

## **JUMP CUT**

### **A REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY MEDIA**

Chilean cinema: ten years of exile (1973-83)

by Zuzana M. Pick

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The coup d'etat, which in September 1973 dismantled the film production infrastructure in Chile, suspended only momentarily the activity of filmmakers who since 1956 had worked towards the construction of a national cinema. Filmmakers, technicians, actors and critics left the country, among thousands of Chilean refugees. Projects which had been started during the three year period of the Popular Unity government had to be finished in exile.

Films like Miguel Littin's *LA TIERRA PROMETIDA* (The Promised Land, 1972-1974) and Patricio Guzmán's *LA BATALLA DE CHILE* (The Battle of Chile, 1972-1979) confirmed that Chilean filmmakers were committed to continuing their work as militants and artists. These two films, among many others, played an important role in the solidarity campaign that mobilized groups and individuals throughout the world. Since 1974, 155 films have been produced by Chilean filmmakers living in 16 different countries.[1] The quantity and quality of some of these films made in exile since 1974 have prompted me to undertake a long term research project to study the peculiarities and characteristics of this unique phenomenon in the history of Latin American cinema. The diversity and energy of some films, shown mainly in festivals, retrospectives and special programs, raise interesting questions related to nationally oriented cultural production outside of its natural borders.

While new thematic concerns and aesthetic strategies characterize the individual filmmakers' efforts, their deeply-rooted commitment to a national and continental history determines how they approach the film medium itself. Therefore, and only the future will tell, the work of Chilean filmmakers in exile could shape the development of the "new" Latin American cinema in the 1980's together with the activity of their Central American counterparts.

Here I shall outline some of the predominant elements shaping Chilean cinema in the last ten years. It is now possible to respond critically to individual contributions and also to clarify the phenomenon as a whole. An historical perspective is available that was not possible some years ago. Since I have seen most of the films produced in this period and interviewed filmmakers about the evolution of their careers, I hope to avoid in this study some of the shortcomings of previous presentations on this subject.[2]

### **BACKGROUND**

Film history in Chile, like that of other Latin American countries, has not yet been fully documented. Practically all the films produced from 1902 to the mid-60s have rotted in basements or been melted to recover the "valuable" nitrate.[3] But this physical absence of past films and the lack of an accurate film history has never deterred stubbornly creative individuals from using cinema to document the country's history of popular struggles.[4] Artists' and filmmakers' awareness of Chile's history of social change has shaped their aesthetics since the 1950s. After the formation of the "Grupo Cine Experimental" (Experimental Cinema Group), documentarists combed

the countryside and the poorest urban neighborhoods to rescue popular history and traditions. With the acceleration of political struggle in the early 1960s, these same filmmakers considered production a militant practice which rejected the official cinema's false folklorism and populism.

As poets, writers and musicians, these young "aficionados" prepared the way for a radically new conception of cinema. Their early films, strongly influenced by the Italian Neo-Realist movement, evolved from a humanist stance to a political understanding of film's social function. Today most of the students and artists who participated in the creation of film societies, the filmmakers who formed the 'Grupo Cine Experimental' in 1956, and those who established the first film schools in Chilean universities are still working in film. Thus the creative energy among filmmakers working inside and outside Chile today remains motivated by this militant tradition that started in the 1960s of commitment to continuously renewed struggle.

1967 marks an important date in the development of a "new cinema" in Latin America. It was the year of the Viña del Mar Film Festival in Chile. However, the repercussions of this event inside the country would only be felt in 1969. LA MARCHA DEL CARBON (The March of the Coal Workers) and LAS BANDERAS DEL PUEBLO (The People's Flags), directed by Sergio Bravo in 1963 and 1964 respectively, had marked the beginning of a militant documentary practice in Chile. But the presentation of four feature films at the second Vina del Mar Film Festival in 1969 marked the beginning of the "new cinema" in Chile. VALPARAISO MI AMOR (Valparaiso, My Love, 1969) by Aldo Francia, EL CHACAL DE NAHUELTORO (The Jackal of Nahueltoro, 1969) by Miguel Littin, CALICHE SANGRIENTO (Bloody Salpetre, 1968) by Helvio Soto, and TRES TRISTES TIGRES (Three Sad Tigers, 1968) by Raúl Ruiz stood as the paradigm of a new kind of feature-film production from a country on the brink of an unique political process.

During the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende, the "Cineteca Universitaria" (University Cinematheque) was formed and later young students were incorporated in "Talleres" (Workshops) set up by Miguel Littin at Chile Films. The first seeds for a promising national cinema had been sown. The political will and creative enthusiasm that prompted an increased cultural activity in the three years of the Popular Unity government did not diminish after the military intervention in 1973.

We must keep in mind here the international impact that the Allende period had on progressive sectors in Europe and the Americas, the brutality of the military takeover, and the traumatic events that forced Chileans to leave their country. The filmmakers I interviewed emphasize that both international solidarity and their own need to maintain their political commitment as image makers have impelled them to continue making films professionally.

## CHILEAN CINEMA IN EXILE

Chilean cinema in exile has never been a "movement." The dispersion of filmmakers, the conditions of production in the different countries and the limited distribution of some of their films have not been favorable to the proposal of a structured organization. In fact, this dispersal has ultimately had positive results.

Working in different countries and under different conditions, the filmmakers had to redefine their practice according to new political priorities of the moment. Some had been concerned that Chilean cinema, cut off from its natural audience, might become repetitive, abstract and less relevant. Yet the contrary has happened.

Most Chilean filmmakers responded positively to their new artistic and social environments by expanding the thematic concerns of Latin American cinema as a whole. They now look at their national identity as an integral part of Latin American consciousness. They are rooted in the struggle against neo-colonialism. Their films

now communicate to wider audiences the uniqueness of Latin American continental culture.

Chilean cinema in exile has dynamically responded to its new challenge by blending heterogeneous elements, much the same as Latin American identity has been forged by the contributions of indigenous, African, and European cultures. These films inscribe a cultural consciousness that preserves the intrinsic elements of a national and continental identity even when individual films do not deal with themes clearly recognizable as Chilean or Latin American. Furthermore, these films probe new environments, histories and cultures with a critical attitude towards the present, so that they affirm that artists in exile must not only be concerned with memory.

For Chilean filmmakers to accept each others' aesthetic and thematic heterogeneity, they have had to pass through a stage of bitter polemics, declarations about the need to preserve purely Chilean themes, and accusations of political opportunism. In the last years, a Chilean Cinematèque in Exile (Madrid and Paris) has coordinated and disseminated information, and the Chilean filmmakers in exile have had an active participation in different film events. This has made all the filmmakers more aware of their mutual participation in a larger phenomenon.

In general, filmmakers in exile have played an important role in film history. The Germans who arrived in Hollywood in the twenties and thirties, the French who left their country in 1940, and the Spanish who went into exile after the defeat of the Republic in 1939 all contributed to the film industries of the countries in which they settled.[5]

Because the Chilean filmmakers are now so dispersed, I cannot assess in a precise way the role they currently play in the history of a "new" Latin American cinema. Furthermore, to evaluate their work made in exile in relation to a national Chilean cinema and its potential impact inside the country will only be possible when these films are finally shown to their "natural" audience. However, individual filmmakers have already had an impact on the independent film communities of their countries of residence.

If it is not possible to affirm that there was a "German (French or Spanish) cinema in exile," it is indeed possible today to talk about a "Chilean cinema in exile." Chilean filmmakers have had only marginal assimilation within the different national industries. Their work still retains the basic traits of their national identity and past cinematic tradition. But most importantly, the Chilean filmmakers working in exile recognize themselves as having "generational" affinities.

They see three "generations" of filmmakers as prolonging a cinematic tradition that has existed in Chile since the 1950s: those who had already achieved recognition in 1973; those who had only produced their first films during the Popular Unity period and/or made their first films in exile; and those who have attended European or U.S. film schools and are now starting to produce their first works.

Since I wish to demonstrate some peculiarities of Chilean cinema rather than to analyze all aspects of Chilean film production in exile, I find this "generational" approach useful. With it we can see the affinities between individuals amidst diverse modes of production and aesthetic strategies. This approach will also validate filmmakers who have not had a wide international exposure and the films of better-known artists which are still relatively unknown.

## **ON SOME FILMMAKERS AND THEIR FILMS**

### **THE FILMMAKERS OF THE FIRST GENERATION**

Miguel Littin, Raúl Ruiz, Helvio Soto and, to a certain extent, Patricio Guzmán belong to the first "generation." Their active contribution helped build a "new cinema" in the sixties. Their careers, spreading over two decades, are as diverse as their personalities. Miguel Littin, living in Mexico but traveling constantly, has often said that he draws his inspiration from physical contact with Latin America. From *EL CHACAL DE NAHUELTORO* (The Jackal of Nahueltoro, 1969) to *ALSINO Y EL CONDOR* (Alsino and the Condor, 1982) he has held a prominent position among Latin American and Chilean filmmakers. Even if his films have moved from national to continental themes, his approach to filmmaking remains unchanged.

*ACTAS DE MARUSIA* (1976) draws historical parallels between the 1907 massacre of miners in the north of Chile and the 1973 situation, but it never reaches the epic dimension that characterizes *LA TIERRA PROMETIDA* (The Promised Land, 1972-1974). Baroque and object-cluttered settings are combined with the grandeur of open landscapes in *VIVA EL PRESIDENTE* (a.k.a. *EL RECURSO DEL METODO - Reasons of State*, 1978), and that film and *LA VIUDA DE MONTIEL* (Montiel's Widow, 1979) capture the rich texture of a continental culture. However, in spite of being quite successful adaptations, these two films do not have the stylistic complexities of Littin's other films, which can be said to be built on an aesthetic also found in modern Latin American literature, "magic realism."<sup>[6]</sup>

In *ALSINO Y EL CONDOR*, a co-production with Nicaragua's Film Institute, INCINE, Miguel Littin has fared better. Less determined by an anecdotal storyline, the film's narrative is brought to life by the magic lyricism of its *mise-en-scène*. The bird peddler and the circus episodes probe deeply into the poetic imagination of the continent. *ALSINO Y EL CONDOR*, even with its shortcomings, is a highly personal work that recalls the achievements of Littin's first feature *EL CHACAL DE NAHUELTORO*.

Patricio Guzmán has now entered a new phase in his career. He has made an experimental and poetic fresco about the survival of Latin American cultural identity, which has faced attack by foreign forces ever since the Spanish conquest. *LA ROSA DE LOS VIENTOS* (The Rose of the Winds, 1983) depicts the people's magical relation with nature through a *mise-en-scène* dominated by majestic mountains and luscious tropical landscapes. The narrative depends on the symbolic presence of a timeless character, moves in a concentric fashion, and incorporates verbal dialogue. These tactics owe much to Glauber Rocha's last film *IDADE DA TERRA* (The Age of the Earth, 1979).

With *LA ROSA DE LOS VIENTOS*, Guzmán radically departs from his previous documentary style and long involvement with one single work.<sup>[7]</sup> That commitment to documentary derived from the social and political climate which Guzmán encountered in Chile upon his return from Spain in 1970. The three parts of *LA BATALLA DE CHILE* (The Battle of Chile, 1972-1979), together with his films made in Chile before 1973, capture through observation, direct modes of address and the use of sequence shots, history in the making. In fact, his interest in the fictional mode of narrative has always been a strong conceptual element in Guzmán's documentary work. He says today that if *LA BATALLA DE CHILE* was an act of love for his country, *LA ROSA DE LOS VIENTOS* is a challenge to renew Latin American cinema. Like Miguel Littin, he seems to be searching for an aesthetic that can render cinematically the mythical excesses of Latin American continental history.

After *LLUEVE SOBRE SANTIAGO* (It Rains Over Santiago, 1976) Helvio Soto, who lives in Paris, directed only one feature film. In strong contrast to his former work, *LA TRIPLE MUERTE DEL TERCER PERSONAJE* (The Triple Death of a Third Character, 1979) rejects conventional narrative. An empty Belgian train station becomes the stage for an exiled writer's obsessive flight from his fictional characters. However, various elements conflict in a way that disrupts the film's paranoid

oppressiveness, an oppressiveness primarily conveyed through Juan José Mosalini's haunting tango score.

Raúl Ruiz is Chile's most prolific filmmaker. A prodigious storyteller and creator of images, he has molded his work by a deeply personal concern with representation and discourse. Since *TRES TRISTES TIGRES* (Three Sad Tigers, 1968) his innovative approach to filmmaking, independence, and critical stance on political reductionism have often separated him from other Latin American filmmakers.

In Paris he has found a fertile ground for cinematic experimentation. After years of relative obscurity, he has gained critical acclaim within the French avant-garde.[8] The cinema of Raúl Ruiz is a cinema of ideas. He has unmasked ideological stereotypes in *TRES TRISTES TIGRES*, *NADIE DIJO NADA* (Nobody Said Anything, 1971) and *DIÁLOGO DE EXILADOS* (Dialogue of Exiles, 1974), his first film made outside of Chile.

In France, Ruiz has turned to more universal concerns. *LA VOCATION SUSPENDUE* (The Suspended Vocation, 1977) exposes the contradictions within a despotic institution. In *L'HYPOTHÈSE D'UN TABLEAU VOLÉ* (Hypothesis of a Stolen Painting, 1978) Ruiz' puzzle-like mise-en-scene is concerned with the ambiguity of representation and artistic discourse. His most interesting films are those that unveil his own tortured work where he is torn between his cultural origins and the empty cosmopolitanism of forced exile. *EL TUERTO* (The One-Eyed Man, 1980) is a "metaphysical serial" filled with abandoned shacks, distorting mirrors and labyrinths where characters enact a bizarre nightmare.

In *LE TOIT DE LA BALEINE* (The Whale's Roof, 1981) an anthropologist in search of a lost language becomes entangled in a world where coherence and order are destroyed in the cacophonous noises of multiple languages. Using painted mirrors, Raúl Ruiz transformed the countryside around Rotterdam into an imaginary Patagonia full of fake exoticism and grotesque stories told by the characters.

Due to an intense concern with performance and with the ambiguity of language, Raúl Ruiz does not structure films around a privileged storyline. In his documentaries, for example, the commentary detaches itself from the image track and acquires an independent life. The spectator becomes lured into the willful contradictions which Ruiz has set out to explore. A playful suspense story of a cuckolded husband displaces the "didactic comparison" of English and French-style gardens in *QUERELLE DE JARDINS* (War of Gardens, 1982). The simulated philosophical texts of *LES DIVISIONS DE LA NATURE* (The Divisions of Nature, 1978) display the regal architecture of the Chambord Castle as an artifice which has no practical function. In *OMBRES CHINOISES* (Chinese Shadows, 1982) he used different techniques of shadow-making, which he later developed as a dominant stylistic element of the mise-en-scene of *BERENICE* (1983).

Few filmmakers have taken better advantage of commissioned work. Raúl Ruiz has a passionate affair with technology, and he has turned his documentary and video essays into playful experiments that inform the cinematic strategies of his feature work. *LE JEU DE L'OIE* (Snakes and Ladders, 1979), commissioned for an exhibition of maps at the Centre Beaubourg in Paris, is a diabolical game that traps the performer in a cartographical maze with mirrors, filters and lighting transforming the familiar into a fantastically exotic kaleidoscope.

Raúl Ruiz has brought back to cinema the magic of French Poetic Realism to explore a world of manipulation, impotence and violence.[9] *LAS TRES CORONAS DEL MARINERO* (The Sailor's Three Crowns, 1983) — his most successful film so far —

presents a flamboyant tale about a mariner looking for somebody to take his place on a phantom ship.

The mariner tells stories to a young student filled with absurd incidents and a strange assortment of characters inhabiting suggestive landscapes.

Raúl Ruiz originality stems from a personal paradox. As an exiled filmmaker, he has had to master a new language while working artistically out of his own cultural roots. He has immersed himself in a culture which colonized his own in order to understand the colonizer's contradictions. Cartesian logic has become an enriching element in Ruiz's personal fictional labyrinth. Even if some of Ruiz's films do not fulfill his imaginative best, all remain a product of his obsessive love with the cinema, as he works with both a close-knit group of old Chilean friends and their projects as well as with all the new friends who surround him in Paris.

## FILMMAKERS OF THE SECOND GENERATION

By filming within small budgets, Raúl Ruiz has been able to work without interruption. By favoring co-productions Patricio Guzmán, Miguel Littin and Helvio Soto have widened their financial base and increased the distribution potential of their films. Younger filmmakers, those who belong to a second "generation" of Chilean directors working in exile, have found access to high-budget production far more limited. However, they have managed to gain funding from various sources such as television networks, state-granting agencies and national film institutes. In fact, the majority of Chilean filmmakers now working in exile belong to this second "generation" because of the tremendous energy unleashed for cultural production by the election of a left-wing government in Chile in 1970.

The government promoted the involvement of many young people in activities related to film production. If the coup d'etat abruptly stopped such cultural activity, still, this generation had a formative political and cultural experience within this unique historical process which allowed them to keep on with the work they had started in 1970. They have a marked generational affinity, seen by their shared militant conception of film practice and their lucid adaptation to the new conditions of exile.

Among these filmmakers are Pablo de la Barra, Pedro Chaskel, Alvaro Ramírez and Beatriz González, Sergio Castilla, Claudio Sapiain, Gaston Ancelovici, Orlando Lübbert, Angelina Vázquez, Jorge Fajardo, Valeria Sarmiento and Marilú Mallet. They all had completed at least one film before 1973. As students they had participated in film societies, production workshops and cultural groups. Around 1967 some of them started joining the different units that produced most of the Chilean documentaries made between 1969 and 1973. For others like Jaime Barrios, Wolf Tirado, Leonardo de la Barra and Leutén Rojas, who had joined production crews during the Popular Unity period, the possibility of directing their own films never materialized. As a result, their activity as filmmakers started in exile after completing their apprenticeship in European and North American film schools.

The early films of these young directors in exile share many of the characteristics of their first work, especially in terms of the films' political function. Their documentaries have helped to promote the Resistance movement in exile and have become indispensable tools in the international solidarity campaigns. As these early films responded to very concrete agitational needs, most of them have lost their militant and aesthetic relevance today. Some remain, however, important historical documents because they are accounts of the brutal repression that followed the coup d'etat.

Among these films are *TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD* (1975), produced by a collective in the United States; *NOMBRE DE GUERRA: MIGUEL ENRIQUEZ* (Pseudonym: Miguel Enriquez, 1975), made in Cuba by a collective; *LOTA 73* (1977) directed by Alvaro Ramírez in Germany and *DENTRO DE CADA SOMBRA CRECE UN VUELO* (Within Every Shadow Grows a Flight, 1976) directed by Douglas Hübner in Germany.

By having access to technical facilities not available in Chile, some of these filmmakers were able to develop creatively the basic narrative elements favored by Latin American documentary in the 1960s. Use of montage, animated still photography, and integration of music and songs as an aural commentary has become less standardized and repetitive. Some of these films still retain an emotional impact because of a creative use of their cinematic devices. One of the most striking films in this regard is Claudio Sapiain's *LA CANCIÓN NO MUERE, GENERALES* (Song Does Not Die, Generals, 1975) since it reshapes the expressive potential of well-known archival material through the use of music and tinted color photographs. This film brings together the crucial events of September, 1973; the songs and solidarity work of Chilean musicians; and the first impressions of an exiled filmmaker in Sweden. It depicts the same song performed in Stockholm, London and Verona by different groups.

As Patricio Guzmán joined some of his former collaborators in Cuba to finish the three-part documentary *LA BATALLA DE CHILE*, so did Gaston Ancelovici and Orlando Lübbert joined up in Germany with a small technical crew to complete a documentary begun in Chile. In 1970 these two architecture students had set out to compile visual material to document Chilean labor history. *LOS PUÑOS FRENTE AL CANON* (With Fists Against Cannons, 1972-1975) integrates still photographs, press clippings, pamphlets, posters, newsreels and amateur films from archives and private collections, and first-hand accounts.

This film offers a powerful analysis of Chilean labor history and the army's role in repressing the labor movement since 1900. As Gaston Ancelovici and Orlando Lübbert set out to finish this film, they updated it and included footage shot during the Popular Unity period. Taking their cues from Eduardo Galeano's book *The Open Veins of Latin America*, they interpreted Chile's situation in the context of continental history. Hence *LOS PUNOS CONTRA EL CANON*, like *LA BATALLA DE CHILE*, remains one of the strongest films of the Allende period through its forceful documentation of the political history of a country. For both Gaston Ancelovici and Orlando Lübbert, this documentary meant the possibility of continuing to work as filmmakers. However, only Orlando Lübbert would go on directing films in Germany while Gaston Ancelovici became more and more involved with organizing the Chilean Cinemathèque in Exile.

For most of the filmmakers of this second "generation," the possibility to pursue a professional career implied adapting to new working conditions and gradually moving away from the traditional rhetoric of Latin American cinema. With the cooperation of filmmakers from other countries, these young directors had the possibility to enrich their aesthetics and make their work more accessible to an international audience without having to betray their politics.

There is no doubt that since 1978, when the solidarity movement with Chile lost its momentum, these filmmakers have found primarily a space gained within the independent film communities of their countries of residence. Like all independent filmmakers, they face frustration, abandon projects due to lack of funding, experience professional instability, and are forced for economic reasons to interrupt their creative

work. To find work, they often change countries. However, most of these filmmakers have now consolidated their careers, and their individual efforts can be measured in relation to their response to new environments. In European countries, for example, some have been able to ensure relative continuity in their creative work by taking advantage of television as a means of funding and distribution.

This wider exposure of their work has also meant redefining their conceptual framework as they face a relation to a different type of audience. Claudio Sapiain, for example, has produced most of his films for Swedish television, and his recent work is particularly concerned with the perception of the "other." He deals with that theme as a way of facing the present in spite of the traumatic weight of the past. Both *EXTRANJEROS* (Foreigners, 1978) and *PILSENER Y EMPANADAS* (1981) question some of the cultural stereotypes that influence relations between people from different cultures; the films emphasize relevant elements of the Swedish social context.

For Angelina Vázquez, living in Finland since 1975, filmmaking has provided her with the opportunity to become a cultural intermediary between two different national experiences. Since her films are shown on Finnish (and Swedish) television, she can measure the impact of her work upon a new audience. Angelina Vázquez' first film in exile depicted attitudes among Chilean refugees living in Finland. But in *GRACIAS A LA VIDA* (Thanks to Life, 1979) she chose to convey the individual experience of thousands of Latin American women through telling the story of one pregnant woman who joins her husband and her parents in Helsinki. That woman's silent despair and sense of isolation dramatize her dilemma. For the new life she carries in her womb was the violent consequence of her rape in prison, and the people around her now seem strangers.

Later with *PRESENCIA LEJANA* (Far-Away Presence, 1982) Angelina Vazquez relates the loss suffered by those whose relatives are "missing" in Latin America. The filmmaker seized the opportunity to learn about Finnish history in order to present the story of a 70 year-old woman whose twin sister was kidnapped in Buenos Aires. With its daring use of narrative devices, *PRESENCIA LEJANA* chronicles the twin's emigration to Argentina in the 1930s and the family's commitment to understand that woman's social choices, which led to her abduction and probable murder.

The need to probe into others' collective and individual histories to understand one's own has guided the recent work of many Chilean filmmakers now working in exile. This kind of response to a new environment and to a different cultural reality has become a foremost element in the aesthetic development of Chilean cinema.

For Leonardo de la Barra, trained in Chile as a cameraman and now a director living in Brussels, cinema has become a means to express a broader sense of reality. He has captured in his films the dramatic sense of isolation and solitude that forced exile imposes. In *ÉRAMOS UNA VEZ* (Once We Were, 1979) he shows the children of Latin American refugees in Europe who have to come to terms with their parents' history and their own feelings of loss while adapting to a new country.

Like Pedro Chaskel's *LOS OJOS COMO MI PAPA* (Eyes Like Daddy's, 1979), filmed in Cuba, and *I REMEMBER, TOO* (1976) directed by Leutén Rojas in Canada, Leonardo de la Barra's documentary chronicles the uncertain future of a generation who remember a violent past and who try to affirm their cultural and political identity. But his most poignant film so far is *EL TREN EN LA VENTANA* (A Train in the Window, 1981), which depicts the traumatic experience of those confined in a psychological space where time shrinks into a whirlpool of threatening memories. In



this short fiction, the camera fragments gestures and objects. An image of a reversed birth ends the film, inscribing the anguish of solitude and alienation.

For most of the filmmakers of this second "generation," cinematic expression derives from their deep-felt need to bring to the screen their own personal histories and lets them link their own perception to that of individuals in a capitalist society. Therefore, their work has moved away from the characteristic stylistic traits that identify Third World cinema. They do not rely on realism as the sole device to communicate alienation and exploitation. Instead they emphasize the expressive potential of mise-en-scène and image. Often they experiment with a minimalist cinematic representation. Their innovative efforts, however, have subject matter or themes directly related to contemporary Latin American history or to an analysis of the individual's role in the developed world.

The single setting of Jorge Fajardo's *CONFERENCIA SOBRE CHILE* (Conference on Chile, 1980), made in Canada, is a stage on which a well-dressed professor seems to offer a cynical defense of human rights violations in Chile. The spectator is positioned as the speaker's audience. The slight changes of the camera's position on the podium allow the viewer/ listener to judge the irony of a rhetoric that triggers the professor's unexplained suicide. In his former short feature entitled *STEEL BLUES*, one of the short stories included in the National Film Board's production of *IL NY A PAS D'OUBLI* (There is no Oblivion, 1975), Jorge Fajardo also relied on theatrical devices to illustrate the recurring nightmare of a refugee who relives his imprisonment. Through a surreal treatment of space and lighting, Jorge Fajardo dispenses with dialogue and constructs his narrative in *STEEL BLUES* solely on the manipulation of visual codes.

Similarly *GENTE DE TODAS PARTES, GENTE DE NINGUNA PARTE* (People from Everywhere, People from Nowhere, 1980), directed by Valeria Sarmiento in France, is an experimental film-poem which conveys the fragmentation of people's lives in the working class suburbs of Paris. It plays upon a systematic use of extreme close-ups and inserts. Relying only on visual and musical codes, the filmmaker transforms the ugly uniformity of the architecture, the bare landscape, and the darkness of the asbestos factory into representing the physical environment of capitalist exploitation. The gestures of anonymous individuals, reduced to mechanical elements on an assembly line, emphasize their solitude and alienation.

Sarmiento directly confronts the various implications of her experience of exile and the social conditions that have influenced her behavior and thought. She also uses cinema to unveil critically some of the deeply rooted traits of Latin American consciousness. She went to Costa Rica to shoot *EL HOMBRE CUANDO ES HOMBRE* (A Man when He Is a Man — a.k.a. *El Macho* — 1982). Here she humorously and powerfully indicts the cycle of male oppression of women in Latin America. The pace of the film is set in its opening with a lasso dance, where cowboys capture their female partners with the same dexterity as they rope cattle. This folkloric choreography becomes the visual metaphor for the film's denunciation of romantic seduction and male virility. Valeria Sarmiento uses the male and female prototypes of films and songs to link notions of violence and power to fragility and romanticism. In *EL HOMBRE CUANDO ES HOMBRE*, the "macho" ideology that conditions social behavior in Latin America is analyzed through those ideals commonly accepted as cultural models of sexual difference.

This concern to explore individual and collective attitudes cinematically in Valeria Sarmiento's *EL HOMBRE CUANDO ES HOMBRE* is shared by other filmmakers. Exile often provides a necessary distance from which one can question some of the

ideological elements that determine one's own political and cinematic perception of reality. Hence these filmmakers constantly seek to experiment with the traditional film genres from both Chilean and Latin American cinema as a whole. First there was a strong influence from Italian Neo-Realism, then a conscious use of metaphor, then a deconstruction of classical narrative conventions.

Their self-conscious exploration of narrative style has brought some of the Chilean filmmakers closer to stylistic strategies already explored in literature. Marilú Mallet in *JOURNAL INACHEVÉ* (Unfinished Diary, 1982), made in Canada, uses and emphasizes a fictional element within a documentary approach. The film is an autobiographical essay. It offers a slow-paced reflective, feminist appropriation of language, depicting a creative environment where human relationships are stifled by the static memories of childhood and the trauma of exile. The filmmaker, as protagonist, narrates the dilemma of an immigrant Chilean woman artist who feels a need to express her fears and doubts and thus comes in conflict with others who do not share her own cultural and political experience.

*JOURNAL INACHEVÉ* is an exceptional film since Marilú Mallet's previous work fits into more traditional modes of narrative. In *LES BORGES* (The Borges, 1978), a documentary produced by the National Film Board of Canada, she uses the techniques of direct cinema and her own experiences as an immigrant to draw a moving portrait of the generational differences within a Portuguese family that has settled in Montreal. However, her first film directed in Canada as part of *IL N'Y A PAS D'OUBLI* is an intimist and modest short feature. That film, *LENTEMENT*, attempts to convey through the awkward words and gestures of a female character the emotional uncertainty of relations between individuals who do not share the same background. With her most recent film, Marilú Mallet has gained an important place among the independent filmmakers of Quebec.

Marilú Mallet, Valeria Sarmiento and Angelina Vázquez have privileged the place of women in their films. These three directors are proposing a new approach to the limited presence of female characters in Chilean and Latin American films. By giving woman a space and a participating voice, they show that the just depiction of women is an integral part of all cinema's political struggle against oppression and exploitation, and vice versa, that the just depiction of women can only come about through the concomitant depiction of a larger struggle against social oppression. Before introducing the work of some of the filmmakers of the third "generation" of Chilean cinema, it might be important to consider the films of a relative newcomer. Antonio Skármeta, as one of the foremost contemporary figures of Chilean literature, has written film scripts for German directors Christian Zwimmer and Peter Lilienthal (*THE UPRISING*, 1982) since he established himself in Berlin. Now he has directed two features: *ARDIENTE PRESENCIA* (1983), based on his own short story as a fictive episode in the life of Chile's foremost poet Pablo Neruda, and *SI VIVIERAMOS JUNTOS* (If We Lived Together, 1983), which shares some of the characteristics of Marilú Mallet's *JOURNAL INACHEVÉ*.

*SI VIVIERAMOS JUNTOS* is a celebration of artistic creation in exile. It shows the filmmaker and his family in Berlin meeting with a group of friends. Paintings, songs, theatrical sketches, public readings and the shooting of a film-within-the film all relate different episodes of this exile's encounter with a foreign city and its people. Fiction and documentary blend in this tribute to a whole generation of Chilean artists who have found in their new environments an active, joyful impulse to pursue their work.

## FILMMAKERS OF THE THIRD GENERATION

Among the third "generation" of Chilean filmmakers working in exile are those who had been marginally involved in cinema before 1973 and the younger ones who have been trained in European film schools in recent years. Their generational affinities are less marked than those of the filmmakers introduced above and their possible contributions to the development of Chilean cinema are still difficult to estimate. However, these young filmmakers have shown an undeniable energy, and their talent is directed towards a cinematic expression that tries to integrate different forms of artistic expression.

More than their "older" colleagues, these filmmakers have relied on their creative instinct rather than on an accepted cinematic tradition. Compared with the filmmakers of the other two "generations," they have been able to integrate a broader range of aesthetic and political concerns. Although their film experience is not as strongly rooted in the Popular Unity period, their work has remained attached to the Chilean problematic. At the same time, they have questioned the traditional rhetoric of Latin American political cinema. Working in exile and having been exposed to some of the "classics" of world cinema and to the work of avant-garde and independent filmmakers, their practice is based more on aesthetic reflection rather than militant urgency. By using video, these filmmakers have gained access to alternative channels of distribution and exhibition. And in order to survive as creators, they have worked closely with other filmmakers and artists.

Among this group of Chilean filmmakers in exile are Reinaldo Zambrano, Luis Roberto Vera, Sebastián Alarcón and Luis Mora, all of whom share some affinities with the filmmakers of the second "generation," and Jorge Lübbert, Emilio Pacul, Gonzalo Justiniano and Patricio Paniagua. Soon other names could be added to this list since other young Chileans are now preparing their first professional work. [10] Although these filmmakers have only modest sources of financing, most have worked in fiction. Most interesting, they have forged distinct iconographic alternatives for Latin American subject matter. Reinaldo Zambrano, the only self-taught filmmaker of this group, has produced and directed two medium-length features in Switzerland. While *LA ESCUELA* (The School, 1979) provides an awkward homage to the peasants' struggles during the Popular Unity period, *EL PUENTE* (The Bridge, 1982) attempts to describe a national drama without having to reconstruct clearly identifiable locations. Set in Chile, *EL PUENTE* conveys an individual's isolation and need to renew active social commitment by utilizing fragmented, oppressively recurring memories and a low-key evocation of atmosphere.

Luis Roberto Vera, now living in Sweden, directed a number of films while attending film school in Rumania. *EN ESTOS TIEMPOS* (In These Times, 1977) recounts an episode of underground militancy after the coup d'etat in Chile and *ELEJÍA* (Elegy, 1978) fictionalizes the execution of Ché Guevara in a Bolivian school house. In these two medium-length features, the filmmaker breaks away from the traditional iconography of the subject matter by juxtaposing the familiar and the exotic. In *EN UN LUGAR...NO MUY LEJANO* (In a Place...Not Far Away, 1979) Vera privileges surrealism and metaphor as he shows the confrontation between a commanding officer and the prisoners of a concentration camp. Set on a deserted rocky beach, the film inscribes the historical roots of political conflict within the allegorical play performed by the prisoners, and it emphasizes the grotesque behavior of the official guests of the camp.

Sebastián Alarcón attended film school in Moscow and he is the only filmmaker of this group who has had access to professional facilities. In *NOCHE SOBRE CHILE* (Night over Chile, 1977), his first feature film, he was able to reconstruct Santiago's National Stadium in the Mosfilm studios. In contrast to Helvio Soto's *LLUEVE*

SOBRE SANTIAGO (1975) and Miguel Littin's ACTAS DE MARUSIA (1976), Sebastián Alarcón has not relied on verisimilitude to depict murderous repression. Rather, he used the more or less recognizable elements of the city's settings to evoke the sheer terror and the uncertain anguish of victims of military repression. These three filmmakers have managed to convey a strong sense of space and mood by stressing dramatic situations rather than by using familiar iconographic elements. Therefore, their films have a curious hybrid quality that is unusual within the established norms of the "new" Latin American cinema.

It is still too early to evaluate the work of the youngest members of this "generation." However, none of them has been held back by the usual difficulties that starting filmmakers have to face. All of them have searched for different ways of gaining some recognition within the creative communities in which they live. Gonzalo Justiniano and Patricio Paniagua, for example, have worked together with other young Latin Americans living in Paris. By collaborating with artists and other filmmakers, they have been able to cope with the frustration of working independently within a highly competitive environment. By taking advantage of alternative sources of financing, they have been able to produce a number of video essays and television documentaries.

For Jorge Lübbert, still a student in Louvain, video art has become a means to experiment with this new technology's aesthetic and political potential. He has produced an impressive number of videos of which DIA 32 (Day 32, 1982) is the most striking. Similarly to Leonardo de la Barra's EL TREN EN LA VENTANA, DIA 32 deals with the trauma of exile. Conceived as part of an exhibit set up at a Brussels' art gallery, Jorge Lübbert's video evokes the experience of imprisonment and the mental collapse of an isolated individual. The montage of war footage and advertising that appears on a television set, shown as the protagonist's recurring nightmare, offers an eloquent collage of the violent images that surround us in contemporary life.[11]

#### CINEMA IN CHILE

By 1979 it seemed that Chilean cinema was only being produced outside of its national borders. Moreover, the lack of communication between filmmakers working outside and inside the country prevented us from estimating the extent of film activity in Chile. Hans Ehrmann's period articles in *Variety* only mentioned unfinished projects and the efforts of producers to insure their livelihood within the advertising industry. The box office success in Santiago of JULIO COMIENZA EN JULIO (Julio Starts in July, 1979), directed by Silvio Calozzi and its subsequent presentation in European film festivals broke the silence that has surrounded the production of cinema inside the country.

In spite of strictly enforced censorship regulations and the negative effects of massively importing foreign films and television programs and closing movie houses, a handful of filmmakers have been insuring the survival of an authentic national and popular cinema. Since 1977, more than 20 films and videos have been produced under very difficult conditions. With the establishment of alternative channels of distribution and exhibition, this nonofficial cinema is reaching its audience. Filmmakers have formed professional associations to publicize their concerns regarding censorship and tax regulations that limit the production of independent films. Together with artists, poets and musicians, they have joined a nation wide struggle to restore an authentic Chilean culture, which the military have systematically attempted to destroy.

Right now, a legal alternative cinema in 16mm is being produced by filmmakers who do not receive any kind of government support and who finance their work through television or commercials. This cinema is being exhibited inside the country in a limited manner. It insures the presence of a national production within a market heavily saturated by U.S. films. The present economic conditions have forced the filmmakers to work with modest means, and through these unprofitable formats they have guaranteed a relative continuity of their craft.

For the younger filmmakers, video is the only alternative. The only film school that survived the repressive measures of the junta in 1973, became the training ground for a new generation of filmmakers. However, it had to be closed in 1979, owing to financial and political limitations. The relatively easy access to video has also permitted the production of an illegal underground media with clear political objectives. The alternatives chosen by filmmakers working in Chile are directed towards producing a strongly committed cinema. As with other cultural expressions in Chile today, the goal is to defeat the rightwing military regime through a realistic strategy, one which explores all the possible alternatives at hand.

Chilean cinema is thus composed of two streams: the films produced by its exiled filmmakers and those produced inside the country. The similarity of all these artists' objectives stems from a common cultural and cinematic tradition as well as from renewed political struggle. But the historical continuity of Chilean cinema in the last ten years can only be measured once the two streams can come together. The same mutual recognition of goals has already taken place as in other artistic fields and it corresponds to Chilean artists' clearly articulated political will. European and Latin American festivals now show at the same time films made inside and outside of the country by Chilean filmmakers. Furthermore, cultural magazines published in Chile mention the exiled filmmakers' activities. These are all indispensable elements that bridge the junta-imposed cultural gap.

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### **CHRONOLOGY SUMMARY**

(Films mentioned in the article above)

LA MARCHA DEL CARBON (The March of the Coal Workers), Documentary - m.l. - b/w, Dir. Sergio Bravo, 1963, Chile.

LAS BANDERAS DEL PUEBLO (The People's Flags), Documentary - m.l. - b/w, Dir. Sergio Bravo, 1964, Chile.

CALICHE SANGRIENTO (Bloody Salpetre), Fiction color, Dir. Helvio Soto, 1968, Chile.

TRES TRISTES TIGRES (Three Sad Tigers), Fiction b/w, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1968, Chile.

VALPARAISO MI AMOR (Valparaiso, My Love), Fiction - b/w, Dir. Aldo Francia, 1969, Chile.

EL CHACAL DE NAHUELTORO (The Jackal of Nahueltoro), Fiction - b/w, Dir. Miguel Littin, 1969, Chile.

NADIE DUO NADA (Nobody Said Anything), Fiction color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1971, Chile.

LA BATALLA DE CHILE (The Battle of Chile), Three part documentary - b/w, Dir. Patricio Guzmán, 1973-1979, Chile-Cuba.

LA TIERRA PROMETIDA (The Promised Land), Fiction - color, Dir. Miguel Littin, 1972-1974, Chile-Cuba.

DIÁLOGO DE EXILADOS (Dialogue of Exiles), Fiction - color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1974, France.

LOS PUÑOS FRENTE AL CANON (With Fists Against Cannons), Documentary - b/w, Dir. Gaston Ancelovici, Orlando Lübbert, 1972-1975, Chile-Germany.

IL NY A PAS D'OUBLI (There Is No Oblivion), Fiction - color, Dir. Jorge Fajardo, Rodrigo Gonzalez, Marilú Mallet, 1975, Canada.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, Documentary color, Collective, 1975, U.S.A.

NOMBRE DE GUERRA: MIGUEL ENRIQUEZ (Pseudonym: Miguel Enriquez), Documentary - b/w, Collective, 1975, Cuba.

LA CANCION NO MUERE, GENERALES (Song Does Not Die, General), Documentary - b/w and color, Dir. Claudia Saplain, 1975, Sweden.

EN CADA SOMBRA CRECE UN VUELO (Within Every Shadow Grows a Flight), Documentary color, Dir. Douglas Hübner, 1976, Germany.

ACTAS DE MARUSIA (Acts of Marusia), Fiction color, Dir. Miguel Littin, 1976, Mexico.

LLUEVE SOBRE SANTIAGO (It Rains Over Santiago), Fiction - color, Dir. Helvio Soto, 1976, France-Bulgaria.

I REMEMBER TOO, Documentary - color, Dir. Leutén Rojas, 1976, Canada.

LOTA 73, Documentary - color, Dir. Álvaro Ramirez, 1977, Germany.

LA VOCATION SUSPENDUE (Suspended Vocation), Fiction - b/w and color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1977, France.

EN ESTOS TIEMPOS (In These Times), Fiction - b/w, Dir. Luis Roberto Vera, 1977, Rumania.

EL RECURSO DEL MÉTODO (Reasons of State), Fiction - color, Dir. Miguel Littin, 1978, Mexico-Cuba-France.

LOS BORGES (The Barges), Documentary - color, Dir. Marilú Mallet, 1978, Canada.

L'HYPOTHÈSE D'UN TABLEAU VOLÉ (Hypothesis of a Stolen Painting), Fiction - b/w, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1978, France.

LES DIVISIONS DE LA NATURE (The Divisions of Nature), Documentary - color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1978, France.

EXTRANJEROS (Foreigners), Fiction - color, Dir. Claudio Sapiain, 1978, Sweden.

ELEGÍA (Elegy), Fiction - b/w, Dir. Luis Roberto Vera, 1978, Rumania.

ÉRAMOS UNA VEZ (Once We Were), Documentary color, Dir. Leonardo de la Barra, 1979, Belgium.

LOS OJOS COMO MI PAPA (Eyes Like Daddy's), Documentary - color, Dir. Pedro Chaskel, 1979, Cuba.

LA VIUDA DE MONTIEL (Montiel's Widow), Fiction color, Dir. Miguel Littin, 1979, Mexico-Cuba-Venezuela.

LE JEU DE L'OIE (Snakes and Ladders), Fiction color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1979, France.

LA TRIPLE MUERTE DEL TERCER PERSONAJE (The Triple Death of the Third Character), Fiction color, Dir. Helvio Soto, 1979, France-Belgium.

GRACIAS A LA VIDA (Thanks to Life), Fiction color, Dir. Angelina Vázquez, 1979, Finland.

EN UN LUGAR...NO MUY LEJANO (In A Place...Not Far Away), Fiction - color, Dir. L. R. Vera, 1979, Rumania.

LA ESCUELA (The School), Fiction - b/w, Dir. Reinaldo Zambrano, 1979, Switzerland.

NOCHE SOBRE CHILE (Night Over Chile), Fiction color, Dir. Sebastián Alarcón, 1980, Soviet Union.

EL TUERTO (The One-Eyed Man), Fiction - color (4 episodes), Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1980, France.

GENTE DE TODAS PARTES, GENTE DE NINGUNA PARTE (People from Everywhere, People from Nowhere), Documentary - color, Dir. Valeria Sarmiento, 1980, Belgium.

EL TREN EN LA VENTANA (The Train in the Window), Fiction - color, Dir. Leonardo de la Barra, 1981, Belgium.

LE TOIT DE LA BALEINE (The Whale's Roof), Fiction - color and b/w, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1981, France-Holland.

PILSENER V EMPANADAS (Pilsener and Empanadas), Fiction - color, Dir. Claudia Sapiain, 1981, Sweden.

DIA 32 (Day 32), Video - color, Dir. Jorge Lübbert, 1982, Belgium.

ALSINO V EL CONDOR (Alsino and the Condor), Fiction - color, Dir. Miguel Littin, 1982, Nicaragua-Cuba.

JOURNAL INACHEVÉ (Unfinished Diary), Documentary - color, Dir. Marilú Mallet, 1982, Canada.

QUERELLE DE JARDINS (War of Gardens), Documentary - color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1982, France.

OMBRES CHINOISES (Chinese Shadows), Video color, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1982, France.

EL HOMBRE CUANDO ES HOMBRE (A Man when He Is a Man), Documentary - color, Dir. Valeria Sarmiento, 1982, Germany.

SI VIVIERAMOS JUNTOS (If We Lived Together), Documentary/Fiction - color, Dir. Antonio Skármeta, 1982, Germany.

PRESENCIA LEJANA (Far-Away Presence), Documentary - color and b/w, Dir. Angelina Vázquez, 1982, Finland.

LA ROSA DE LOS VIENTOS (The Rose of the Winds), Fiction - color, Dir. Patricio Guzmán, 1983, Cuba-Venezuela-Spain.

BERENICE, Fiction - b/w, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1983, France.

LAS TRES CORONAS DEL MARINERO (The Sailor's Three Crowns), Fiction - color and b/w, Dir. Raúl Ruiz, 1983, France.

ARDIENTE PRESENCIA, Fiction - color, Dir. Antonio Skármeta, 1983, Germany.

### Notes

1. 50 long features, 26 medium-length features and 79 short features are listed in the chronology established by the Documentation Center of the Chilean Cinematèque in Exile (Paris).
2. Michael Chanan edited in 1976 a book entitled *Chilean Cinema* (for the British Film Institute in London). *Framework*, No. 10 (1978), contains a dossier on Chilean cinema. This has been so far the only material in English that deals with this subject in a larger context, although it is basically centered on the period previous to 1973. Peter Schumann's article (taken from the Berlin Film Festival documentation) in *Framework*, No. 10, deals with personal hardship rather than attempting to give a comprehensive view of the films produced until then in exile. A special dossier that appeared in *CinéTracts* (Montreal) listed a chronology of Chilean cinema in exile but did not attempt either to deal with particular films or filmmakers. At that time I had not had access to most of the films produced in exile and concentrated on the work of the major filmmakers. Articles on Miguel Littin, Patricia Guzmán and Raúl Ruiz have been published extensively in North American, British and French film magazines but most of the other filmmakers are practically unknown outside of Latin America or continental Europe.
3. Alicia Vega and a group of young scholars have undertaken to review the history of Chilean cinema and have published a first book which documents and analyzes some of the silent films that are still available. *Re-visión del cine chileno* (Santiago de Chile: Ed. Aconcagua, 1979), 391 pp, illustrated.
4. Some interesting historical elements can be found in Michael Chanan's *Chilean Cinema*, pp. 14-22.
5. Roman Gubern has listed in his book *El cine español en el exilio, 1934-1939* (Barcelona: Ed. Lumen, 1976) the names of those directors, technicians and actors that left Spain and contributed to the film industries of Argentina, Mexico, France and even Chile. To my knowledge there is not a single study of the "exile" activity of some of the French filmmakers or German directors who worked in Hollywood from the point of view of a "cinema of exile."

6. These two films are adaptations of a Cuban novel by Alejo Carpentier translated into English as REASONS OF STATE and a short story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
7. Patricio Guzmán spent seven years editing and promoting the three parts of THE BATTLE OF CHILE.
8. Retrospectives of Raúl Ruiz' work in Madrid, Edinburgh, London, Rotterdam, Paris and Avignon have finally paid off. His recent film THE SAILOR'S THREE CROWNS has been released commercially in Paris. *Cahiers du Cinema's* critical support of Ruiz' work has been fundamental to his recognition as an important figure in France.
9. Raúl Ruiz has worked since 1977 with Sacha Vierny and Henri Alekan, two veteran directors of photography of French cinema in the 1930s and 1940s. Alekan also worked recently with Wim Wenders on THE STATE OF THINGS.
10. In France and Canada, for example, Chileans are gaining experience working with other filmmakers, and those attending film schools are starting to show their work in student festivals and local retrospectives.
11. It is important to point out that today in Latin America, filmmakers are using video technology as an alternative to the high cost of 16mm production and as a means to distribute their political work outside the heavily censored official channels. In El Salvador, for example, video is used to record the struggle and to rally international support.