

Traits of Historical Cinema. Reflection from Colombian Cinema

Rasgos del cine histórico.

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Reflexión desde el cine colombiano

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Characterization of historical cinema from a sample of full-length feature films made in Colombia and through theoretical approaches to Ricoeur, Rosenstone, the Annales School, and others. In contrast to written history, it must be acknowledged that cinema is not a reconstruction of events, but emotional discourse that communicates that narrated, as well as the filmmaker's way of conceiving the world and the society in which the cinematography work emerges.

KEYWORDS: Cinema, History, Narration, Fiction, Discourse.

Caracterización del cine histórico a partir de una muestra obras de largometraje hechos en Colombia y mediante acercamientos teóricos a Ricoeur, Rosenstone, la Escuela de los Annales y otros. Frente a la historia escrita, se aporta que el cine no es reconstrucción de hechos sino discurso emotivo que comunica no sólo lo narrado sino la forma de concebir al mundo por parte del realizador y la sociedad en que surge la obra cinematográfica.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Cine, Historia, Narración, Ficción, Discurso.

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INTRODUCTION

Frequently, after attending the projection of a fictional cinematography work, commonly included among the so-called genre of *historical cinema* or even after viewing one not included among that which intuitively is understood as *historical genre*, the audience in general –but particularly academics interested in History– wonders if said denomination is adequate or if it is fitting to recognize some historiographic character to said work.

Since his *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, White (1973), referring to the written tradition of historiography, proposed that it is impossible to distinguish between a historical chronicle and a fictional chronicle.

Further, in relation to cinema, according to Hueso (1991), cinematography works known within what is often denominated as historical cinema admit being analyzed from three points of view mentioned ahead and among which the first two are apparently of common sense:

These cinematography works are *products* elaborated in the entertainment industry and, hence, seek to gain profit through the spectacularization of that narrated. From this writing, it is worth indicating that shutting oneself within this consideration prevents perceiving other interpretative possibilities in relation to the culture and, in this particular case, to history.

1. These are artistic works and, as such, are elaborated with creative freedom and not with scientific rigor. It is worth adding that it is also unwise to annul *a priori* the relationships between art and science, or the pertinence of artistic imagery for the socio-humanistic disciplines.
2. All of them –and this is of interest in this article– involve a historiographical conception that, according to Hueso (1991) may be historicist (based on data about events and characters recognized due to certain institutionality); romantic (prone to the novella presentation of the events); Marxist (centered on the historical transformation of society through the class struggle); or of the *New*

History (that pays attention to the vicissitudes in diverse facets of the complexity of human and social life).

3. This text, in turn, alludes to fictional cinematography works assuming that every cinematography work is such, even those commonly called documentaries (Lozano, 2012b; Montero, 2016; Rosenstone, 2006), inasmuch as they are *product* of staging with a given narrative style (and, in this case, even an interview is a simple staging) and of a double selection: on the one hand that of the events recorded and, on the other, that of the preponderance and organization of said events within a narrative structure.

In this writing, to allude to the characteristic traits of historical cinema, we will refer to cinematography works of full-length feature films produced in Colombia, on one side, responding to the cultural context in which emerges the problematization that results in this reflection (closely related to the tendency of many professors to identify cinematography works with didactic interest) and, on the other side, because they guarantee both a broader narrative development and greater commercial availability for access to the public interested in the theme.

DEVELOPMENT

According to Sorlin (1985), one thing is to reconstitute an epoch, that is, create an atmosphere that evokes it, and another is to rebuild an event, in which is *re-created* in a supposedly credible manner what occurred during a given time and place. Bearing in mind the aforementioned, cinematography works that *reconstitute* the past refer more to how the society that carried them out was or is, to its context, than to the historical event or referent they seem to reconstruct. Thereby, from this point of view, cinematography works made in Colombia, for example, within the context of hired assassins, drug trade, para-militarism, and guerrilla in the future will not account for the events *per se*, but above all on how said phenomena were assumed during their time.

Caparrós Lera (2002) highlights that Krakauer, in *From Caligari to Hitler. A psychological history of German cinema (1947/1985)*, argues

that the Nazi spirit was already in the background of the cinematography works produced during the period known as the Weimar Republic. This author underscores that cinematography works, in general, reveal the conceptions filmmakers, as representatives of an era, have about the events narrated. In that direction, the cinematography work *Cóndores no entierran todos los días* [*A Man of Principle*], (Norden, 1981) besides the biography of a character named León María Lozano, reveals a certain view on the intolerance experienced at the start of the liberal-conservative violence during the 1950s in Colombia.

Ferro (1995), historian from the so-called *Annales School* and author of several didactic publications and documentaries since the 1960s and 70s, had already stated that cinematography works, including fiction, are a sort of *agents* of History that implicitly reflect the mentality of the time and of the filmmakers.

Martínez-Salanova (1997) considers that cinematography works can be only referents that, in turn, can be taken as historical sources. Thus, in Colombia, the cinematography work *Soñar no cuesta nada* [*A Ton of Luck*], (Triana, 2006) in the future can serve as reference to allude to the casual finding, in May of 2003, of money hidden by the FARC guerrilla group of which there was evidence, but no one was witness –aside from the military personnel who were involved in the events, of course–.

Considering the multiple ways of approaching history and cinema, in this case, two theoretical references are taken as principal guides, which help to support this article: the first is French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, for whom, from the point of view of the construction of narrations, close proximity exists between History as study discipline and the narration of fiction, given that both allude to the action (that is, to human events). Ricoeur, in *Time and Narrative* (1983/2000), refers to literary narrative, however, his positions can be adapted to cinematographic narrative, given that in the end the script is a literary moment of cinema, but above all because, on the one hand, it establishes profound relationships between the narrative and time as a succession of human events –which is fundamental for cinema– and, on the other hand, it establishes three key moments of every narrative process: Pre-figuration, Configuration and Re-figuration of action. The last, in cinema, is a technical order and

which Ricoeur explores at the level of its implications in philosophical anthropology. This text finds interest in cinematographic narratives, given that they account for the human action considered of historical relevance. For Ricoeur, the Reconfiguration of the narrative (in this case of the historical chronicle) is that carried out by the spectator, a moment in which the narrative acquires a pedagogical dimension – which undoubtedly results useful for eventual educational purposes–.

The second theorist is Robert Rosenstone, one of his books inspired the film *Reds* (reconstruction of the biography of John Reed) directed by Warren Beatty in 1981.³ This author, in *Film on History/History on film* (2006), argues with profusion of examples that fictional cinema is a valid means to construct historical narratives as legitimate as academic narratives (official or not) or, if preferred, as alternate narratives, according to the interests of the subordinate groups. Thus, admitting that cinema not only has its own narrative resources and, hence, different from those of alphabetical writing employed by classical historians, but that cinema can construct different types of narratives or, rather, structures that can be recognized among the differentiations that some establish between narrative cinema and non-narrative or experimental cinema. According to Rosenstone, from the point of view of the allusion to History, three types of cinematography works exist: 1) mainstream works, based on a classical narrative structure with proposal, development, and denouement; 2) documentary works, thus denominated because a good part or all their recordings are made *in situ*, but are edited with narrative structures similar to those of the mainstream; 3) experimental works, in which allusion to data is less important and, rather, highlighting the ideological, political, or cultural points of view assumed upon them.

Hence, if for Ricoeur History seeks the truth while fiction does not; for Rosenstone, even classical historians fictionalize because there are always events that escape the testimonies.

³ Winner of three Oscar awards and various Oscar nominations.

NOW, WHAT IS A HISTORICAL EVENT?

Ricoeur calls on the *temporary characters*, that is, on the actions that, in turn, make up events that leave a mark over time, that is, in the human transformation. Thus, there are relevant historical events for a specific community, although not so for a nation-state and even those not for this do not affect with the same intensity all the local communities. Let us, then, assume that a historical event is an event or phenomenon that, at a given moment, is considered relevant within the context of the cultural transformation of a social group according to its interests and imagery. For example: a milestone in Colombia's transformation was the assassination of liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán on April 9th 1948, a fact that generated a country traumatic imaginary and which films emerged around, like *Canaguaro* (Kuzmanich, 1981), which refers to the manipulation of political leaders on those up in arms; in *Cóndores no entierran todos los días* (Norden, 1983) León María Lozano is an intolerant character who came about precisely during the period of violence, triggered by the death of the so-called "leader of the people"; in *Confesión a Laura* (Osorio, 1990) these are mutinous snipers because of the assassination of that politician on the year mentioned who physically keep Santiago from leaving Laura's house; in *Un tigre de papel* (Ospina, 2009), historian Arturo Alape states that Pedro Manrique Figueroa that day was near the place of occurrences; *La Historia del Baúl rosado* (Gómez, 2000) takes place some years before the death of Gaitán and this work shows portraits of Gaitán, poster type, pasted on a wall in a small park through where detective Mariano Corzo passes when going to Martina's house, the coffee shop owner.

Nevertheless, according to Paz and Montero (1999), there is an explanatory dimension of the story, it is worth drawing attention to its communicative dimension, that is, on the possibility and capacity to inform, generate opinion, and –above all– construct senses within the social group for which a given event turns out to be historic.

Since 1895, year in which the invention of cinematograph was made public, humanity has lived a period in which the phenomenon known in didactics as "the attention", summoned again to a simultaneous reading

of reality, this time contained within a rectangular screen (Dussel, 2015). Further, if herein we state that attention has been called anew, it is because this phenomenon, although reinforced by the cinematograph, was not invented for this; cartography, painting, the blackboard, and photography had already proposed this framing of reality.

In the end, a cinematography work permits drawing attention to the rectangular screen, affecting vision and audition that are the two senses in relation to the distant setting humans have (Mitry, 1963-1965/2002).

Thus, a cinematography work has a different capacity and, in any case, more sensory than that of the written language –which is more rational– to represent and evoke historical events (Montero, 2016). Cinematography works, with all their technical innovations for representation, are directly related –at the same time– to literary and dramaturgical stories, that is, to narrative.

According to Rosenstone (2006), History has been represented throughout the existence of humanity in multiple ways, thus, for example, verbally –as in all ancestral cultures–, through icons –as in Buddhism and Hinduism–; pictorially –as in the collection of universal painting–; in writing –as historians have done since Herodotus–; and contemporaneously through cinema and television. This last case is illustrated in Colombia with unitary works made for television with the titles *Crónica de una generación trágica* (Triana, 1993) and *De amores y delitos* (Restrepo, 1995) that allude to anecdotes that occurred in the preambles of the independence of Colombia, initiated with the Battle of Boyacá in 1819.

In another type of paper, we would have to consider that other forms have existed of preserving the historical memory, like the *Kipus*, which were a kind of nodal weave in Inca culture. However, since the 19th century, from the historicist tradition it has been assumed that the historical discipline validated academically is written history and this is comprehensible when considering that written language permits describing, as well as arguing propositionally and explaining the events described.

Nonetheless, this set of virtues of written language coexists with a feature that goes beyond the rationality of history as academic discipline. Due to the preeminence that must be given to rationality,

History writers maintain an ambiguous relationship, sometimes fearful, with narrative –this is so in all the historiographical trends indicated by White for written History and Hueso for all the historiographical trends identifiable in cinema–. Writers cannot escape narrative, but also cannot account for many details that escape memory or which must always be obviated in favor of the explanatory and generalizing rationality of the academic discipline. Therefore, History writers, even without intending it or without admitting it openly, resort to metaphors, quite often in logical and argumentative key (Rosenstone, 1997).

From our perspective, history writers are respectable and valuable representatives of what McLuhan (1962) called *Gutenberg's Galaxy* in which the printing press configured a way of reading the environment from left to right and assimilating it in analytic manner. Thus, cinematography works can recover or –if preferred– highlight in our time the emotional narrative dimension that has always accompanied the approach to historical events.

To continue with this, upon recognizing humanity as a warrior strain, historians have established that the official history is told by the winners and during times of less belligerence, it is told by the hegemonic powers, but if human societies are assumed as complex cultural structures, then it is necessary to accept that along with the official history there are divergent stories that emerge from those defeated, from remote regions, from marginalized social sectors, from social phenomena until now ignored, etc. Consequently, less than to the historical truth, we would have to refer to the versions of history. Of course, the aforementioned also indicates the lack of Colombian cinematography works told precisely from the subordinate or marginalized cultures, although a solidarity attitude is indeed remarkable from some filmmakers, as in *Maria Cano* (Loboguerrero, 1989), which evokes those who participated in the 1928 banana massacre, an event also alluded by Gabriel García Márquez in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS ON HISTORY

Upon contrasting the Colombian cinematographic production of full-length fictional feature films with a historicist vision of the country, it

is noted that numerous significant episodes exist, both of the official History and the divergent histories, of such officialdom that they have not been addressed.

Only to cite some examples, if we review the catalogue by Proimágenes Colombia, a state entity that coordinates the cinematographic production in this country, we evidence a lack of works that refer to pre-Colombian times; on Columbus' arrival to America, only one animated film exists by Fernando Laverde titled *Cristóbal Colón* (1982); no works are found on the colony. There are also no cinematography works on the times of the establishment of the republic and in general on the rest of the 19th century, except for *La María* (Calvo, 1922), and perhaps for the allegorical *La pobre viejecita* (Laverde, 1978) and for the burlesque satire *San Antoñito* (Sánchez, 1985), which, however, have received little transcendence. The first big historical event of the 20th century, alluded to directly in cinema, is the transfer of the Panama Canal to the United States, through the work *Garras de Oro* (Jambrina, 1926), seemingly filmed mainly abroad (in fact, it seems not to fit within the legal sense with which today we conceive a Colombian cinematography work). No direct approach has been made on the life of the renowned populist leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, although regarding his assassination; several cinematography works have been created of which the most recent is *Roa* (Baiz, 2013). Even though in recent years cinematography works have been made on the armed conflict and its victims, there is a notorious shortage of works on the causes, the origins, and the protagonists of the armed conflict during the years following those of liberal-conservative violence, that is, of guerrillas of socialist influence and, thus, successively we can continue on a chronological review of voids and absences in the historical allusions by what could be called national cinema.

From the romantic perspective, biographies are scarce in Colombian cinematography, except for two works on Bolívar; one in parody tone of current Colombia, *Bolívar soy yo* (Triana, 2002) and the other, a story with animated characters: *Bolívar, el héroe* (Rincón, 2003), besides *María Cano* (Loboguerrero, 1989) on that ill-fated social and trade union leader from the early 20th century, and *Cóndores no entierran todos los días* (Norden, 1983) about one of the best known

political assassins in the mid-20th century. Until now, numerous artists, scientists, sports stars, and, in general, personalities that have made significant contributions to construct the nation remain outside the Colombian cinematographic narrative.

In the same romantic perspective, but in relation to the epic (and even to the adventurous or the fantastic), much still needs to be explored in relation to the armed conflict, although this has been alluded to, for example, in *La toma de la embajada* [*The siege of the embassy*] (Durán, 1999) in which a commando of the M-19 guerrilla group on February 27th 1980, burst into a meeting of diplomats in the embassy of the Dominican Republic, taking several ambassadors hostage; *Golpe de estadio* (Cabrera, 1998) that intermixes the anxieties during combat between the army and the guerrilla with the emotional reactions of the combatants from both sides who, at the same time, are watching a football match in which Colombia defeated Argentina during the playoffs for the 1994 World Cup; *La primera noche* (Restrepo, 2003) depicts the connivance of some members of the state's armed forces with paramilitary groups, while *La pasión de Gabriel* (Restrepo, 2009) presents the complementarity by opposition between the abuse of power by bureaucracy and the excessive arrogance of a guerrilla group; in *Los actores del conflicto* (Duque, 2008) different ballast of the conflict are humoristically engaged: mafias, sectarianisms, arms trafficking, ineptitudes, arrogance, and even impostures; *Yo soy otro* (Campo, 2008) highlights the presence of the conflict in all places and aspects of social life; while *Los colores de la montaña* (Arbeláez, 2010) points to the frustration and displacement victimizing farming peasants and specially children. *La Sirga* (Vega, 2012) mentions the everyday fear and secrecy required by the armed conflict, and *Jardín de amapolas* (Melo, 20014) portrays the mixture of violence from the drug trade and that of the guerrilla-paramilitary conflict, through the children's vision.

Within the Marxist perspective, *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro*, (Rodríguez & Silva, 1982), from the indigenous world vision (inserted in the narrative within the class struggle), contributes to broadening the vision on history at a time when the indigenous movement has been consolidating organizationally in Colombia; *Raíces de piedra* (1961) and *Pasado el meridiano* (1964), both by José María Arzuaga,

account for the urban landscape and for the sociopolitical morality of those years in Bogotá; *Con su música a otra parte* (Loboguerrero, 1984) adds something more on the young leftist romanticism of the 1960s and 70s.

It should be remembered that within the New History, various ways of approaching events exist, which do not necessarily focus on the chronological, as has occurred since the Annales school, which opts for studying different themes related to the history of mentalities, economy, microhistory (which induce to universal reflections from very local cases), etc. In relation to the history of mentalities, in *El río de las tumbas*, (Luzardo, 1964) we can recognize, amid picturesque situations, the shrewdness awakened by the liberal-conservative violence and which is revealed when the town fool discovers an unidentified corpse in the river; in turn, *La sombra del caminante* (Guerra, 2004) points to the misery in which both the victim and the perpetrator are found in a city whose mentality continues its chaotic and violent march.

Regarding the economy (in this case surreptitious), drug trade is addressed relatively in Colombian cinema. For example, *El rey* (Dorado, 2005) provides data about the beginning of the marihuana crop and the production of cocaine; *La ley del monte* (Castaño & Trujillo, 1998) describes the steps in the purchase of raw materials and production of cocaine; *Sumas y restas* (Gaviria, 2004) refers to the times and movements of the alkaloid trafficking and to the enchantment this business exerted upon the middle class in Medellín during the 1980s and 90s until many of its strong business prospects succumbed to its whirlwind; *María llena eres de Gracia* (Marston, 2004) details the technique of human cocaine transport and the motivations and torments of those who practiced it, that is, of the so-called “mules”; *El arriero* (Calle, 2009) deals precisely with the perverse ethics and ideals of a character who organizes and controls said mules. Additionally, only a few cinematography works, like *La historia del baúl rosado* (Gómez, 2005) –a love story frame-worked within the investigation of the mysterious crime of a young girl–, address the idea of microhistory.

However, no cinematography works exist in Colombia that, for example, mention the establishment of the coffee economy, key for the country's development; there are also none on the industrialization

processes; no direct and profound mention is made of the agrarian problem, which is supposed to be at the root of armed social conflict, so significant for Colombian history.

In keeping with Rosenstone's perspective, we easily identify the classical narrative structure –from the mainstream– which prevails in the works mentioned. In *Soñar no cuesta nada* (Triana, 2006), a story about some soldiers in the company Destroyer who found a number of hidden barrels full of US Dollars belonging to the guerrilla, soldier Porras expresses that he does not agree with taking the money; thereafter, the lieutenant orders him to remain silent about such finding and precisely on minute 30 the soldier represses his inconformity and accepts the order by screaming “lancer!” This is the first *plot point*, which specifies what Field (1984) denominates as *set up* (proposal). As of that point, the story is not about the journey of some soldiers without money, with youthful illusions, and who are after the guerrilla, but about the obtundation of a group of soldiers who keep the money found and waste it among quarrels and games in the jungle. The midpoint takes place when, on the flight to the military base, soldier Lloreda reports that he has lost his money and threatens to blow up the plane with a hand grenade. A soldier declares that Lloreda will not be capable, but he screams, “I am not a moron!” and at exactly 60 minutes Lloreda is subdued by the lieutenant and by soldier Porras, who is the main character. This is the midpoint, at 60 minutes. Although that occurrence does not prevent the soldiers from keeping the money, it does start to raise doubts on what will happen. From that moment, the awkward ostentation by the soldiers raises suspicions among the high command. The second big plot point takes place at exactly 90 minutes when, during an explanatory flashback, soldier Porras calls his young wife to tell her he escaped to avoid facing justice. This way, he shows a justification to try to save his family from bankruptcy, a justification that contrasts with the fate of the other soldiers and, thus, sets the discussion on the ethical validity of that perpetrated by the whole platoon. As of that moment, begins the rather short solution of the story, which consists in Porras' young wife, accompanied by her small daughter, starting the journey back home.

Regarding the fictional traits of the documentary, *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro* (Rodríguez & Silva, 1982), to achieve its narrative and ideological purpose, resorts to representing the devil through a hand knitted mask. Every documentary registers some events directly from reality, but—in the first place—is not prevented from carrying out reconstructions through staging of already transpired situations; also, it tends to interview witnesses who during the interview are located in a context different from that of the events referred. Thirdly, it tends to use audiovisual records taken from different events, but which serve to illustrate or support a point of view and, most importantly, during editing, elaborate a fictional narrative structure, which is clearer in what is today denominated as “false documentaries”, which in the end accomplish evidencing in notorious manner what documentaries have always done to a greater or lesser extent. Such is the case of *Un tigre de papel* (Ospina, 2008), which suggests the existence of a character called Pedro Manrique Figueroa, who—of course— never existed, but who supposedly experienced a good part of the history of Colombia lived by the Colombian left from the 1930s to the 1980s.

It is fitting to cite Rosenstone (2006), who considers that the cinematography works can be historical discourses from versions on History by using narrative techniques of experimental nature. From this perspective, *Garras de Oro* (Jambrina, 1926), besides conducting some historical reconstitutions, resorts to allegory of Uncle Sam plucking the Panama isthmus from a map of America.

More bluntly, the same author considers that fictional cinema has more appropriate tools than the documentary to propose, not veracious situations, but symbolizations and points of view on history. For example, *La tierra y la sombra* (Acevedo, 2015), proposes, through fiction, the crudeness of the life of sugarcane cutters and their feudal dependence on sugar mills, during the 21st century.

TO CONCLUDE

If for the History writer, the starting point is the rational explanation and emotionality is a point of support for its argumentation; for the filmmaker the starting point is the emotionality of the narrative, which

does not eliminate the projection of a discourse on the events referred to. Every cinematography work is logopathic, as stated by Cabrera (2002), that is, it impacts reasoning (logos) and emotionality (pathos).

From the historicist tradition, *writers* tend to reproach of cinematography works their lack of rigor to cite historical sources or provide testimony of them through foot notes or bibliographies, but this is only a matter of cultural and institutional conventions; dealing with the need to assimilate the different possibilities of the cinematographic language accomplish it, for example, through interviews, photographs, staging in real or reconstructed settings, dialogues among characters, manipulation of objects by the actors, inserts of fragments from other cinematography works, etc. Similar to history writers, filmmakers miss everyday details, but unlike writers, who can fill this void through abstract rhetorical, generalizing, and logically structured resources (for example, “the colony in Colombia is the period from the conquest to independence”), filmmakers must account for them in specific audiovisual manner. From the aforementioned, it is derived that every filmmaker must resort to what may be called audiovisual rhetorical resources, dramaturgically structured (Lozano, 2012). Filmmakers invent scenes or even plots and subplots (in terms de Ricoeur: prefigure and configure narratives); History writers also do so, but with other media. That is, History writers require a certain degree of fiction, in any case different from the fiction used by filmmakers, but fiction after all.

Thereby, to the proximity that from the point of view of the language Ricoeur has established between History and literary narration, in this case, we add that a single historical truth does not exist although events do exist that serve as historical sources that, in turn, admit multiple interpretations constructed dramaturgically in the cinematography works and which can be validated (or refigured, according to Ricoeur) according to the interests and imagery of the communities assimilating them.

In any case, any historian or filmmaker requires at least three types of research: bibliographic-documentary research, field research, and creative research, which is the one upon which they structure their story (Gómez, 2016).

It is quite common to identify mistakenly historical cinema with the reconstitution of the environment of the period or the pretentiously

truthful reconstruction of an event. This mistake is especially frequent in television, but what makes a cinematography work (or television) deserving or not of the historical classification is the relevance it grants during the narrative development to the event it seeks to highlight, that is, as a cultural event relevant and characterizing of a social group's transformation.

This consideration is especially important in these times of transmedia communication and web series in which narrative techniques emerge, which were previously seen as experimental, but which now serenely combine drawings, animations, plastic compositions of the image and sound and the human actors within narrative structures of much fiction but often, for that very reason, of significant references to history. In that regard, it is fitting to remember *Pequeñas voces* (Andrade & Carrillo, 2011), that from drawings made by children displaced due to paramilitary-guerrilla violence, their exodus from the countryside until they become lost in the hard thicket of the city is told.

There are filmmakers who undertake profound historical investigations; nevertheless, stating that a filmmaker is *per se* a historian is somewhat controversial given that professional historians have specialized formation, tradition, and full-time dedication to this role, an academic collection, an academic community, and an intentionality clearly aimed at studying the past as a whole. It must be indicated that History is not an exclusive property of historians, given that it can also be approached and in fact has been approached in different manners (oral or iconic) by inhabitants from all communities, writers, artists, and filmmakers.

Hence, upon the discussion on whether cinematography works truly recreate historical events, adapt them to the period, or falsify them according to the audiovisual language connected to the spectacle, Ibars Fernández (2006) considers that the fundamental question is not if cinema falsifies, trivializes, or hinders the historical truth because cinema is not *History*, but only a manifestation or testimony of such or, even, a tool to get to know it and, as a tool, it must be subjected to a severe critique process, as it occurs with other historical sources.

According to the aforementioned, for the same author, using cinematography works to study History depends on the critical capacity

of the historian and of the spectator (although it may be added that also of the educator or student) to identify aspects from the argument that have historical value, differentiating them from those that constitute only narrative supports, as in *Silencio en el paraíso* (García, 2011), in which a love story serves as context to denounce the official massacre known as the false positives of Soacha, in which some state agents forcibly disappeared 19 young men in 2008 in a location near Bogotá.

It seems that our attitude toward the past must necessarily count on cinema and the audiovisual in general, no longer as intended faithful testimony of the events, but, or analyzing the work as a projection or portrait of the society, or attracting us by the visual media or the cinematographic language as another means to construct discourses about History.

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