Cinema in Uruguay (1960–1974):

Resistance, Guerrilla and Third World

Álvaro Lema Mosca, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid / Universidad Internacional de La Rioja

The article reviews the dialogue between documentary and animated cinema produced in Uruguay during the 1960s and 1970s and different forms of political resistance. The Uruguayan historical-political situation is contextualised and three films are analysed as examples, in order to show the complexities of the moment: *Como el Uruguay no hay*, by Ugo Ulive (1960), *Me gustan los estudiantes*, by Mario Handler (1968) and *En la selva hay mucho trabajo por hacer*, by Walter Tournier (1974). The three short films show a clear accusation of Uruguay's political situation and, additionally, they reveal the complexities within Uruguayan society in moments of democratic debacle. The complicated political scenario of the country during those years led to the coup d'état of 1973 and the consequent exile of Ulive, Handler and Tournier. The three directors followed a combative form of filmmaking from different Latin American nations by discussing the intellectual's role in a colonized space and eventually they became big names of the Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano. They came together at the Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo (C3M), founded in Montevideo in 1969, and set up a relationship with other Latin American filmmakers of the time. They discussed about the political and artistic situation in the continent, by creating networks of exhibition and co-working and by publishing theorical material on all those topics. The C3M thus became a space for debate on key notions such as Third Cinema, Imperfect Cinema or Cinema of Denunciation, promoted from the Global South as a way of confronting European and Hollywood film industries. .

Keywords
Uruguayan Cinema
Dictatorship
Third Cinema
Documentary
Global South
DOI
https://doi.org/10.54103/2036-461X/23447

"Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence", Frantz Fanon wrote in 1961 (1963, 61, my translation). The phrase belongs to his famous book *Les Damnés de la Terre*, published in Spanish in 1963. The essay quickly became a sort of political-aesthetic proclamation for the young Latin Americans of that time. In December 1961, the Uruguayan weekly *Marcha* published a long review of Fanon's main postulates on what was happening in Algeria and, around 1968–69, the same newspaper printed several reports on the political situation in Africa, the problem of "negritude", decolonisation and the Third World, notions closely linked to Fanon's ideas.

The so-called "global 1960s" were a moment of political, social, and intellectual changes characterised by interactions between the centre and the periphery. While the French May, l'*Autunno Caldo* in Italy, and the Prague Spring were unfolding in Europe, in Latin America the New Left was consolidating its gains with the Cuban Revolution, the Liberation Theology, and the students riots all along the continent. During that time, the notion of Colonialism became a problematic issue, especially in left-wing intellectual circles, and soon

influenced the artistic practices of the time. Artists and writers thus became "makers" of social transformation, participating in resistance, street fighting, and political action. Concepts such as the Third World, the Global South and the Underdevelopment created a whole consciousness that quickly spread inside and outside the continent. All this shaped Latin American "solidarity", especially in cinema, by reinforcing artistic migrations to both sides of the Atlantic. The young filmmakers of that time, interested in the coming together of art and politics, were very influenced by the social and political matters of the world. They were concerned about the consequences of Colonialism and also worried about the risks of belonging to a South characterised by oppression, poverty and racism.

This article attempts to approach Uruguay's film production of that period, focusing on short documentaries and animation produced just before the 1973's coup d'état and the beginning of a long and rough dictatorship. Between 1960 and 1974, several short films were released and many international networks were set up. The choice of the three case studies under scrutiny here is not arbitrary. All three are well-known and long-studied short films: *Como el Uruguay no hay, by Ugo Ulive* (1960), *Me gustan los estudiantes*, by Mario Handler (1968) and *En la selva hay mucho trabajo por hacer*, by Walter Tournier (1974). They articulate a clear critique of Uruguay's political situation and additionally reveal the complexities within Uruguayan society in a moment of democratic debacle. These films use different approaches: from an ironic manifesto confronting the bourgeois' hypocrisy to a street protest against the American intervention and an allegorical animation of resistance. Whilst they have been discussed on previous occasions (Burton-Carvajal 1990; Chanan 2014; López 1997; Tadeo Fuica 2017; Lacruz 2020; Dufuur 2018), there has not been an exhaustive analysis of the key concepts of the time and the influence that political thought had on their creators. Their three directors (Ulive, Handler, Tournier) represent the committed intellectual, encouraged by foreign ideas of anti-imperialism, decolonisation and freedom. They were persecuted by the military government and had to go into exile. But unlike other filmmakers, they remained in Latin America and continued their creative fight from the Global South. Eventually, they became established names in the Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano movement. The main goal of this article is to decipher the influences of colonial thought on the artistic and political stance of these filmmakers, using three films as case studies, analysing the period and the forms of resistance and commitment they use.

COLONIALISM: A KEY CONCEPT IN LATIN AMERICA

In 1965, the Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama delivered a lecture in Italy on the possible contribution of Latin American literature (so fashionable at the time) to World Literature. In that essay, published some years later, Rama discussed Fanon's concept of Colonialism: "This Martinican lacks American consciousness

and affirms an improbable desertion, because ultimately he has the eventual support of a non-European cultural tradition, which he assumes racially: the black African" (1973, 8, my translation). Rama argued that Fanon's vision was closer to an African perspective, while in Latin America, European culture had been one of the fundamental assets in formative development. However, he did recognise Fanon's participation in a common space of discussion: the Third World. Even when Rama was an important name, his criticism of Fanon's proposal did not prevent the Martinican's postulates from spreading like wildfire throughout Latin America. In fact, in Latin America, colonialism was deeply shaped during the 1960s by a confluence of intellectual, political, and social movements that critiqued the enduring legacies of colonial rule and imperialist domination in the Global South. In addition to Fanon, other thinkers such as Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi and Pablo González Casanova were crucial, each contributing distinct yet overlapping perspectives that helped frame Latin American and global anti-colonial thought.

In Fanon's view, colonialism is a form of systematic and total violence that impacts the psyche of both the colonised and the colonisers, generating a process of alienation and human degradation. The response to this violence is anticolonial violence, necessary for decolonization and the construction of a new society. This is not only political independence, but also a process of cultural, social, and psychological transformation that involves a new construction of identity. In this scenario, the colonised intellectual becomes an agent in the battle for liberation and restitution. In this sense, Ángel Rama's criticism was not so different from other thinkers. Actually, Fanon's perspective was hardly criticized for not being "Latin" enough, even though his positions were adopted by a large part of the Latin American intelligentsia. The truth is that even the notion of "Latin America" is problematic and complex, since it was a European invention to designate a specific part of the planet in the 19th century. Until the early 1930s, this category was not used and the limitations were essentially national. Its appearance is the result of deep diplomatic, institutional and cultural programs (Palomino 2019).

Fanon's perspective was contemporary with other similar theories. Dependency Theory, Liberation Theology and Liberation Sociology made visible the historical situation of exploitation and dependence. Mexican Pablo González Casanova introduced the concept "internal colonialism" (2006), to describe how Latin American indigenous and rural populations were dominated within independent states. He argued that racial and ethnic minorities were systematically excluded from political and economic life, replicating colonial hierarchies.

In the very successful 1971 essay *Open Veins of Latin America*, Eduardo Galeano detailed how Europe and the United States had historically abused the continent, plundering its natural resources and meddling in its state policies:

> *Latin America is the region of open veins. Everything, from the discovery until our times, has always been transmuted into European—or later United States—capital, and as such has accumulated in distant centres of power. [...] the history of Latin America's underdevelopment is, as someone has said, an integral*

part of the history of world capitalism's development (1997, 2).

Galeano was showing historical exploitation and its repercussions both in the economic and cultural order. Decades later, this critique evolved into Decolonial Theory and the persistence of colonial power structures after formal decolonization. The approaches of fundamental authors such as Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Catherine Walsh, among others, have explored the continuities of those old types of interventionism.

In the 1960s, the situation of the modern/colonial world-system (Mignolo 2003) began to be strongly debated in Latin America. But with the peculiarity that this discussion jumped from intellectual circles to the artistic realm and involved networking throughout the space. In various meetings during the 1960s, artists and intellectuals assumed political commitment against capitalist imperialism. At the International Cultural Congress of La Havana (Cuba), in 1968, the intellectual was vindicated as *homo politicus* and the union of artistic and political action was proposed: "The cultural fact par excellence for an underdeveloped country is the revolution" (21). One year earlier, the filmmakers had proposed something similar at the Viña del Mar Film Festival.

Uruguay, as a small country amidst large nations, became the stage for all those discussions. The filmmakers of the time (along with writers, painters, actors, etc.) took an active and participatory role in the debate about Latin American identity and they materialised it in their films. In a weak and almost non-existent industry, they found the most affordable ways to make cinema through political documentaries and hand-made animation. Besides, they were artists committed to the winds of change and took an active stance toward what was happening both in their country and on the continent. Through three key words (resistance, guerrilla, third world) we can trace their cinemas and the political and artistic commitment of those turbulent years.

RESISTANCE: *COMO EL URUGUAY NO HAY*

The 1958's edition of the SODRE Documentary Film Festival in Montevideo held the First Latin American Congress of Filmmakers with the special presence of John Grierson. It was a very important event: for the first time, filmmakers from several countries attended the meeting and discussed the role of Latin American cinema. The meeting laid the groundwork for the Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, a movement that would acquire its final form in subsequent meetings. All participants wanted to create a transnational cinema in opposition to the imitative Hollywood models, a new cinema capable of representing, for the first time, the social, historical and cultural reality of Latin America. Documentary, animation and experimental cinema were the favourite methods to achieve this. The young filmmakers had been educated by the historical avant-gardes, Italian Neorealism, Free Cinema, Chaplin's comedies and the surrealism of Luis Buñuel. All those cinemas had a political connotation that reached a new form and colour in Latin America.

In Uruguay, there was a political and cultural crisis: the economic prosperity

of "the Switzerland of the Americas" (as the country was called after World War II) began to decline. This situation appears in *Como el Uruguay no hay* (Ugo Ulive, 1960), a short film that mockingly questioned the country's exceptional situation.[1] Ulive, who was mainly involved in stage productions, had worked on discontent and moral crisis in a previous film, *Un vintén pa'l Judas* (1959), considered the greatest expression of Uruguayan Neorealism (Lema Mosca 2023, 216–21). With powerful animation fragments, the movie takes up the common belief that there is no other country like Uruguay and creates a sharp critique of the situation in the country. So strong was the vision of Uruguay as an "European nation" that asserting the contrary was already violent. The film was rejected in the 1960's SODRE Film Festival edition and caused a huge uproar in the press.[2]

The movie confronts two existing realities of the country: on the one hand, the progressive and developed life of the rich classes, and on the other, the poor and underdeveloped existence of the marginal neighbourhoods. The contrast between those two spheres is reinforced by the choice of format and the materiality of the images: while advanced Uruguay is shown in fragmented photographs, poor Uruguay is filmed *in situ*, giving priority to the realism of the moving image, deepening the gap between one sector and the other. By using all these unusual techniques, the short film confronts the society and shows a critical view of the political system and state institutions through disbelief and sarcasm, a particularly shocking gesture in a strongly institutionalised, liberal and democratic society.

Additionally, the short film called for street mobilization and violent action as a way to combat the government's injustices. "If we want this to change, one day we will have to take to the streets, not just to protest, not just to have fun, but to stop the country from continuing its march towards a brilliant destiny", the voice-over ironically says. For many years documentary in Latin America has served as a vehicle for political activism and social critique, by exposing state violence, imperialism, and social injustice (Chanan 2014, 2017). By using protest as a form of social change, Ulive's short film thus appeared as one of the first political manifestations in Uruguayan cinema. *Como el Uruguay no hay* aroused heated debates in the local press and critics and it was named a "pamphletary" film. It was also a kind of prequel to later political cinema, as we will see below. Ulive became one of the first "intellectual filmmakers", an auteur linked to the social and political problems of the continent, and one of the most important names of the Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano.[3]

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1 Available for viewing on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJY_o1b5i0g&t=16s.

2 Several film critics came out and defended Ulive's work, as well as his right to present a work no matter how critical it was of the government, but nothing made the Board of Directors back down. However, despite not participating in the competition, the film achieved great notoriety and later that year won the award for best national film from the Film Critics Association.

3 Ulive continued making political films while in exile in Venezuela. In 1969, he released *Basta*, a raw experimental short film about the country's violence.

GUERRILLA: *ME GUSTAN LOS ESTUDIANTES*

As Fredric Jameson (1984) pointed out, thinking about the 1960s means reflecting on a time of enormous social and cultural transformations throughout the world. Events that led to significant political and social change in different parts of the planet also triggered the configuration of a new consciousness. Particularly in Latin America, this change coincided with the emergence of the Third World and the questions about some established historical notions. As Jameson writes, "the 60s was, then, the period in which all these 'natives' became human beings" (181). This new political situation, which put human beings at the centre of the cultural debate, had enormous repercussions on Latin American art and especially on cinema.

Furthermore, the 1960s saw the *boom* of Latin American literature, with the editorial exploitation of young writers of enormous talent who shaped a particular "image" of the continent. In Ángel Rama's conference cited at the beginning of this article, the Uruguayan critic discussed the relevance of this new concept. Rama affirms that there are two cultures in it: one cosmopolitan and another one traditional, which have been historically mixing, intersecting and cross-fertilising. The original contribution of Latin America literature is based on how writers, from a firm anti-imperialist conviction, produce high-quality literary works from the Third World, capable of introducing the Latin continent into the contemporary world (Rama 1973). It is important to think how much the configuration of a very precise "Latin American literature" influenced the creation of a "Latin American cinema" that, from the Global South, confronted the hegemonic aesthetics of the First World. This "transculturation" (in Rama's words) through which writers integrate their own cultural elements with narratives inherited from European or Western traditions, also spread to filmmaking. Or even preceded it and was present in filmmakers before writers.

The main historical events of the world also influenced artists. The Cuban Revolution embodied the dreams that another model of society was possible. Student protests in different parts of the world made young people the protagonists of a countercultural movement. The economic and cultural invasion by the United States in the middle of the Cold War was seen as a threat to Latin American societies. Thus, the role of intellectuals and artists began to change and move towards the premise of political commitment, which somehow responded to Sartre's call and the recovery of Gramscian writings. It was not only abandoning the typical mid-century intellectual passivity but embracing social mobilisations and facing the surrounding reality. With a strong emphasis on the human aspects within a transformative socio-political context, documentary film was concerned with recording the events and offering a possible solution. As Julianne Burton-Carvajal has pointed out, it was at the same time an instrument of cultural exploration, epistemological questioning, nationalist definition and political transformation (1990, 6).

The different meetings throughout Latin America and Europe in the 1960s sought to produce and to exhibit more local cinema, crossing national barriers and appealing to continental affiliation. Key notions showed up for expressing

collective concerns: violence, marginality, resistance, poverty, neo-colonialism. By reflecting the political and social situation of the peoples in Latin America, the filmmakers were also shaping a new identity and a new transnational movement. All of them had the same concerns as filmmakers: they considered Hollywood as a dominant form of cultural invasion, they were influenced by Neorealism and Direct Cinema, they were contemporary to the *Nouvelle Vague* and other new cinemas of the world. Their material possibilities however were different from all of those movements. So, their forms of production demanded alternative models: marginal, low-budget, independent films, often in small format, in order to reflect the crudest reality of Latin America by using documentary and cinema verité to express the underdevelopment of the continent. The spectator played a prominent role, as filmmakers resorted to raising the audience's awareness and spur them into action (López 1997; Chanan 2014).

In 1967, during the First Meeting of Latin American Filmmakers in the Viña del Mar Film Festival, a statement was declared: "The authentic New Latin American cinema has only been, is and will be the cinema that contributes to the development and strengthening of our national cultures, as an instrument of resistance and struggle" (my translation) (Acta del Primer Encuentro de Realizadores Latinoamericanos 1988, 545). Several filmmakers were interested in theorising about their own cinema and most of them shaped their theoretical writings around the ideas of Frantz Fanon and other left-wing intellectuals, such as Sartre, Camus and Gramsci.[4] All of them wielded the advantage of cinema as an instrument of liberation and militant action, against the political and cultural neo-colonialism of Latin America, seeking to reflect the reality of the countries from a critical and intellectualised perspective. They sought to turn the production limitations into a tactical method, in order to highlight the political militancy of the films. Simultaneously, they outlined a cultural movement by rejecting the Hollywood movies and European *cinema d'auteur* and redefining cinematic space (a world divided into three types of cinema).

In Uruguay, the political situation had also a big impact on the pledge. The revolutionary Theory of Foco, thought up by Che Guevara and theorised by Regis Debray, encouraged the violent actions of a small group to incite the masses' uprising and the overthrow of the regime (Jameson 1984). In 1963, the National Liberation Movement-Tupamaros (MLN-T) started an active urban warfare and most of its *guerrilleros* grew into iconic members of the political scenario. During the next years, violence and battles between the government and Tupamaros became more and more frequent. At the same time, a transnational network of leftist organizations emerged in the continent. They promoted political violence and transnational strategies as the only paths to achieving social change. Thus, they relied on armed struggle and built innovative repertoires of protest and collective action, such as street riots, urban guerrilla and exile.

4 In 1962, Fernando Birri published *Cine y subdesarrollo*, three years later Glauber Rocha lectured in Italy *La estética del hambre*, in 1969 appeared also *Hacia un tercer cine* by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino and *Por un cine imperfecto* by Julio García Espinosa.

If *Como el Uruguay no hay* represents denunciation and resistance against an oppressive political system, *Me gustan los estudiantes*[5] (Mario Handler, 1968) embodies the violent response to that oppression. The short film shows the meeting of international Presidents in Punta del Este and the protests of young people in the streets of Montevideo.[6] The documentary presents two situations happening at the same time: on the one hand, the visit to Uruguay of US President Lyndon B. Johnson during the Organization of American States Conference (OAS), in Punta del Este, and on the other, the student riots in Montevideo against the presence of the American President. The OAS Conference was held in April 1967, but the political events during next year were heating up the mobilisations on the streets. The assassinations of the first student martyrs in Uruguay, the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia, the increase of the government's repressions, along with the students' protests all around the world, were the breeding ground for street action by the younger people. Violence was as a symptom of generalised discontent and a confrontative and revolutionary way of changing society.

Originally, Handler's film was meant to be a purely informative record but then became something different with the use of sound and montage: while some scenes are set to music, others are completely mute. Thus, when the young people protest in the street and confront the police, the off-screen music underlines the author's predilection for the song's message. On the contrary, when the politicians appear at the OAS summit, only silence is heard. Paradoxically, this aesthetic twist takes away the voice of those who are speaking and gives it to those silenced.[7]The purpose is further reinforced by the choice of the title (previously it was to be called *Violencia en Montevideo*) and the author's participation in the revolt. The film had an organic function according to that political cinema: to incite something in spectators. According to the chronicles of the time, during the premiere in a downtown theatre of Montevideo, the viewers went out into the streets to protest violently (Getino 1969, 77).

In a 1969 interview with Oscar Getino, Handler asked himself: "Should I make a purely demonstrative film or should I make one with a whole creative and transformative intention?" And he answered: "The only important thing from this aesthetic point of view is, for me, to have joined a cinema of aggression, that is, a cinema directly pamphleteering and not demonstrative" (Getino 1969, 73,

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5 Available for viewing on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LU--HzxUiYU.

6 Handler had filmed several political short films before, such as *The Burial of University* (*El entierro de la Universidad*, 1965), a performance by members of the University Students Union, *Carlos: Cinema-portrait of a Walker in Montevideo* (1965), about a homeless man of the city, *Elecciones* (with U. Ulive, 1967), about the presidential elections of that year. Later, he filmed *Líber Arce, liberarse* (1969), a short film about the murder of the first student martyr, *Uruguay 1969: el problema de la carne* (1969), about the conflict of meat processing workers and he clandestinely recorded the prison where the MLN-Tupamaros kept their hostages.

7 In the film *C3M. La Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo* (Lucía Jacob, 2011), Handler assures: "I denied the heads of State the joy of those songs, while the students possess that joy within themselves."

my translation). This approach demonstrates continuity with Ulive's political-artistic proposal (whom Handler considered one of his "maestros"), in terms of producing only politicized and committed cinema that challenges society. *Me gustan los estudiantes* erases from the violence and it shows the duality of its forms: young people respond with violence to the violent actions provoked by politicians. Moreover, it displays in a crude and explicit way the radicalisation of students and the transformation of protest methods. Thus, the young's violence is shown as a form of resistance to the violence of the ruling classes, a transversal idea in all radicalised sectors of the left-wing. In the same interview, Handler added:

> *Today, the situation in Uruguay objectively calls for a political struggle. This means that, whether one has an artistic vocation or not, the situation also forces one to act politically. I might not be a good politician or a good guerrilla fighter, but I can put one's vocation or cinematographic or artistic capacity in function of a political activity (Getino 1969, 73, my translation).*

To "act politically" means: social mobilisation, performance art and the materialisation of violence. But it also means taking a political stance against colonialism and the new forms of expropriation in Latin America. Not surprisingly, once exiled in Venezuela, Handler dedicated his subsequent films to this topic, as can be seen in *Dos puertos y un cerro* (1975) and *Tiempo colonial* (1978).

THIRD WORLD: *EN LA SELVA HAY MUCHO TRABAJO POR HACER*

The foundation of the Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo (C3M), in November 1969, brought together filmmakers, producers, distributors and critics, becoming a beacon of reference for political cinema throughout the continent. The C3M was created as a new space of non-commercial cinema, both producing and exhibiting marginal films from Latin America and other parts of the world. Based in Montevideo's downtown, it was a common space for young people from the art scene identified with the radical left, the Guerrilla and street mobilization.[8] The inauguration was attended by prominent filmmakers such as Joris Ivens, Fernando Solanas and Geraldo Sarno, among others, and it had a clear political goal, like other similar institutions all around the world. Actually, the logo represented a filmmaker holding a camera as if it were a weapon, thus reaffirming the intention to produce and exhibit political films (Villaça 2012; Dufuur 2018; Lacruz 2020).

8 The first members were Walter Achugar, Mario Handler, Mario Jacob, Alejandro Legaspi, Marcos Banchero, José Wainer, Eduardo Terra, Walter Tournier, Rosalba Oxandabarat, Dardo Bardier, Líber Bossolasco, Lucía Seade, Alfredo Echániz, Gabriel Peluffo Linari, Carmen Pérez Marexiano, Inés Blixen, Teresa Trujillo, Olga Filliol, Luis Bello, Luis Rocandio, Ricardo Fleiss, Luisa Fleiss and Armando Bresky.

The existence of three geopolitical spaces proposed at the Bandung Conference in 1955, was later transferred to cinema. According to this theory, first outlined by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, First Cinema was identified with the Hollywood industry and its vernacular imitations around the world, an alienating and dehumanizing cinema mediated by neo-colonialism. The Second Cinema was the "auteur cinema" or "cinema-expression", an alienated gesture that, paradoxically, reproduced the myth of developmental cinematic modernity. The Third Cinema appeared then as a decolonizing cinema, as an open play plausible to be completed not by a mere "spectator", but by a subject in action, fully revolutionary. The existence of a new type of cinema was discussed in several meetings[9] and other paradigmatic notions appeared, traveling concepts that served to designate this political form of filmmaking: militant, revolutionary, marginal, critical, lumpen, postcolonial cinema (Chanan 2014; Shohat and Stam 2014).

The Third World (an extension of the French concept *Tiers Monde*) did not refer to a precise geographical space but a virtual territory. The appearance, in the 1980s, of the term "Global South" seemed to fill this lack, by proposing a division between two metaphorically opposite spaces. Global South is understood as "assemblage of deterritorialization and decolonization", a process of creativity, resistance and affect, as it has been defined by Menon and Taha (2024). This is also a problematic category because it does not clearly designate a specific area, but rather a shared and transnational space. The idea has a special significance when considered from the South, and particularly from a region prone to theoretical discussion and questioning of the hegemony of the North. For this reason, Latin America has generated so many reflections about the *Global North* and the relationships between the two spaces (Palomino 2019). However, this approach had existed in Uruguay for a long time. Already in the 1940s, for instance, the painter Joaquín Torres García had proposed the confrontation between the developed North and the undeveloped South and had inverted the map in his famous drawing *América Invertida* (1943), proclaiming that: "our North is actually the South".[10] That was a current idea for Latin filmmakers and artists for whom Torres García had been a lighthouse in the construction of a local artistic identity. In the following years, the South would also become a

9 A first instance was the Congress of Filmmakers held at the SODRE Film Festival in Montevideo, in 1958, followed by the 1965 edition of the Mar del Plata Film Festival, where the Union of Cinematheques of Latin America was created (UCAL). Then, the First American Independent Film Festival in Montevideo (1965), the First Argentine-Brazilian Meeting of Short Film Directors in Buenos Aires (1965), the Film Festival of Marcha (1967), the Viña del Mar Film Festival (1967), the First Exhibition of Latin American Documentary Cinema in Mérida (1968) and the International Meetings for a New Cinema in Montreal (1974).

10 "I have called this La Escuela del Sur because our North is actually the South. There should be no North for us, except in opposition to our South. Therefore, we now turn the map upside down, and then we have a true idea of our position, and not as the rest of the world wishes. The tip of America, from now on, prolonging, insistently points to the South, our North" (Urban Media Archaeology 2011).

space of dreaming and desire for those Latin American artists.[11]

The C3M debated those theoretical topics in its own journal *Cine del Tercer Mundo*, which published two voluminous issues in 1969 and 1970. In a questionnaire to Solanas, the Argentine director assures: "Either the author-director of the Third World faces the challenge that neo-colonialism throws at him, becoming at the same time a producer, distributor and, if necessary, an exhibitor, or he accepts, before begin the battle, his own denial" (my translation) (Cuestionario a Solanas 1969, 34). In a review on *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968), by Mario Handler, published in the same volume, the Uruguayan debated the risk of becoming an "author" and ending up being a part of the imperialist cinema, since the codes of language and the very formation of a filmmaker responded to the First and Second cinema's influence. Rephrasing Fanon's famous expression "every spectator is a coward or a traitor", Handler wondered what a filmmaker was in that context. The answer is blunt: "At one extreme, a slave of the system, or a 'voyeur' who enjoys the vision of the reality of exploitation, or a hitman of domination. In the other, almost a revolutionary, almost a politician, almost a discoverer" (Handler 1969, 31, my translation).

The committed filmmaker found himself in this dilemma. From the beginning, C3M wanted to produce poor and imperfect cinema, capable of portraying the reality of Uruguayan society. An "emergency cinema" characterized by the aesthetics of poverty, street recording and artisanal editing, with immediate production and dissemination, almost at the pace of a newsreel. Furthermore, C3M created bridges with other cinemas, by revitalizing the very notion of collective work and its impact on art. Since then, unusual films were shown, exhibitions in alternative spaces (factories, schools, grassroots committees, workshops) were promoted, magazines and pamphlets were published, and several documentaries and animations were produced[12] (Villaça 2012; Dufuur 2018; Lacruz 2020). Plus, the cultural situation in the country helped to develop documentary as opposed to fiction films, which were difficult to produce in an unprepared and deficient industry (Lema Mosca 2023, 250).

In the following years, the political situation worsened. In 1971, President Pacheco Areco entrusted the Army to attack the *guerrilleros*. One year later, an MLN-Tupamaros offensive was harshly twarted by the military and most of the members got arrested and tortured. In 1973, the Army broke into the C3M and took the films and equipment. Some of the founding members were arrested and tortured and others had to escape into exile. The dictatorship would last until 1985.

One of the last movies produced by C3M was *There is a lot of work to do in the*

11 For instance, in 1985 Mario Benedetti published a famous poetry book titled *El sur también existe* and three years later, Fernando Solanas directed the film *Sur* (1988).

12 Along with the C3M, other institutions promoted these alternative ways of consumption. Cinemateca Uruguaya, the cine-clubs and other state agencies such as Cine Arte del SODRE or the Film Institute of the Universidad de la República (ICUR) reinforced their activities through new exhibitions spaces, courses and theoretical material in its publications, encouraging local production and new places for dissemination and discussion.

jungle (*En la selva hay mucho trabajo por hacer*, Walter Tournier, 1974), a short animation about the animals in a jungle and their battle with an evil hunter.[13] Over the years, the film became a metaphorical response to the dictatorship. Produced and recorded clandestinely in C3M, after the premiere Tournier had to exile to Peru, where he produced his following animations.[14]

Based on a short story by the Uruguayan political prisoner Mauricio Gatti, the jungle serves as an allegory of society. The choice of a group of animals is symptomatic, for several reasons. Fanon had already pointed out the "animality" between colonists and colonised relationship: "The colonist, when he wants to describe [the colonized] and he find the right word, constantly refers to the bestiary" (1963, 20, my translation). The jungle becomes a symbolical space and the hunter represents the oppression: both the coloniser of the north and the military officer of the dictatorship. The figure of the hunter appears exploitative and oppressive: he focuses on the lack of freedom of animals, the mistreatment and exploitation of their property. The Colonialism's lexicon has always been both zoological and bestialising, since the dehumanization transforms the dominated into mere beasts. Colonised people were the first to experience the lacerating significance of modern European politics. Colonialism invents an inferior "Other", and in this difference lies the operation of material and symbolic plunder of colonised peoples. They are attempting to annihilate culture and impose a new order and registration of bodies. If colonialism is characterised by the imposing nature and the use of violence against bodies, the symbolic situation of animals is representative of this new modality. South America's dictatorships thus became a new and ruthless form of imposition, an internal colonialism capable of classifying the inhabitants of the same country into several levels.

In *En la selva hay mucho trabajo por hacer* the jungle is a place where everyone participates without hierarchies and absolute freedom. Working is shown as an essential component in life (a key notion in Marxist philosophy) and it is a motive of equality between the members of the animal society. At the end, a young girl rescues the animals and returns them to their natural habitat, creating an identification with the child audience of the film, but also representing the value of good actions. Finally, animals can decide about their own existence by appealing to revolution: with the organised mobilisation, they can return to the jungle, recover what is lost, and prevent other hunters from coming to kill/colonize them. The lesson is powerful: if the society of the South is organised, no one from the North will come to impose their force.

13 Available for viewing on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gi17VXw5Go0&t=4s.

14 *El cóndor y el zorro* (1979), *El clavel desobediente* (1981) y *Nuestro pequeño paraíso* (1983). Since then, has had a successful career in animation, stop-motion and puppets. Some of his most important works are the television shows *Los Tatitos* (1997–2001) and *Los derechos del niño* (2004–07), films *El jefe y el carpintero* (2000), *Caribbean Christmas* (2001) and *Selkirk, el verdadero Robinson Crusoe* (2012).

CONCLUSION

The 1960s were a moment of political tension and intellectual production in Latin America. They were a period of very significant transformation in which late capitalism ended up consuming the vestiges of pre capitalism, as Jameson puts it (1984). The citizens' mobilisations undertaken in the public sphere found their counterpart in the artistic scene, as the mirror of bigger cultural and social concerns. In those turbulent times, dissimilar notions were linked to common worries: colonialism, exploitation, underdevelopment, marginality, dependence or oppression are some of them. Somehow, those forms of silent violence found their opposite side in street protests and guerrilla warfare. Fanon's call to violent action as the only way was thus the sign of expression for students, artists and *guerrilleros*.

Cinema echoed social changes and captured what was happening on screen, becoming a document of undeniable value for rethinking history and the recent past. Whether through the documentary record or through animation, the film production of that time can be seen as a mirror to recover those moments fifty years later. Discussing the situation of Uruguayan society while the imaginaries of prosperity and splendour were falling apart was something crucial. This was also a way to materialize the concerns of those citizens dissatisfied with the political crisis. The directors analysed here belong to that first generation of professional filmmakers who took their first steps in the 1960s and who, towards the end of the decade, were already prominent names on the local scene. They are also good examples of the committed filmmaker, who combined art and social consciousness as a superior ordinance and, for that reason, had to pay for it with harsh consequences, of which the most notable has been exile.

However, the films discussed here are only a small sample of Uruguayan cinema and they are just a node in that broad fabric called the Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano. The transnational relations of that decade should be explored in greater detail in order to draw a more comprehensive picture of Latin America's cinema. The director's exile only strengthened the relationships with other filmmakers in different spaces of enunciation and expanded their international recognition. While the situation was not always easy, especially when the New Latin American Cinema was beginning to dissolve in the 1980s. Anything was possible and anti-capitalist and neo-colonialist fights seemed something of the past. New times were coming and the Latin American cinema would have to adapt, again.

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