (focalising characters): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY	Identification with Mirta (narrator and focalizer): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY – EXILE	Identification with María (narrator and focalizer): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY - EXILE

FILM		*CONTAR HASTA 10* (Barney Finn 1985)	*EL RIGOR DEL DESTINO* (Gerado Vallejo 1985)	*LOS DÍAS DE JUNIO* (Fischerman 1985)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements	"Biblioteca Nacional. Archivo General de la Nación."	"Agradecemos la participación del poeta Francisco (Pancho) Galíndez y los exdirigentes de FOTIA, Rafael Desantis y Alejo Ávila"	
	dedication		"A la memoria de los dirigentes tucumanos Atilio Santillán, Benito Romano, Bernardo Villalba y Raúl Zelarayan que forjaron mi camino"	
	others			
Enunciator / Narrator		Objective Camera Temporal manipulation (flashbacks of childhood memories with subtitles)	Objective Camera Temporal manipulation (flashbacks) Voice-off of Eduardo in his diary when read by his son.	Objective Camera Organization: repetition of the first scene at the end (the flag burning) but without any temporal connection.
Spatial and temporal setting		First scene: Argentine flag in boat Subtitjes: "Viedma 1979", "Bs. As. 1979", "Viedma 1979". (References in dialogues to the events at Ezeiza in 1973 and to the military coup of 1976).	Subtitles: "Santa Lucía, Tucumán 1976" "San Miguel de Tucumán 1983"	1982: references to the Flaklands / Malvinas War and to the Pope's visit to Argentina Second scene: radio news report regarding the latter
References to other texts	Press			Newspaper *Crónica*: "Alto el fuego"
	Military government propaganda			Radio or TV propaganda in off: "Argentinos, a vencer!"
	Radio or TV	Radio interview to Cardenal Samorei. Radio News report in flashback, with references to Frondizi and Balbín.	*Proclama* of the Military Junta, on radio (first scene) and First *Comunicado* in off.	Constant radio reports regarding the development of the war and the Pope's visit (in car, laboratory, class-room). TV footage ot he Pope's visit
	Others	Letters from Pedro dated at significant moments of Argentine recent history: the *Cordobazo*, Ezeiza, the military coup.	Demonstration against the closing of sugar mills. Represion. The Martin Fierro sung in an Andalucian version	Songs regarding the Pope's visit (in TV footage and within the plot)
Enunciatee		Identification with Ramón (focalizer, internal ocularization of his memories): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY	Identification with Miguelito (focalizer and main ocularising character, voice-off). Flashbacks through which Miguelito reconstructs his father's life (the teacher's and his grandfather's narration, own memories and his father's notebook): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY	Variable identification with any of the four friends. Internal ocularization of each of their stories recounted while being detained. Predominant focalization from Emilio's perspective. TESTIMONY - EXILE

FILM		SOFÍA (Doria 1986)	EL DUEÑO DEL SOL (Mórtola 1986)	A DOS AGUAS (Olguín 1986)	MADE IN ARGENTINA (Jusid 1986)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements			"Nuestro agradecimiento a..." (list of companies)	
	dedication		From Martín's diary: "A mis hermanos Juan, Ana y María y a la generación del 70".	"A Lala y a Manuel."	Subtitle in final scenes: "A todos los amigos que no pueden volver. A todos los amigos que fantasean con irse. A todos."
	others			Final warning regarding the fictionalization of characters.	
Enunciator / Narrator		Objective Camera	"Prólogo": narrative frame (group of children that finds Martín's diary) Intradiegetic narrator: Martín "Epílogo": frame (children looking at ashes)	Objective Camera Intradiegetic narrator: Gregorio Rey	Objective Camera
Spatial and temporal setting		1976-77 (aprox.): military government propaganda	Firt date of the diary: "Martes 14 de enero de 1977". "Buenos Aires seguía peligrosa. Todos los habitantes podían ser peligrosos".	"Regresé al país en abril de 1976. El golpe militar me sorprendió en pleno viaje". Pasaport stamp: 2 de abril de 1976. [temporal ellipsis] "Las primeras navidades democráticas..." (1983)	First scene: New York (Statue of Liberty). American radio. Shift to Argentine radio. Buenos Aires (*Obelisco*).
References to other texts	Press				
	Military government propaganda	TV footage of the military government propaganda (steak being destroyed by several knifes).			References to stickers with the legend "Los argentinos somos derechos y humanos"
	Radio or T.V.				
	Others	Film featuring Alberto Olmedo and Jorge Porcel.	Recorded speeches: common-places of totalitarian speech	"todos fuimos cómplices en esta catástrofe", "era una guerra; había que pelear"	"Ese, por algo se tuvo que ir"
Enunciatee		Identification with Pedro (main focalizer): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY	Identification with Martín (narrator and focalizer, internal ocularization of his childhood memories): trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge TESTIMONY	Identification with Gregorio Rey (narrator) and Isabel (variable focalization from these two characters' perspectives): returns from different exiles TESTIMONY - EXILE	Variable focalization from the four main characters' perspectives: wanting to return (Osvaldo), not wanting to return (Mabel), not wanting to leave (Yoli), wanting to leave (Negro). TESTIMONY – EXILE

FILM		*LOS DUEÑOS DEL SILENCIO* (Lemos 1986-87)	*MEMORIAS Y OLVIDOS* (Feldman 1986-87)	*LA DEUDA INTERNA* (Pereira 1987)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements			
	dedication		"A mis hijas"	"Al pueblo jujeño"
	others	Subtitles and footage in epilogue: Decembre 1983 (Alfonsín), April 1985 (Madres), Decembre 1985 (Madres), Decembre 1986, Febrero 1987 (torturer free / *Madre* demonstrating).	Final scene: reduplication of interview: "que participen, que no tengan miedo". Epilogue: "Esta película se terminó antes de los acontecimientos de Semana Santa. En esas jornadas el pueblo argentino no tuvo miedo y participó"	"Guión original Miguel Pereira, basado en relatos del maestro rural Fortunato Ramos"
Enunciator / Narrator		Objective Camera Subtitles (spatial setting) Subtitles (Swedish and English translations)	Objective Camera TV camera functions as a second-grade enunciator in interviews and documentaries; the people interviewed functions as third-grade enunciators.	Objective Camera
Spatial and temporal setting		Subtitles: "Buenos Aires 1977" "Estocolmo", "Washington", "Buenos Aires".	Map of Argentina in wall 1985: "Han pasado más de 30 años" (referring to 1955)	Subtitles: "Chorcán, Noroeste de Argentina, 1964" "Humahuaca 1982"
References to other texts	Press	*Buenos Aires Herald*: "Swedish businessman arrives to Argentina". Swedish newspapers: "Sixten Ryden expulsado", "Yo vendí mi alma en el infierno", "Se retira la Junta", "Retorna la democracia a Argentina" (translated in subtitles). Argentine newspapers: "Iníciase el juicio a excomandantes" (*La Prensa*), "Dictan sentencia a excomandantes"(*Clarín*), "Agregarían Nuevas medidas al Punto Final" (*La Razón*). (In the epilogue with subtitles dating them) Videla's speech (TV footage) Encounter between Videla and Pinochet (TV footage) Visit of the King iof Spain (cinema footage) Sentences of the trial (TV footage) First scenes: military in front of the airport	Newspapers without date	
	Military government propaganda		World Football cup: "Sí, Argentina camina!" Falklands / Malvinas: "Argentinos, a vencer!"	Argentine flags given out during the Footbal World Championship
	Radio or T.V.		First *comunicado* of the Military Junta (at the end of the film). Documenatry footage from 1930 to the present of the enunciation	Radio: First *comunicado* of the Military Junta. Footbal World Championship. TV: recovery of the Malvinas / Falklands islands, Galtieri's speech, newsreport on the development of the war, sinking of the Belgrano (May 2 1982).
	Others		Interviews	
Enunciatee		Identification with Sicten Ryden (main focalizer; internal ocularization). Investigation: trajectory from not-knowing to knowledge. Final scene: demand for justice. TESTIMONY – DENUNCIATION	Identification with one or several of the subjects interviewed (multiple focalization with third-grade enunciators). Final scene: call to participate TESTIMONY – DEMAND FOR PARTICIPATION	Identification with teacher (main focalizer: voice-off with his voice reading Veronico's father's letters and his own, internal auricularization.) Internal ocularization of Veronico's dream. TESTIMONY - DENUNCIATION

FILM		*REVANCHA DE UN AMIGO* (Oves 1987)	*BAJO OTRO SOL* (D'Intino 1987)	*EL AMOR ES UNA MUJER GORDA* (Agresti 1987)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements	"A Familiares de detenidos y desaparecidos por razones políticas"		
	dedication		"Dedico esta película al "chicato" Mose y al "Pupi" Cohen, compañeros peonistas asesinados durante la dictadura militar, y al "Tigre"Cedrón, mi amigo, que se murió de tristeza en el exilio. Francisco D'Intino"	
	others		"La madre: Yo había soñado con un hijo que cerrara los ojos de su madre. / El rebelde: Yo he decidido abrir bajo otro sol los ojos de mi hijo. Aimé Césaire. Tomado del libro *Los condenados de la Tierra* de Franz Fanon"	
Enunciator / Narrator		Objective Camera	Objective Camera	Unreal Objective Camera Intradiegetic narrator: José (voice-off)
Spatial and temporal setting		Subtitle: "1982" (Ariel's return from exile)	First scene: Argentine flag, finalization of school-year in Arroyo Seco. Second scene: radio report announcing the law of *Punto Final*.	References to *Punto Final* in dialogues and press (1987).
References to other texts	Press	*Clarín*: reference to Bignone and the multi-partisan coalition	Photograph in Manuel's room of a demonstration in Plaza de Mayo, which shows a banner reading "Perón o Muerte".	Newspaper: "Es ley el Punto Final". *Clarín*: "Aprobó el senado el proyecto de Punto Final".
	Military government propaganda		In dialogues: "Argentina campeón!, Somos derechos y humanos, no les suena?" (between Manuel and Carlos)	
	Radio or T.V.	TV. news report: Human Rights'demonstrations against the military government	Radio: Proposal of the law of *Punto Final*, strike, sanctioning of the law.	TV footage of military characters (Videla, Galtieri, Massera) under custody. José's voice-off: "Están pasando cosas raras, sabes?"
	Others	Poster of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* Banners and demonstration for García's freedom	Human Rights'demonstrations in *Plaza San Martín*, City of Córdoba.	Radio announcement of the Pope's visit to Argentina Alfonsín's picture on a wall
Enunciatee		Identification with Ariel (focalizer). Internal ocularization of his memories. Search for knowledge regarding Carlos Rearte's "*desaparición*". The film's title also suggests the idea of revenge. DENUNCIATION – SURMOUNTING OF REVENGE	Identification with Manuel (focalizer). Internal ocularization of his memories Final scene: surmounting of revenge and demand for participation ("Vamos a hacer esa Patria, Petizo, la vamos a hacer") DENUNCIATION – SURMOUNTING OF REVENGE	Focalization from José's perspective (voice-off): trajectory from not-knowing (and not-wanting-to-know) to knowledge. Also not-being-able-to-not-do (tha characters can not avoid being filmed) DENUNCIATION

FILM		*SUR* (Solanas 1988)	*LA AMIGA* (Meerapfel 1988)	
Reference to sources	acknowledgements		"Agradecemos muy especialmente el apoyo de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo" (final credits)	
	dedication			
	others		"Investigación histórica: Osvaldo Bayer"	
Enunciator / Narrator		Unreal Objective Camera Division in episodes introduced by titles Intradiegetic narrator Intradiegetic character acting as sender of knowledge: "el muerto". Incorporation of photographs and musical scenes	Objective and Unreal Objective Camera Subtitles: "Buenos Aires 1978"; "Buenos Aires 1981"; "Berlín 1983"; "Dos años más tarde en 1986".	
Spatial and temporal setting		Subtitle: "Buenos Aires, 1983, Fin de la dictadura militar"	First scenes: the two girls'childhood: radio report announcing Argentina's involvement in IIWW. Transition through family photographs to the main narrative, introduced by a subtitle ("Buenos Aires 1978").	
References to other texts	Press			
	Military government propaganda	Military tank that reproduces *comunicados* from the Junta: "los argentinos somos derechos y humanos"	Military government propaganda: against tax evasion (in off) and against "la sinarquía internacional" (a little gaucho happily feading his cows after scaring away a flock of red vampires).	
	Radio or TV	Radio: First *comunicado* of the Military Junta (episode 2)	Fictional miliotary character's speech on TV German radio announcing the return to democracy (with subtitles)	
	Others	Banners hanging in the credit sequences: "Dictadura" and Argentine flag.In demonstration: "Dictadura, no. Democracia, sí". Reference to *Obediencia Debida* in dialogues ("Fue una orden, viejo. Vos lo tenés que entender, una orden!").	Sophocles' *Antigone* in Raquel's speeches. Citation of Hebe de Bonafini's speeches in María's interventions. Demonstrations against *Punto Final*.	
Enunciatee		Identification with Floreal (main focalizer; internal ocularization of his ghosts). DENUNCIATION - (MEMORY)	Variable focalization in Raquel and María. Internal ocularization of their memories of Carlos. DENUNCIATION - (MEMORY)	

FILM		UN LUGAR EN EL MUNDO (Aristarain 1992)	UN MURO DE SILENCIO (Stantic 1992)	AMIGOMÍO (Meerapfel 1993)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements		"A Madres de Plaza de Mayo" (final credits)	"A Eduardo Galeano por inspiramos con los textos de *La trilogía del fuego*" (final credits)
	dedication	"Para Bruno"		
	others			"Versión libre del libro *Historias de Papá y Amigomío* de Pablo Bergel"
Enunciator / Narrator		Objective Camera. Narrator: Ernesto (internal focalization of his memories)	Objective Camera. Sevral levels of narration: 1. Kate Benson's story, 2. Silvia's past (the film *La historia de Ana*), 3. Silvia's present situation. Subtitles establishing the different levels.	Objective Camera. Narrative frame in Ecuador, linear development of the journey interrupted by former memories.
Spatial and temporal setting		End of the 80's, beginning of the 90's; deduced from dialogues (Ernesto is 12 years old and was born during his parents' exile). References to San Luis. Street sign of *Tusaco Española*, mencioning the name of the village: "Valle Bermejo"	First-narrative subtitle: "Buenos Aires 1990" Second-narrative subtitle: "Buenos Aires 1976" Subtitle in documentary: "Córdoba, mayo 1969"	Frame in 1982 (newspaper's date at the end of the film) Past story during the dictatorship
References to other texts	Press		Newspaper announcing the *indulto*.	Newspaper's title in 1982: "Dijo Camps que no quedan desaparecidos con vida"
	Military government propaganda			
	Radio or T.V.		Cinematographic footage of the *Cordobazo*, and of Cámpora's winning of the presidential elections.	
	Others	References in dialogues to Ana and Mario's participation in left-wing-movements and to Ana's brother's dissapearance.	Madres de Plaza de Mayo demonstrating against the *indulto*	Super 8 Home movies.
Enunciatee		Identification with Ernesto as an adult searching for his past ("Hay cosas que uno no puede olvidarse, no tiene que olvidarse, aunque duelan") MEMORY	Variable identification: Kate Benson (main focalizer), Silvia (internal ocularization of her husband's ghost). Different postions regarding memory. MEMORY	Identification with Carlos. Focalization in Carlos and *Amigomío*. Internal ocularization from Carlos's perspective (dreams, memories, images, etc.) and also from *Amigomío*'s perspective. MEMORY

253

FILM		*BUENOS AIRES VICE-VERSA* (Agresti 1996)	*EL CENSOR* (Calcagno 1995)	*LA SONÁMBULA* (Spiner 1997)
Reference to sources	acknowledgements			
	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".	"A Ana" (final subtitle)	
	others			
Enunciator / Narrator		Unreal Objective Camera	Objective Camera Temporal manipulation	
Spatial and temporal setting		Reference to the 90s in TV news report from *América Noticias* (Clinton, *subcomandante* Marcos, Nerval index, etc.)	Buenos Aires 1975-77 (reference in dialogues) [Temporal ellipsis] Buenos Aires 1983-84 (references to democracy: gays' demonstrations, propaganda stickers of the presidential campaign, Raúl Alfonsín's TV speech)	Buenos Aires 2010 (TV at the *Centro de Rehabilitación* accompanyed by the National Anthem: "en el año del bicentenario de la Revolución de Mayo", in the image: "2010").
References to other texts	Press		Magazines and newspapers covers at kiosk (references to "*the horror show*" and to the "*destape*")	
	Military government propaganda			Political propaganda of the regime in 2010 comparable to that of the dictatorship: "Es Gauna. Identifíquelo. Denúncielo." "De la mano de los que como hoy, guían nuestro país hacia un futuro de grandeza..."
	Radio or T.V.	*América Noticias*	TV footage: Alfonsín's speech Stickers (in public toilets) and poster (in the *Cámara de Senadores*) of Alfonsín's campaign.	TV announcement of the death of Norman Briski's character: "Angel, alias el duque, quien colaboraba con los extremistas en tareas de inteligencia y espionaje"
	Others		Sexual minorities's demonstrations Censored film by Liliana Cavani (extratextual referent) Censored film by Ramos Larsen (fictional referent)	"300 000 afectados" by the loss of memory and identity Graffiti: "Gauna nos espera"
Enunciatee		Variable focalization (internal ocularization from boxer's perspective, internal auricularization from Damián and Daniela's perspective).Identificación with Daniela: recovery of the past. MEMORY	Identification with Veiravé (focalizer). Attempt at filling the gap left by the temporal ellipsis: search for memory. MEMORY	Identification with Eva Rey (focalising character). Internal ocularization of her memories and premonitions. MEMORY

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