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Southern Cone Memory Discourse and Cuba's *Generación de los Hijos* in Camila Guzmán Urzúa's *El telón de azúcar* (2006)

El presente artículo analiza el documental El telón de azúcar *(2006) de la cineasta cubana Camila Guzmán Urzúa (1971) y el diálogo cinematográfico que esta entabla con la obra de su padre, el documentalista chileno Patricio Guzmán. Aunque el documental principalmente se centra en Cuba y el impacto que ha tenido el Período Especial en la generación de la cineasta, el artículo propone que al prestar discursos y técnicas audiovisuales de la cinematografía posdictadura de su padre, Guzmán Urzúa desarrolla una fuerte crítica de la generación revolucionaria de sus padres al mismo tiempo que mantiene su fe en un futuro socialista.*

Palabras clave: *Cuba, Periodo Especial, memoria, La generación de los hijos, cubanía*

The present article analyzes the documentary Telón de azúcar *(2006) by Cuban filmmaker Camila Guzmán Urzúa (1971) and the cinematic dialogue she sustains with the work of her father, Chilean documentarian Patricio Guzmán. Although the documentary primarily deals with Cuba and the impact of the Special Period on the filmmaker's generation, the article proposes that Guzmán Urzúa, upon borrowing audiovisual discourses and techniques from her father's post-dictatorship cinematography, develops a searing critique of the revolutionary dream of her parents' generation, even as she maintains her faith in socialist futures.*

Keywords: *Cuba, Special Period, Memory, La generación de los hijos, Cuban identity*

In 1991, the fall of the Soviet Union served a serious blow to socialist nations across the globe. With its intense dependency on the USSR – established in large part due to the United States' embargo on Cuba – the island was severely impacted by the loss of its foremost ally, which had provided the

nation with crucial economic support since its 1959 Revolution. The crash of its monocrop sugar-for-petroleum export economy left Cuba on the brink of collapse, ushering in a period of austerity that would be known as the "Special Period in Times of Peace." Shortages of food and petroleum, the virtual breakdown of transportation networks, and the hurried diversification of national economies all defined this period of economic depression, which reached its peak in the mid-1990s. The Special Period came to a gradual end between 1995 and 1997, partially aided by the 1995 *Ley de Inversión Extranjera*, which drastically altered the country's positionality vis-à-vis global capitalist markets.[1] The 1993 decriminalization of the US dollar had a similarly transformative effect, allowing the socialist state to bank hard currency, which had previously circulated exclusively on the black market. Despite the island nation's relative bounce-back, the general discontent and precarity experienced by Cubans throughout the Special Period had lasting effects, challenging the faith of many in Cuba's revolutionary project. Nevertheless, and as Ariana Hernandez-Reguant articulates, economic policy remained "subordinated to the political survival of both the revolutionary government and the socialist state" ("Writing" 7), allowing the Castro government to regain control of Cuba's public sphere by the end of the 1990s (9). Significant political change remained all but out of reach, even as the revolutionary government's shift in economic policy involved increasingly complicated "ideological cartwheels" (Whitfield 26).

Filmed in the late 1990s and produced over the course of the following six years, Camila Guzmán Urzúa's *El telón de azúcar* (2006) looks back at her own youth spent in Havana during the comparatively "golden" 1970s and 1980s.[2] Over the span of eighty minutes, Guzmán Urzúa reconstructs her early years by interviewing childhood friends and visiting the spaces most central to her revolutionary education. This cinematic reconstruction moves in chronological order, starting with a visit to the filmmaker's former primary school, which still houses hordes of enthusiastic – and very patriotic – youngsters. From there, Guzmán Urzúa transports her viewers to Villa Tarará, her old *colegio,* and a still functioning *escuela de campo*, to name just a few of the featured locales. Crucial, too, is the filmmaker's constant intercalation of family relics and archival materials, including photos, drawings, newspapers, and video clips. The intimate tonality of *Telón* is further amplified by Guzmán Urzúa's use of a hand-held camera, as we see reflected in a mirror during an interview with her mother. In many ways, the film is an ode to the filmmaker's very specific experience of Cuba's golden years.

Despite featuring various testimonies confirming the golden nature of 1970s and 1980s Havana, Guzmán Urzúa – who returns to the city from

economic exile in Europe to shoot the film – cannot help but contrast late Special Period Cuba with "los años dorados" of her youth (*Cine Latino*). Shots of deteriorating textbooks, decaying schools, and ruinous museums are juxtaposed with memories of childhood splendor, thus confirming the filmmaker-protagonist's claim that "[y]a nada es lo que era, siento que mi país de infancia ha desaparecido" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 00:12:42-00:12:48). But as the film's circular ending suggests – in the final scene, a primary school-aged child enters a schoolyard like that shown in the opening sequence – life in Havana goes on, with a new generation of youngsters offered a similar revolutionary education and its corresponding dreams.

Yet unique to Guzmán Urzúa's documentary is the fact that the filmmaker's mother and father are Chilean exiles, even if she herself strongly identifies as Cuban.[3] Born in 1971 to parents actively committed to Salvador Allende's political revolution, Guzmán Urzúa moved to Havana at the age of two, shortly after the military coup d'état that saw Augusto Pinochet's rise to power. Her father, Patricio Guzmán, is the internationally acclaimed documentary filmmaker responsible for films like *La batalla de Chile* (1975-79), *Chile, la memoria obstinada* (1997) and *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010). He may be partially credited with spearheading Chile's cinematic "memory boom." Guzmán has become emblematic of his generation's successive progressive political movements and continued fight to uphold democracy, with his name now synonymous with Chilean memory work. Thus, if upon traveling to Santiago in her twenties, Guzmán Urzúa realized that she was Cuban (*Mabuse Revista*) – and not then, Chilean – the filmmaker still maintains close ties to the Southern Cone and the cinematic production of her father, whom she worked closely with before starting out on her own (*Cine Latino*).

In what follows, I explore the implications of Guzmán Urzúa's binationality as it relates to *El telón de azúcar*. Locating Guzmán Urzúa within Latin America's *generación de los hijos,*[4] I consider how her (mis)appropriation of cinematic tropes and techniques common to her father's work evidences a desire to update and move beyond the revolutionary discourses, histories, and imaginaries put forth by his generation.[5] Reworking the discourses and repertoires of Guzmán and his contemporaries, Guzmán Urzúa, I argue, unearths the experiences of the many *hijos* left out of and disillusioned by the histories and imaginaries constructed by their parents. In this sense, I suggest that the film closely dialogues with the work of the Southern Cone's *generación de los hijos* – and, most closely, with Albertina Carri's *Los rubios* (Argentina, 2003) – whose own identity challenges often dovetail with those explored by members of Cuba's Street Film movement. Yet most critically, I propose that in grafting

her father's distinctly Chilean memory discourse onto an exploration of Cuban childhood, Guzmán Urzúa polemically reframes her generation's Special Period disillusionment as an experience of traumatic, identity loss. To this end, I argue that in *Telón,* the filmmaker accuses the Cuban State, her parents, and their contemporaries of having "disappeared" a collective, generational set of *cubanía(s)* built upon the impossible promise of a brilliant future.[6] Crucially, this critique coexists with Guzmán Urzúa's own anti-capitalist politics and belief in the project of socialist revolution.

Filmmakers who came of age in the 1990s ushered in a new era of Cuban cinema defined by an increased reliance on newly available digital technologies and a distancing from some of the revolutionary ideals of previous generations. Amid the turbulence and scarcity of the 1990s, this new cohort of filmmakers armed themselves with portable recording devices and hit the "streets" (Stock 15) to capture the "increasing complexity of a society losing its fundamental meanings or, at the very least, in which meanings had to be reconstructed" (Venegas 144). Ann Marie Stock employs the term "Street Filmmaking" to refer to those Cuban filmmakers born in the 1970s and 1980s who came of age during the Special Period. Due to a decrease in both film-industry jobs and formerly abundant institutional opportunities, the group was forced to adapt, revolutionizing Cuban cinema in the process:

> Out of necessity, working with limited budgets and without industry infrastructure, this generation became adept at *resolviendo* and *inventando*—figuring out creative ways to make do. One strategy was to forge partnerships with institutions and individuals at home and abroad . . . Another consisted of experimenting with new technologies, thereby increasing the audiovisual options open to them for producing and disseminating their work. (Stock 15)

In his own study of Special Period cinema, Nicholas Balaisis employs the term "imperfect aesthetics" (2) to describe the material, ideological, and aesthetic "making do" that came to define the era's cinematic production, using Julio Garcia Espinosa's notion of "imperfect cinema" as a point of departure. Balaisis draws parallels between this cinematic making do of the late twentieth century and that of the immediate post-revolutionary period, while emphasizing the Special Period's heightened political and ideological instability and ambiguity (9).

If post-revolution Cuban cinema was primarily employed for "revolutionary dissemination" and the production of new "Cuban publics" (Balaisis 14), young cineastes of the Special Period worked to interrogate these very conceptualizations of *cubanía*. In doing so, they began to form new articulations of national identity, often via the recuperation of

individual stories and testimonies. As Stock argues, these personal narratives and micro-histories were frequently at odds with long-standing patriotic discourses, discourses that generally upheld the unshakeable nature and ideological supremacy of Cuba's revolutionary project:

> Located between past histories of the nation and emerging narratives of a global community, [this new generation of filmmakers] would draw upon Cuba's "foundational fictions" to problematize and critique national identity. In doing so, they would craft a conception of *cubanía* characterized by transnational linkages and responsive to global processes—an identity retaining some of the socialist values promulgated throughout the revolution while resisting dogmatism and the reach of state authority. (13)

Responding to increased dialogues with global actors, a national opening-up to capitalist markets, and the uncertain future of the island's revolutionary project, this new era of Cuban cinema thus registered the frustrations and anxieties of the nation's *generación de los hijos*. That is, the children of those who shared in the construction of Cuba's revolutionary project, broadly defined, in real time.

Both thematically and in terms of the material circumstances of its production, then, Guzmán Urzúa's *Telón* closely aligns with the spirit of Special Period Street Cinema, as Arelis Rivero Cabrera (2013) and Anabella Castro Avelleyra (2015) have argued. While immensely personal, the film contributes to a collective, cinematic airing of generational angst, presenting the complex *cubanía(s)* of those who came of age with its creator. Accordingly, Rivero Cabrera's reading of *Telón* emphasizes both its reconsideration of everyday life and its production of a generation-specific counter-archive, arguing that the documentary moves to establish "un terreno en el que pueda germinar el discurso de su generación; un discurso que no encuentra el más mínimo acomodo en ninguna de las laderas del abismo entre épicas de paraísos e infiernos idealizados" (11). Moreover, Cuban film critique José Antonio García Borreo suggests that *Telón* – despite Guzmán Urzúa's not-exactly-Cuban identity – served as an important precursor of more recent meditations on the Cuban revolution and its diverse aftermaths, proving the staying-power and "Cubanness" of Guzmán Urzúa's documentary.[7]

Crucially, and as was and is the case of their *Southern Cone* counterparts, Special Period filmmakers of Guzmán Urzúa's generation – including Guzmán Urzúa herself – responded to a broad, transnational revolutionary project and discourse that was not of their own creation, even if they reaped the benefits of its revolutionary splendor for a short while. The Cuban Revolution did, of course, inspire leftist revolutionary projects

across the hemisphere, including within the Southern Cone. To this end, while the revolutionary dreams of Southern Cone leftists were prematurely disrupted by right-wing military dictatorships, Cuban and Southern Cone *hijos* could be considered close cousins. Cuban *hijos* may have, at least in the 1970s and 1980s, lived the revolutionary dream that was made impossible for their Southern Cone counterparts – counterparts who suffered the disappearance and murder of their parents as a result – but they, too, can be said to live in the shadow of revolutionary progenitors and their legacies. And they, too, are now left to sort out a complex matrix of familial, cultural, and sociopolitical inheritances, inheritances that often hinge on supposed ideological givens. To be clear, I by no means wish to conflate these two experiences – the literal loss of one's parent(s) and the inheritance of an unstable revolutionary project.[8] Rather, and while acknowledging the specificities of each national context, I would like to suggest that the experimental overlap of these two groups allows for productive transnational dialogues and necessitate the inclusion of Cubans in transnational theorizations of Latin America's *generación de los hijos*. Patricio Guzmán's own movements between Chile and Cuba – and his daughter's resulting bi-nationality – evidences the relative naturality of such an approach.[9]

Like their Cuban counterparts, *hijo* filmmakers from the Southern Cone respond(ed) not only to revolutionary legacies – including the violence and trauma produced by subsequent military dictatorships – but also to the discourses that sustain them. María José Bello's description of the *generación de los hijos'* post-dictatorship cinema proves just how closely the work of Cuban *hijos* – and, by extension, Guzmán Urzúa's documentary – may align with that of their Southern Cone contemporaries, even if addressing distinct national contexts:

> El relato autobiográfico se abre paso a través de recuerdos y poesía para actualizar una temática que tiende a ser relegada al olvido del discurso dominante…estos documentales contemporáneos nos hablan de la historia de Chile a partir de las experiencias personales de nuevos directores que tienen hoy entre 30 y 40 años. Los cineastas son hijos de padres que tuvieran una militancia de izquierda característica que marcó el destino de sus familias ya sea por la muerte de sus miembros o por la dispersión sufrida por el exilio y el desarraigo … Si bien abordan temáticas políticas, lo hacen desde un posicionamiento subjetivo para dar cuenta de cómo el devenir histórico de Chile afectó su desarrollo identitario. (79)

Once again, we see a decisive conjugation of discursive rebellion, intergenerational inheritance, revolutionary leftovers, and a felt need to work through resulting identity confusion.

Although Bello's description refers exclusively to Chilean *hijo* filmmakers, Albertina Carri's ground-breaking documentary *Los rubios* (Argentina, 2003) perhaps most potently – and polemically – exemplifies Southern Cone *hijo* discourse, albeit via an immensely sarcastic, often caustic tonality.[10] As I suggest below, *Telón* appears to borrow much of Carri's playful causticity, reframing discourses and representational repertoires put forth by the parental generation in order to center her own *hija* subjectivity. As Geoffrey Maguire affirms, Carri's controversial documentary "has been a foundational landmark in the cultural production from the children of the disappeared" (19), most notably for its creation of an alternate "image of the hijo" (20) that runs counter to discourses and representational repertoires put forth by the revolutionary generation. Like Carri – who calls into question the heroism of her disappeared *montonero* parents – Guzmán Urzúa moves to question the vision and post-revolutionary discourse of one of Chile's most notable memory practitioners: her own father. It is perhaps for this reason that Bello identifies *Telón* – which she unequivocally classifies as a *Chilean* documentary – as a precursor to iconic second-generation films like *Mi vida con Carlos* (2010) and *El edificio de los chilenos* (2010), underscoring the documentary's importance to Chilean and broader Southern Cone cinematic genealogies. More still, and discursive questions aside, the filmmaker's status as "child of Chilean exiles living abroad" undoubtedly cements her and *Telón*'s belonging to Southern Cone cinematic canons and *hijo* discourses, even if she may not identify as Chilean.[11] Nevertheless, her now "secondary exile" from Cuba to Europe only further binds her to Cuban *hijo* canons and discourses – within which exile and diaspora are crucial themes – making it all the more difficult to establish the film's belonging to any single national context. My point here is that despite the documentary's obvious commentary on Cuba and the Castro government, *Telón* easily fits within this broader Southern Cone *hijo* canon. Yet as my prior discussion of Cuban "street" cinema would suggest, the film is still very "Cuban," and thus also belongs to Cuban cinematic traditions.

As Guzmán Urzúa's initial claim that "[su] país de infancia ha desaparecido" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 0:12:42-0:12:48) anticipates, notions of *pérdida* and absence consume *El telón de azúcar*. Yet unlike the work of Guzmán Urzúa's Southern Cone contemporaries – the majority of whom recount the literal loss of a disappeared family member – in *Telón,* the displaced or disappeared entity is far more difficult to locate or even identify. The Cuban filmmaker lost many friends and former schoolmates to exile during the Special Period, but she presents these absences as vestiges of a far greater loss: that of their utopian socialist childhood and, by extension, the basis of their individual Cuban identities. Indeed, the

filmmaker's interviews with childhood friends only sporadically confront issues of exile or displacement head-on, instead unearthing seemingly benign childhood anecdotes – stories of delicious school snacks, *pioneros* summer programing, and school trips to *escuelas de campo* – which she juxtaposes with the very different Cuba they now encounter. Conversations with contemporary Cuban youth prove that school children are no longer offered the same delicious snacks as they were in the 1980s, whereas visits to former museums and field-trip destinations reveal the ruinous state of once-pristine infrastructure.

Nevertheless, and despite the partial dissolution of Cuba's former grandeur, the adult interviewees maintain that, at least in the 1980s, they were very happy. This happiness, as one interviewee describes, was due in part to a general sense of "tremenda posibilidad y tremenda confianza también," (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 01:13:41-01:13:46) upheld by the fact that, as another would put it, "había mucha gente que realmente creía en el proyecto" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 00:59:42-00:59:46). Their Cuba, to quote a more emphatic Guzmán Urzúa – whose voice accompanies several panoramic shots – "era como un paraíso" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 00:02:51-00:02:53). And this *paraíso* represented the realization of a leftist dream not so unlike that described by Chilean actor and director Ernesto Malbrán in Patricio Guzmán's *Chile, memoria obstinada* (1999). According to Malbrán, his generation's leftist causes were "un nave de soñadores" that "se hizo pedazos," even if their collective dream was – and, implicitly, still is – "un digno sueño" (Guzmán, *Chile, memoria* 0:25:25-0:26:20).[12] Critically, and as Macarena Gómez-Barris contends, Ernesto Malbrán serves as the "director's surrogate" for most of the film, parroting Guzmán's own nostalgic yearnings (124). Guzmán Urzúa's Cuban childhood was, in a sense, the very embodiment of the "digno sueño" shared by adult leftists across the hemisphere, including her own parents.[13]

Guzmán Urzúa's focus on childhood and the unsustainable splendor engendered by adult *sueños* sets the stage for her wide-ranging critique of the heroic revolutionary discourses upheld by the Cuban State and individuals like her own father. As Claudia Castañeda argues, the figure of the child has long wielded the potential to generate "bodies and worlds," with the childhood condition finding its foremost value in this potentiality (4). Indeed, Joanne Faulkner reminds us that children are often figured as "agents-in-waiting, or a reserve of human potential" (130) that may be used to "imagine other selves and other possibilities for the human" (129). Looking back from the precarity and insecurity of the Special Period, the lost, unreachable (former) child of the 1970s and 1980s would represent an obvious symbol of the nation's uncertain, dissolving future. And in the case of *Telón,* the child serves as a symbolic stand-in for the identity confusion of

the filmmaker's generation, those former-children who once embodied the very "other selves and other possibilities" (129) dreamt-up by their revolutionary parents. As several of the film's interviewees imply, it was precisely the limitless futurity promised to them by the Cuban State and, in turn, their parents that made them who they are and that became an absolute hallmark of their individual Cuban identities. Growing up in *los años dorados*, to be Cuban – at least in the case of the filmmaker and her childhood friends – became almost synonymous with endless possibility undergirded by a functioning socialist State. Even if Guzmán Urzúa and her friends once saw the island through rose-colored glasses, those rose-colored glasses were still crucial to their formation as both Cubans and individuals. To lose all hope in this limitless Cuban futurity, then, would have triggered the dissolution of their future-oriented *cubanía(s)*, leaving them with, as one interviewee suggests, "un recuerdo idílico de algo que quizás nunca fue" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 01:00:10-01:00:12).

The filmmaker's focus on the childhood wonders of Cuba's *años dorados* may reflect a sometimes-yearning, retrospective gaze, but her constant juxtaposition of past and present, splendor and ruin, life and absence produces a less-than-joyous affect. The *digno sueño* that engendered her joyful childhood is constantly held up against the bleak reality of the 1990s and early 2000s, calling into question the sustainability of the Cuban State's particular socialist dream, at least as it was envisioned at the time of the film's production. As I explain, these juxtapositions help the filmmaker make important, ongoing distinctions between typical experiences of childhood nostalgia and a more painful loss of identity, imagined homeland, and future. If Svetlana Boym cautions that nostalgia "tends to confuse the actual home with an imaginary one, [in extreme cases creating] a phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill" (12), Guzmán Urzúa's film documents the difficult confrontation of her phantom, idealized homeland – which she conjures via interviews with childhood friends and the intercalation of material artefacts – with the reality of a once unimaginable Special Period present. Yet while "the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility, is at the very core of the modern condition" (414), the displacement and irreversibility problematized by the director and her peers are not solely the result of natural temporal distancing. Rather, they are the consequence of significant political upheaval, ranging from the ongoing economic violence caused by the United States' embargo against Cuba to the island nation's abrupt estrangement from the Soviet Union, and the revolutionary generation's implicit failure to brace against them.

While Guzmán Urzúa's juxtapositions of past grandeur and present decay are evocative in and of themselves, *Telón*'s employment of black-and-

white photography is particularly suggestive. Photography enters the film most prominently via the insertion of childhood portraits of Guzmán Urzúa and her interviewees. The interviewees' portraits appear just before video footage of their adult-selves – whose testimonies contrast childhood joy with Special Period precarity – a procedure the filmmaker relies on for the entire documentary. To be sure, the image has played an important role in Special Period Cuba and its aftermath. As Ana María Dopico argues, photography became an "emblematic genre for representing Special Period Havana (as tourist synecdoche for Cuba)" (451), with the frenzy of internationally circulating images "of a real nation functioning as historical theme park" serving as the "projection screen for Western fantasies" (452). Photos of exotic locales and their "third world" inhabitants, she contends, yielded "nostalgia for ruins, for time suspended" and offered "a consumable geography that symbolically abolishes everything else around it" (453). Yet in *Telón,* Guzmán Urzúa's employment of black-and-white photographs does not conjure any sort of "consumable geography," even if they do evoke nostalgia. Instead, they seem to more closely recall images from the Southern Cone, where the photograph – and particularly the headshot – has acquired a weighty symbolic charge. As has been the case across Latin American, the use of photography to mark and protest the absence of the disappeared has become central to Southern Cone responses to dictatorship. Protesters throughout the region and continent have long taken to the streets carrying enlarged images of their missing and making visible the faces of those whose whereabouts are unknown or withheld. The childhood portraits intercalated in *Telón* bear a striking resemblance to the photos reproduced on posters and presented to authorities by the families of the disappeared, many of which were carnet-sized photos taken from government-issued identification documents. The portraits featured in *Telón* were themselves issued by a government body – the Cuban Education System – a detail that further suggests that their evocation of Southern Cone "*desaparecido* photography" may not be entirely accidental.

Beyond its significance to Southern Cone activism, photography has also become a mainstay of the region's memory discourses, discourses with which Guzmán Urzúa would have been intimately familiar. As Nelly Richard argued in *Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile Since 1973* (1986), photography became an essential medium for Chilean artists and creators immediately after Pinochet's usurpation of power:

> The introduction of photography coincides with the end of that period of silence after the 1973 coup when the artists had to carefully rethink the meaning of their practice in terms of new instruments of communication that could refer to the socio-political environment in a more explicit or actively critical way. Thus photographic

> information became privileged in that it enabled the work to present its relation to the context by turning all signs of reality into evidence or the *proof* of its accusations. (35; emphasis added)

The use of photography as "proof of … accusations" extended far beyond the immediate post-coup era described by Richard, becoming a mainstay of post-dictatorship cultural production. In the context of Chilean post-dictatorship cinema, Michael Lazzara has argued that the accusatory charge of black-and-white photography was intensified by its conflation with "remains" and "a remote past whose vibrancy persists solely in the memories of the defeated" (Lazzara 75). That is, photos often became stand-ins for the missing, both affirming the former presence of those lost and evidencing the "defeat" implicit in their absence.

In line with aesthetic currents described by Richard and Lazzara, in Patricio Guzmán's important documentary *Chile: La memoria obstinada* (1997) – which came out nearly a decade before *Telón* – black-and-white photographs of *desaparecidos* serve as searing accusations of state violence, while simultaneously pointing to the despair of a post-dictatorship present. Guzmán's interviewees are asked to engage with photos taken before the dictatorship, often provoking unexpected virtual reunions with disappeared friends and comrades, whose faces they recognize in multiple photos. Although painful, these interactions with images of Chile's *desaparecidos* implicitly do more good than harm, opening new discursive spaces for survivors of dictatorship and, more critically, helping to sustain the memory of those lost. Nevertheless, these productive sequences still engender the somber tonality referenced by Lazzara, as is nearly impossible to avoid when working with photographs of the disappeared. To some extent, the viewer is even reminded of Roland Barthes' reading of a photo of Alexander Gardner taken shortly before his execution: "the *punctum* is *he is going to die.* I read at the same time: *This will be* and *this has been;* I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is at stake" (96). Thus, if the photos from Guzmán's documentary conjure-up previously suppressed or unspoken memories, they also serve as reminders of the violence and failure that awaited their subjects, registering a lack of futurity only legible due to the viewers' temporal distancing from their revolutionary past.

Given Guzmán Urzúa's closeness to her father's work and intimate knowledge of Chilean memory discourses, the likeness of *Telón's* childhood portraits to iconic images of Southern Cone *desaparecidos* would seem at least partially intentional. What is more, and as Bernadita Llanos has identified, Guzmán Urzúa's documentary even recycles the basic premise of her father's *Chile, memoria obstinada*: an exile-documentarian returns to their country of origin for the first time since a departure preempted by

political upheaval – for Guzmán, the 1973 coup and for his daughter, the Cuban Special Period – in order to interview former friends and look-back on a hopeful "before" via the examination of archival footage and the revisiting of key geographic locations (Llanos 26). Given *Telón*'s close mirroring of *Chile, memoria obstinada*, I propose that Guzmán Urzúa's black-and-white photos not only evoke a now-unthinkable childhood, but also the abrupt *disappearance* of the filmmaker's and her friends' future-oriented *cubanía(s)*. And this seemingly impossible, borderline unethical comparison between Southern Cone *desaparecidos* and formerly hopeful Cuban children would thus be made in an intentioned effort to polemicize, as was the case with Albertina Carri's deliberate "mishandling" of her disappeared parents' legacy in *Los rubios.* To this end, the ghostly children pictured – representatives of a former, now deteriorating revolutionary dream – are bestowed with a sinister charge that prohibits any nostalgic, hegemonic reading. I should say, however, that Guzmán Urzúa's use of photography and broader critique of the Cuban State and its revolutionary generation is complicated by the fact that she herself is an anti-capitalist supporter of socialism. The filmmaker confirms this stance in a 2009 interview with Facundo García, in which she cites a Cuban "perestroika" as a possible solution to the island's struggling brand of socialism: "Ojo: yo sé –he andado bastante por Latinoamérica– que el capitalismo no funciona. Pero creo que el socialismo que tenemos [en Cuba] está pidiendo un cambio, una revolución dentro de la Revolución. Nos debemos la perestroika que no fue." Like Carri – who is by no means a dictator apologist – Guzmán Urzúa's critique of Cuban revolutionary discourse comes from a new generation of leftists who came of age in their parents' shadows and who seek fresh paths forward, be they in the cultural or political spheres.

Returning to the filmmaker's employment of photography, while *Telón's* interviewees indeed describe intense experiences of rupture, the film's evocation of Southern Cone *desaparecido* imagery reframes their collective, identity loss as a palpable, even violent trauma. Each intercalated school portrait appears fixed by a static camera, with the muffled voices of school children sounding in the background. Compared to the vibrancy of the children's voiced-over laughs and shouts, the stillness of the photos – which show signs of wear-and-tear – evoke a sense of solemnity that foretells the expiry of the subject captured, as well as "an anterior future of which death is at stake" (Barthes 96). If the photos' aura of death and "infuturity" clearly reference the upheaval of Cuba's Special Period, it also portrays the featured, now-adult children as future victims of some ghastly – albeit unnamed – trauma only legible from the present. Much in the way that Guzmán's use of images gestures towards the violent future facing the disappeared in *Chile, la memoria obstinada*, the ominous tonality of his

daughter's photo sequences – which painstakingly contrast life and the inanimate; stillness and movement; color and lack thereof – stages the former-children as future victims and not, then, subjects of the more traditional nostalgic gaze described by Boym.

More critically, this audiovisual discourse suggests that the children featured in the photos – the former selves of the documentary's interviewees – were themselves victims of state violence, albeit a form of state violence that is more figurative and subjective than literal and corporeal. *Telón* seems to imply that their victimization was neither random nor accidental, but the direct result of tangible political instability and upheaval. If in *Chile, la memoria obstinada* photos of the disappeared serve as "proof of … accusations" (Richard 35), Guzmán Urzúa's intercalation of state-issued childhood portraits provides similar "proof," albeit of identity violence. While here and throughout Guzmán Urzúa appears to identify the Cuban State as her generation's primary "aggressor," the fact that both of her parents – as well as, presumably, those of her peers – supported Cuba's revolutionary project insinuates that they, too, are targets of this overarching critique. It is here that the sort of loss explored by the filmmaker most seriously diverges from the many losses of her father's generation, which are – as Guzmán's filmography makes clear – almost unequivocally tied to the violence committed by right-wing military dictatorships. Particularly in *Chile, la memoria obstinada*, there is little suggestion that leftist activists and militants of Guzmán's generation had somehow allowed their revolutionary dream to run amok. And given the magnitude of human rights abuses associated with Chile's military dictatorship, such a critique would be difficult if not impossible to sustain. Thus, it is here, too, that resonances of Albertina Carri's purposefully controversial, antihegemonic discourse are most palpable. Guzmán Urzúa may not cut up family photos nor send a surrogate to complete important interviews with her parents' former comrades – as Carri does in *Los rubios* – but she does evoke "sacred" emblems of her father's revolutionary generation – both *desaparecido* photography and her father's own filmography – in a way that is both polemicizing and self-centering. The Cuban filmmaker's invocation of her father's filmography, then, not only provides a necessary framework for her condemnation of the Cuban State; it may also comprise a certain "filming back" at her father's generation of leftists, their preferred representational repertories and, most crucially, their now-unstable revolutionary dream.

The extent to which the filmmaker and her peers were "victimized" by the Cuban State's and their parents' shared, unstable revolutionary dream is further articulated in a scene featuring a school-building sketch. The sketch appears as part of an extended interview sequence, wherein a now-

adult interviewee is seen leaving home after recounting the grandeur of his 1980s elementary school. Proceeding to his left, the man stands on his tiptoes to peer through an unassuming window outfitted with thick steel bars. Cutting to the window, the camera reveals a classroom of smiling school children who immediately rush towards the opening. The bars remain visible for the shot's entirety, as the gaggle of children jump up-and-down on the other side. After roughly five seconds, the aforementioned sketch appears, rendered in pencil on now-faded graph paper. Entirely fixed on the drawing, the camera slowly pans upward towards the front of the sketched room, moving past rows of desks inhabited by pupils. The words "che" (*sic*), "Fidel," "Camilo" (Cinefuegos) and "Raúl" (Castro) appear on the blackboard, while a map of Cuba hangs to its immediate right. Jumping to two separate classrooms, the camera reveals that the sketch is actually a panoptic rendering of an entire school, with two straight lines dividing each room. Panning up and down, Guzmán Urzúa captures hand-drawn children engaging in a variety of activities, some dancing during music class and others listening to a teacher read aloud. The sequence ends with freeze-frames of four separate, additional drawings rendered on plain white paper, all of which depict young pupils engaging in patriotic activities (Gúzma Urzúa, *El telón* 00:07:48-00:09:01).

If the school-building sketch provides an apparently pleasant rendering of a 1980s Cuban school, it also offers a potentially damning condemnation of the Castro government and her parents' generation of leftists. From the very start of the sequence, the metal bars adhered to the window of the real, contemporary elementary school confirm the impossibility of recovering the hopeful *cubanía(s)* of the filmmaker's and her friends' pre-Special Period youth. Peering through the window, the interviewee finds himself physically barred from engaging with the joyful children, children who appear to be of the same age as he was in a previously featured childhood portrait. Apart from marking the temporal and ideological distance separating the interviewee from his now-distant childhood, the bars conflate the dim classroom with a prison or detention center. Its jailhouse framing highlights the imprisonment of golden-era subjectivities within a now unreachable past and insinuates the oppressive nature of a revolutionary education destined to produce adult disillusionment and discontent. If the bars prevent the adult interviewee from entering the classroom – and thus recuperating a once glorious *cubanía* – they simultaneously suggest that the contemporary schoolchildren cannot exit. The young scholars, too, are a captive audience, offered a similar series of dreams that will likely prove impossible to fulfill.

More to this point, while Guzmán Urzúa's bird's-eye panning enables viewers to comprehend the scope of the featured sketch, it also produces a

totalizing gaze reminiscent of the Castro government's all-encompassing authority, particularly during and after the Special Period. Whereas each quadrant of the drawing confines the children to their individual classrooms, the camera's lens moves freely across the page, jumping from room-to-room and panning up-and-down without difficulty. In contrast, the sketched classrooms – all of which lack doors – are meticulously traced onto graph paper. Like the real-life children who appear before the barred window, joyful imaginary pupils, who presumably belong to the filmmaker-protagonist's generation, are fully contained. Thus, Guzmán Urzúa's visual discourse suggests that she and her peers were unknowing cogs in a system that ultimately proved unsustainable. Indeed, the filmmaker-protagonist's voiced-over description of how, at least during *los años dorados*, "todo nos parecía posible" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 00:08:51) anticipates later testimonies of its failure. Subsequent interviews with former schoolmates speak to their generation's collective experiences of scarcity, hunger, and, most notably, joblessness. The government's guarantee that anyone could become "médicos, ingenieros, físicos, pintores, atletas" (Guzmán Urzúa, *El telón* 00:08:51-00:08:58) proved disproportionately false. The disappearing *cubanía(s)* of the filmmaker's youth were, as several interviews attest, at least partially sustained by the promise of endless opportunity, both professional and otherwise. And these promises – due to a deadly cocktail of the US embargo against Cuba, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the mismanagement of Cuban socialism – were overwhelmingly unfulfilled.

Indeed, the filmmaker's employment of the school building sketch indirectly indexes Cuban ideological authoritarianism, which she inherently links to her own revolutionary education. Likewise, the sketch's possible reference to drawings produced by survivors of Southern Cone detention centers further advances the film's discursive recall of the disappeared while simultaneously affirming the victimization of its interviewees. Crucially, both Carri's *Los rubios* and Guzmán's later *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010) include hand-drawn visualizations of government detention centers rendered from memory by former detainees. In each case, the drawings serve as precious visual testimonies, testimonies that – especially when held-up against now-unassuming, sometimes ruinous former detention centers – foreground experiences of unthinkable human suffering often obscured by official narratives. Of course, Carri's decision to represent her parents' disappearance using Playmobil figures – and even to restage their disappearance as an alien abduction – provides an important, albeit sarcastic, counter memory of the period in question, effectively bucking normative representational repertoires and centering her *hija* experience. Guzmán Urzúa's own school building sketch may serve a comparable function, offering a critical re-reading of past childhood splendor while

simultaneously, and quite polemically, questioning the foresight, discourses, and representational repertoires of the revolutionary generation.

The absolute impossibility of resurrecting the future-oriented *cubanía(s)* of Guzmán Urzúa's generation is further underscored by the filmmaker's visit to several locations central to her childhood, among them an elementary school, an *escuela de campo,* and a museum devoted to Che Guevara. And here it should be prefaced that these spaces are difficult to access, making their appearance in *Telón* rather evocative. Guzmán Urzúa enters heavily protected, "sacred" Cuban spaces, only to assign them a fiercely antihegemonic reading. If in *Chile, la memoria obstinada*, the friends and families of the disappeared – among them, Guzmán himself – return to detention centers and torture sites in order to patch together memories of trauma and militancy, *Telón* offers another sort of "traumatic return."[14] Painful encounters with places of detainment and torture are substituted for a series of confrontations with former sites of childhood splendor that, after the fall of the Soviet Union, "se [hicieron] pedazos" (Guzmán, *Chile, la memoria* 00:25:34). The pleasant nostalgia typically assigned to childhood locales is substituted for a solemnity more commonly attributed to spaces associated with violence or physical loss. The result is a recodification of space that begs viewers to identify muffled traumas and hidden disappearances, as is the case when the filmmaker visits a local elementary school. At the school, the camera silently pans across a vacant classroom before fixing its view on empty desks. Previous shots prove that the school is not abandoned; there are in fact swarms of happy children there receiving their own revolutionary education. Yet the filmmaker's attempt to capture the room's utter abandon suggests that it is not these contemporary children who are missing (Gúzman Urzúa, *El telón* 00:38:22-00:40:08). Rather, the shot conjures up the children of Cuba's *años dorados* whose *cubanía(s)* had been all but disappeared with the onset of the Special Period.[15] Again leaning on tropes from Southern Cone cinema, the scene polemically evokes death and physical violence, underscoring the absolute seriousness of the identity rupture the filmmaker seeks to trace.

This evocation of missing bodies is further compounded by the frame's striking resemblance to a shot from Guzmán's *Chile, memoria obstinada.* After recording contemporary youth discuss Chile's military dictatorship – youth who argue over the possible "necessity" of Pinochet's 1976 coup d'état – Guzmán cuts to a silent shot of an empty desk. Breaking with the vibrancy of the previous discussion – in which one student claims that those of her generation "son la consecuencia de ese golpe" – the filmmaker evokes those who suffered the coup d'état's most brutal *consecuencias*: the thousands of students of his generation who were disappeared by the military

dictatorship (Guzmán, *Chile, la memoria* 00:31:23-00:31:25). If Guzmán Urzúa's strikingly similar shot already recalls Southern Cone memory discourses, her recycling of a motif previously employed by her father makes the sequence even more polemical. Whereas Guzmán's desks register the absence of disappeared student-activists – thus negating the seriousness of the personal *consecuencias* discussed by the featured *hijo*-generation Chilean youth – his daughter's shot conjures and renders serious the disappeared identities of Cuba's own *generación de los hijos*. Her appropriation of the shot reveals that she may partially agree with the students featured in *Chile, la memoria obstinada* – at least as it relates to the serious impact of the coup d'état. Guzmán Urzúa may not condemn the dream of Latin America's revolutionary generation, but she does seem to question, at least in the Cuban context, the consequences of its prior mismanagment and present evocations on subsequent generations. And as her near-direct appropriation of the scene makes clear, this critique of the revolutionary generation's *digno sueño* is inseparable from a parallel critique of their nostalgic, heroizing discourses and representational repertories.

This conflation and questioning of Cuba's and Chile's revolutionary dreams is confirmed by the filmmaker's intercalation of archival video footage from the 1970s and 1980s. With her inclusion of archival materials – both video footage and the front-pages of multiple newspapers – Guzmán Urzúa situates her generation's experience of splendor-turned-disenchantment between moments of extreme revolutionary promise and, later, failure. During a particularly intimate interview with her mother in Havana – who relays the family's exile to Cuba in 1973 – the cineaste introduces black-and-white video footage filmed by her own father during Fidel Castro's 1971 visit to Santiago de Chile. Salvador Allende and the Cuban president appear together, waving at thousands of excited spectators as their vehicle traverses a main avenue. Crucially, very similar footage of Castro's historic visit also appears in Patricio Guzmán's *Salvador Allende* (2004), a film in which the Chilean filmmaker unequivocally celebrates the former president's legacy.[16] In *Salvador Allende,* testimony from interviewees clarifies that the former Chilean president did not identify as a pure Marxist nor wish to fully replicate Cuba's revolutionary project. This being said, Castro's visit is still framed as a major symbolic victory over a capitalist United States.[17] Moreover, and as Lazzara argues, *Salvador Allende* may be considered "a manifestation of [Guzmán's] own inner utopia – a space where Allende lives on, untainted and victorious" (75). According to this logic, Guzmán Urzúa's father would not only read the past through rose-colored glasses but also seek to detain it indefinitely through his own cinematic project.

Guzmán Urzúa's inclusion of a very similar video clip in *Telón* may at first blush appear nostalgic, with her mother's accompanying description of the family's exile attesting to the generosity of the Cuban State. But additional archival footage – which appears slightly later in the documentary – diminishes the vaguely celebratory tone of this initial clip, even recontextualizing the footage included in her father's *Salvador Allende*. Amid a series of interviews with former schoolmates regarding the precarity of the Special Period, the Cuban filmmaker inserts a series of images recalling Mikhail Gorbachev's state visit to Havana in 1989. From there, Guzmán Urzúa's voice accompanies a montage of newspaper clippings from the same year, all of which, as she explains, evidence Cuban state media's failure to adequately report on the collapse of the Berlin wall and its potential consequences for the island. The montage eventually arrives at a headline reading "Festejan derrota de Pinochet y triunfo de Aylwin," just before jumping to multiple articles covering the war in Angola. Finally, the camera follows the filmmaker's hand as she flips through a long list of Cuban soldiers killed while participating in revolutionary conflicts abroad (Guzmán Uzrúa, *El telón* 00:45:20-00:47:02). Taken together with the prior footage of Castro's visit to Santiago, this assemblage of video and newspaper clippings traces a bleak timeline of Chile's and Cuba's parallel experiments with socialism, both of which, as Guzmán Urzúa's viewer is left to surmise, resulted in more disappointment – and poverty, in the Cuban context – than actual progress. Yet in the case of Cuba, this *digno sueño* that eventually "se hizo pedazos" (Guzmán, *Chile, la memoria* 00:25:34) has yet to totally run its course or, better, find a more sustainable course, as references to the nation's interventions abroad would suggest. Seemingly agreeing with Lazzara's reading of *Salvador Allende*, Guzmán Urzúa's montage additionally points to her father's own (mis)handling of Castro's, and perhaps even Allende's, legacies both within his cinematic production and beyond. Read alongside *Salvador Allende, Telón* seems to suggest that Guzmán's celebratory treatment of Castro's visit romanticizes an "inner utopia" (Lazzara 75) that, at least in the Cuban context, has begun to wreak havoc, leaving *la generación de los hijos* in a state of identity rupture. Without drawing a direct comparison between Chile's military dictatorship and Cuba's Special Period, the *hija* filmmaker takes to task a revolutionary dream that produced ripples of violence, both literal and more symbolic, that, at least in Cuba, have yet to stop advancing towards an uncertain future. If the Cuban filmmaker does not necessarily fault the *digno* sueño itself – we cannot forget that she is firmly anti-capitalist – she does call-out her parents' generation's nostalgic peddling of heroic discourses and unstable utopias.

It is precisely the complicated, transnational nature of Guzmán Urzúa's critique that invites audiences to take a more expansive view of the debates at hand, particularly as they relate to Latin America's unwieldly, heterogenous *generación de los hijos*. It also urges critics and scholars to more firmly situate Cuba within transational readings of the *hijo* generation and its cultural production. While *Telón* firmly roots itself within specifically Cuban historical and political contexts, its filmmaker's polemical appropriation of her father's cinematic repertoire places the film within broader conversations surrounding the many legacies and afterlives of twentieth century revolutionary dreams. More still, the film's probing, sometimes caustic discourse suggests that it belongs to a fiercely antihegemonic strain of *hijo* cultural production, whose practitioners – among them, Albertina Carri – are desperate to (re)present twentieth century revolutionary projects and their aftermaths on their own terms. And in Guzmán Urzúa's case, this means challenging romanticizations of Cuba's revolutionary project still upheld by the likes of her father, in order to highlight the identity traumas of the island nation's generation after and ulimately craft new socialist futures.

Yet while the filmmaker's appropriation Southern Cone memory discourses forces a reframing of generational nostalgia as traumatic loss, it also permits a hopeful glance towards the future. If intercalated photographs, newspaper clippings, and childhood sketches all evoke traumatic referents, they also provide evidence of anti-hegemonic memory work, not unlike that activated within the Southern Cone. The very presence of these documents signals the possibility of constructing a counter-archive capable of destabilizing hegemonic discourses and charting healthier – socialist, according to the filmmaker – paths forward. That is, while Guzmán Urzúa indeed levies a serious reproach of the Castro government and its *digno sueño*, she does not give up on Cuba. The filmmaker may be unable to recuperate the care-free grandeur of *los años dorados*, but she still looks to a future of polyphonic testimonies and vigorous debate; a future in which the specters of disappeared *cubanía(s)* may be recognized, analyzed, and properly worked through.

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NOTES

1 Establishing an effective "end point" for Cuba's Special Period is challenging. As Ariana Hernández-Reguant argues, it is perhaps more productive to frame the Special Period as an ongoing sociopolitical process: "There was no official

end to the Special Period. Without the Soviet Union, the Cuban Revolution survived by turning itself into a new temporal category: the Special Period" (17).

2 *Telón* was produced by teams from Cuba, Spain and France. Its multinational backing afforded Guzmán Urzúa necessary funding and technical support, while also enabling the filmmaker to explore the challenges of Cuba's Special Period more frontally by avoiding Cuban censors. That being said, in an interview with journalist Facundo García, Guzmán Urzúa reports that the film was recognized at the 2007 Havana Film Festival, which, she contends, demonstrated that "se están moviendo estructuras" (*Página 12*).

3 In an interview with Pamela Biénzobas, the filmmaker describes her own *reencuentro* with Chile in the late 1990s. Disillusioned by the Special Period and struggling to define her own cultural identity, Guzmán Urzúa returned to Chile only to discover that she was indeed Cuban: "En ese momento vivía en Inglaterra. Todo el tiempo te preguntan '¿de dónde eres?', 'Cubana', '¡Castro al infierno!', 'No, yo fui feliz'. Y todo eso me provoca un conflicto de identidad con Cuba que se cae … Luego el '97 y el '98 me fui a Chile, pero me di cuenta de que era cubana. Lo pasé mal. Regresé a Cuba seis meses con la decisión de hacer mi película." (*Mabuse Revista*)

4 I use the term "generación de los hijos" to refer to a generation of Cubans that has lived in the shadow of their parents' prior revolutionary activities. *Generación de los hijos* has been widely employed to describe the children of victims of dictatorship, genocide, and armed conflict across Latin America.

5 Here I refer to the broader ideological concerns of Latin America's revolutionary generation, to which Camila Guzmán Urzúa's parents surely belonged. I find it necessary to use this more flexible generational grouping to recognize the flow of bodies, discourses, and resources between sites of possible revolution. Guzmán Urzúa's parents prove emblematic of this transhemispheric exchange, with the couple moving from Santiago de Chile to Havana.

6 Here and throughout, I avoid referring to any collective notion of Cuban identity, *cubanidad* or *cubanía* so as to acknowledge the lack of any clear cultural-political consensus, particularly in the context of the greater Special Period. As Hernández-Reguant affirms "[during the Special Period] *cubanidad* has never been a fuzzier notion, now closer to spirit than to reason. The *ajiaco* was boiling over, the pot was cracking, the ingredients were spoiling" (Hernández-Reguant 86).

7 "[H]ay que admitir que estamos en presencia de una película no solo muy personal, sino también muy provocadora: *El telón de azúcar* es precursora de una tradición fílmica que en el caso del cine relacionado con la Revolución cubana es justo ahora que comienza a configurarse. Una tradición donde, para

decirlo en los mismos términos propuestos por Claudio Magris, el análisis de la utopía y el desencanto opera no desde la exaltación o la satanización, sino desde el enfoque subjetivo que raya casi con lo post-utópico" (García Borreo).

8 I should make clear that the Southern Cone's *generación de los hijos* has come to conceptualize this "post" generation in very general terms, allowing for the inclusion of *hijos* whose parents may not be considered heroic nor have participated in leftist movements whatsoever. As Alejandro Zambra's *Formas de volver a casa* (Chile, 2011) and Nona Fernández's *Space Invaders* (Chile, 2013) suggest, feeling removed or estranged from revolutionary histories is also a valid *hijo* experience.

9 García Borreo's reading of the film's hemispheric reach further supports this approach: "Ya no se trata solo de la reflexión de una joven que ha visto desvanecidos una buena parte de sus sueños personales (y los de muchos miembros de su generación), sino que esas imágenes de archivo traen al presente, con un sentido crítico, la génesis de esa confianza que depositó en la Revolución cubana buena parte de la izquierda latinoamericana."

10 The film follows Carri's attempt to make a non-traditional film about her *montonero* parents' disappearance during Argentina's military dictatorship. Rather than inhabit the role of mournful, heroizing daughter, Carri hires actress Analía Couceyro to complete milestone memory work on her behalf, including having her blood drawn at a center dedicated to identifying the remains of Argentina's *desaparecidos.*

11 Mexican author Verónica Gerber Bicecci's *Conjunto vacío* (2015) is an excellent example of this. Herself the child of Argentine exiles to Mexico, Gerber Bicecci's multimedia novel stages a Southern Cone *hija* experience from a position of geographic and identity displacement.

12 In *Chile, la memoria obstinada,* Patricio Guzmán returns to Chile for the first time after fleeing the country in 1973. The filmmaker reunites with former friends and activists, inviting them to review old photographs and return to former sites of trauma in order to reflect on Salvador Allende's presidency and the terror of Augusto Pinochet's subsequent dictatorship. A central component of the film is Guzmán's screening of his earlier documentary *La batalla de Chile,* which had largely been censored in Chile since its three-part release in the mid-seventies (1975, 1976, 1979), for Chilean university students.

13 In her comparison of Guzmán Urzúa's *El telón de azúcar* and Guzmán *Chile, la memoria obstinada,* Bernadita Llanos makes a convincing case for placing Chile's revolutionary dream in conversation with that of Cuba: "En el caso de Chile y Cuba las experiencias históricas, productos de proyectos políticos nacionales de izquierda, vinculan a ambas naciones en el intento por construir una Sociedad utópica basada en una visión de igualdad y justicia dentro de los parámetros instituidos por la guerra fría para las Américas" (24).

14 These "returns" feature prominently in *Chile, la memoria obstinada.* Guzmán and his interviewees return to both La Moneda and the Estadio Nacional decades after suffering life-changing traumas there.

15 Another comparable scene captures an unoccupied *escuela de campo* bunkroom, where the camera again moves silently across empty space, this time with the littered belongings of visiting teenagers pointing to the eerie absence of human bodies. The result is another haunting sequence where the lack of bodies – who we know are just nearby –again suggests that someone is missing, if not dead.

16 Less ground-breaking than *Chile, la memoria obstinada,* Guzmán's later *Salvador Allende* assembles a series of interview testimonies and archival footage in order to examine the legacy of Chile's former president. The film largely heroizes Allende and traces the ways in which capitalist interests – coming, in part, from the government of the United States – ultimately led to the nation's 1976 coup d'état and subsequent military dictatorship.

17 Footage of Fidel Castro's visit to Chile also appears in Guzmán's earlier *El primer año* (1971), in which the filmmaker documents the first year of Salvador Allende's presidency. Nevertheless, I believe that Camila Urzúa Guzmán's intercalation of a similar video clip would more likely serve as a response to Guzmán's later *Salvador Allende*. Unlike *El primer año,* which Guzmán produced before the coup d'état, this later film situates Castro's visit within the full context of Allende's legacy.

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