

Representations of forced displacement in Colombian fiction cinema: Years 2003 to 2011

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Abstract

The following exhibition of results is the product of a research project that asks about the way in which the arts rewrite and interpret Colombian history. Specifically, how the Colombian fiction cinema between the years 2003 to 2011 gave account of those multiple realities product of the war. Today, with a peace process signed with the FARC guerrillas and the maximum challenge of an implementation that guarantees real peace, it is pertinent to examine history, build memory processes and draw attention to the strategies used to reveal these realities.

Keywords: Colombian fiction cinema, war, peace, memory, audiovisual representations, post-conflict, historiographic discourse.

Internal migration or forced displacement is a reality that reaches 7.4 million displaced people in the country according to the Annual Report of the UNHCR 2016, which in turn comes from the total accumulated number of persons registered since 1985 in the Government Victims Registry². In Colombia, violence is primarily an act of displacement. Geographical displacement takes place because people are forced to abandon their place of origin to go to other territories that belong to us; a displacement towards territories where they have no roots and, of course, a symbolic displacement because, by representing it, tragedy becomes an object and it moves to other stages of representation. That is why, in the words of researcher Geoffrey Kantaris "The representation of violence in Colombia is always an act of displacement"³.

In the fictional Colombian film and audiovisual landscape, in general before 2002, forced migration had been treated repeatedly as a secondary subject, as a detail of the violence that

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2 Ver <http://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=fileadmin/Documentos/Publicaciones/2017/11152>

3 Kantaris, G. (2008). « El cine urbano y la tercera violencia », Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. LXXIV, Núm. 223, abril-jun, p. 455

placed the displaced in the periphery and named them as collateral damages of the conflict, perhaps the anecdotal part of a character's life story and not like the story of a character in the midst of violence. The situation is different today and began to be so since 2003, the year in which the first film law that favored film production came into force and one year after the largest number of displaced persons registered in Colombia up to that date, according to the estimates from state agencies such as Acción Social, Codhes (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement.) The questions we asked ourselves in this paper were: What are the representations of forced displacement in Colombian cinema of fiction between the periods from 2003 to 2011, a year before the beginning of the peace process with the FARC? How does this type of cinema imagine the displaced and the causes of their displacement?

For this analysis, five films were selected from a national production that after the film law had slight increases (from 4 in 2000 to 8 in 2005, 10 in 2007 and 18 in 2011). The central issue should be forced internal displacement and have a Colombian production or co-production, specifically institutional aid through the Film Development Fund or other public institutions. The films selected were⁴: *La Primera Noche*² (2003), Luis Alberto Restrepo; *La sociedad del semáforo* (2010), Rubén Mendoza; *Retrato de un mar de mentiras* (2011), Carlos Gaviria; *Los colores de la montaña* (2011), Carlos César Arbeláez; *Pequeñas voces* (2011), Jaime Eduardo Carrillo

To refer to the contexts of violence and displacement, concepts were taken from Germán Guzmán, Fals Borda, Geoffrey Kantaris, Nubia Ruiz and the concept of "places of memory" is approached from the work of Pierre Nora. The theoretical approach of this work took elements from the theories of storytelling and representation, as well as hermeneutics and film analysis, based on the work of Paul Ricoeur and his idea that plots construct discourses through narrative operations whose representations articulate stories. The concepts of function and actants of Roland Barthes, Julien Greimas and Jacques Aumont are important to reveal the structure of the filmic narrative. At the same time, this research was interested in the look on the forced displacement of the filmmakers who become the authors of the representation. In the case of forced migration we recognize a historical, social and cultural context from which the author, director, does not make a copy of reality but takes features that he considers relevant for representation. These choices reflect the author's point of view, because they summarize the ideas he shares with the social and cultural space he inhabits.

In short, the objective was to characterize the cinematographic representations of forced displacement during this period, to examine how Colombian cinema has imagined this problem and to compare it with the perception of the filmmakers themselves in order to try to reconstruct the gaze on forced displacement.

Preface: Some considerations of cinema as a place of memory

Maurice Halbwach (1950) reminds us of the idea of a memory that survives in individual and collective experience. Society reflects on itself from the relationship with all recollection,

4 TN: -The first night, The semaphore society, Portrait of a sea of lies, The colors of the mountain and Small voices

no matter how personal or intimate it may be. *“The memory is largely a reconstruction of the past with the help of information taken from the present and prepared in addition by other reconstructions made in earlier times and where the image of the past was already altered.”*⁵ Halbwachs himself clarifies it, if only through our memory we could be in direct and reliable contact with our lived experiences, the memory itself would be distinguished, it would be The Memory, it would simply stand out *“... from those ideas more or less precise than our reflection, helped by the stories, testimonies and confidences of others allows us to make us what our past should have been.”*⁶ (Halbwachs, 1950, p.38) The above underlines the idea of an affected memory, filtered and fed by different notions, groups, people, languages, stories, places, in general elements external to us but that configure us. It is about demystifying the idea that there is only a corner of our mind where complete images of our past would subsist, and of recognizing that it is also in society where the indications and traces necessary to reconstruct our past are found.

From Halbwachs we can work on the definition of “places of memory”⁷ proposed by Pierre Nora. According to the historian it is about significant units that correspond to the material and / or symbolic dimensions where the human will or the time that passes create a symbol for a community. (Nora, p.24) A symbol that seems to be updated with the present. We could define the places of memory as external indicators that are part of the collective memory and allow a collective identification, so that they are available to reconstruct the past or more accurately the stories of the past.

The cinema can create places of memory. A film is a story that tells us about the world, even if it is a fiction story, because it establishes a relationship with history and social imaginaries. As a story, a film tells stories, you can build your narratives from a historical time and also take distance and build an imaginary time. The comparison between dreams and cinema, which has been widely theorized, helps us to understand the importance of storytelling as a method of knowledge. In psychoanalysis a story that we imagine during a dream can explain or clarify situations, or questions that are in the subconscious, which would be in cinematic terms the out of field. It is a narrative that can tell us about the present and about the present past, but hidden, because it offers coherence in a scenario that poses the situation or solves the questions and their possible consequences.

The cinematographic narrative is there to be consulted, to be visualized, to return to it, but not only is it inscribed in a temporal physical duration, but it also releases its potential and begins to belong as a story to the individual consciousness and collective memory. Thus the place of film memory is not the natural or artificial location, or the duration of the film, but the virtual memory space that the viewer imagines observing the images and reflecting on

5 Le souvenir est dans une très large mesure une reconstruction du passé à l'aide de données empruntées à la présente, et préparée d'ailleurs par d'autres reconstruction faites à des époques antérieures et d'où l'image d'autrefois est sortie déjà bien altérée. Certes, si par la mémoire, nous étions remis en contact directement avec telle de nos impressions anciennes, le souvenir se distinguerait, par définition, de ces idées plus ou moins précises que notre réflexion, aidée par les récits, les témoignages et les confidences des autres, nous permet de nous faire de ce qu'a dû être notre passé. (Halbwachs, 1950, p. 38).

6 Idem

7 Lieux de mémoire

them. A place of memory that is created in a process of transformation from the projection or visualization of the film and whose signifiers are integrated into the social memory.

Axis construction and analysis model

Forced migration is a violent displacement and at the same time it is a symbolic displacement. A theoretical approach to identification is necessary since, faced with forced migration, the person loses his or her culture, which is full of local practices, family and social ties that break down and that place the processes of individual and collective identity at risk. So this research is both descriptive, analytical and hermeneutic. The descriptive part allowed us to observe elements such as plots and narrative actions, and then focus on analyzing the representations from four axes that gave rise to the analysis model:

First the question about the role of the character and the relationships of the proposed fiction with references to reality. This axis tries to question the characteristics of the characters that the authors propose. What are the roles that the authors highlight in the face of a reality such as forced displacement?

Next, we analyze the dimension of space, which is configured in a kind of dichotomy between one's own space and unknown space. Both migration and forced migration give the space that is inhabited an obvious importance. Leaving one place and reaching another can be even more violent when the land itself is the specific objective of the violent agents. The way in which films staged the spaces of migration can tell us about the conditions of the phenomenon itself.

The configuration of the conflict is related to the context of forced migration and is expressed in what the characters seek. This axis asks about the history of the film, what the characters want to find and their motivations, being able to establish meeting points between the film and the context of forced displacement.

Finally, examining the historical time and the time of the story allows us to situate the films in a Colombian historiographical context and above all will leave clues to talk about movies as places of memory.

The four previous axes were the guide to establish the following categories through which we observed the films:

- The spaces within the story
- Time
- The female characters
- The male characters
- The presence of the State
- Crafts of the characters
- Narrative strategies
- Detonator of violence
- Subversive-illegal presence

The application of the model allows a hermeneutic exercise to gather the relationships between the films and the historical reality of forced displacement, from which we extract representations of that migration. We also established short interviews with the directors of the films. This stage sought to collect relevant information about the creation process that could provide answers about the origin of the characters, the motivations of the conflict raised in the story, the possible censorship and the idea of films as places of memory.

Confronting the analysis of feature films with the voice of the filmmakers is a strategy that makes it possible to visualize ideological forms, the ideas that the authors share with society through their audiovisual products. This analysis sends us to the problem of enunciation, which is nothing more than the recognition that, as Michel Marie and Jacques Aumont (1988) put it, *“A good part of recent cinema is presented both as a discourse and as a story”* All cinema contains a statement, a story, and also speeches that are revealed in the forms used to tell these stories, that is, the enunciation. If the situation is more evident in recent films, we can not forget that *“narrative cinema, especially in its classic period, always tried to hide its enunciation by showing itself as a transparent statement working on the real world”* (Marie, Aumont, 1988).); the audiovisual is a technique of representation of the world and at the same time a tool of analysis. On this the filmmaker and linguist Jean Paul Desgoutte is clear:

The image is the memory of the gaze. It is characterized both by a point of view, that of the subject, and by an intention, endowed with a force and a duration. The image as any message proposes to the interpretation, in addition to its own content, the act of its enunciation. (Desgoutte, 1977).

The questions asked to four of the five directors were the following:

- Who is the aggressor in your movie?
- What are the differences between the displaced woman and the displaced man?
- How was the idea of the script born and how was it constructed?
- Why only from 2010 forced displacement becomes a relevant issue in Colombian fiction cinema?
- Why do you think that drug trafficking is not shown in movies about forced displacement as an important factor in this problem?
- Do you think that your film contributes to the construction of collective memory? How is that contribution?

The known space, the cosmogony that is left

Each of us inhabits a space. This space is the place where we feel safe, protected; It is the medium of our cosmogony. From there we inhabit the world and build it; it reveals what we love, what we fear, but when forced displacement occurs, that space is destroyed.

In the movie *La primera noche* (The First Night) (L. Restrepo, 2003), the familiar space has already become a memory and we discover it through flashbacks. When the images appear,

the director demonstrates his intention to make this space the object of loss, of nostalgia. In Greek *nostos* mean return and *algos* suffering; nostalgia is then the suffering caused by the unsatisfied desire to return and, in this case, the inability to return.

The space known in *La primera noche* is composed of family ties and friendship. The images show 'Toño', a cheerful young man who has fun with his brother playing pranks on his mother. The festive atmosphere continues even when 'Paulina' appears, the young woman of whom both brothers fall in love. The house is the reference element; it functions as the center of memories of known space. That is, the actions of the characters go from the periphery to the house (bring an object from the outside in, eat inside the house, talk with your mother inside, swim, run). This everyday and apparently unimportant feature is relevant here to understand the house as the home, and its significance as a transverse space of personal knowledge and the recognition of others. It is this space that is lost first with displacement. The director privileges the plans of the whole and medium planes to recognize, in full light, the mountains, the river, the forest that mix and that are part of the known space. Night and darkness are reserved for moments of forced displacement.

In *La sociedad del semáforo* (The Traffic Light Society) (R. Mendoza, 2010), we are in the street with a group of people who survive doing street sales, circus shows and living on charity in a pension in Bogotá. The known space has a double face. On the one hand, a nostalgia for the places of origin; some come from the Pacific, from the Afro-Colombian coast, others from rural areas. On the other hand, a process of symbolic movement that relies on recognizing the street as the new known space. This is the case of Orlando, also called Cienfuegos and Raúl, the poet of cables. The first is an old man who lives on charity in a pension and exerts a political influence on the group. Cienfuegos comes from Pozos Azules, a small town near Villa de Leyva, of which he says: "It would be good to come back. Suicidate me the last fifty years" (R. Mendoza, 2010). His known space is composed of his mother, who lives there and the tranquility of his blue water ponds, an image that the director introduces into the film as an extradiegetic insert. Contrary to *La primera noche*, *La sociedad del semáforo* does not use flashback to present the known space, but uses dialogues to appeal to nostalgia as illustrated by Raúl's character.

The poet of the cables comes from Choco where his daughter Ana María who he longs for. However, this character symbolically displaces his identity, from the world he knew from the big city, to the world that inhabits the streets. He does not remember the age of his daughter and he is an electrician but he recycles cardboard. When a baker friend asks him why he lives on the street, he responds: "*Lock myself in a house to be out of the street, no, not crazy. Where I lived there were fields, waves, sea. The street is what most resembles it, even in the sound*" (R. Mendoza, 2010). The known space was displaced physically and symbolically. Raúl wants to resemble the place he inhabits, that unknown space and his place of origin and for that he is located halfway between building a new way of living or facing the memory by reconstructing what he had.

Retratos de un mar de mentiras (Portraits of a sea of lies) (C. Gaviria, 2011) evokes a familiar space based on family and traditions. The images of the memories of Marina (a young woman

who lives on a hillside in a marginalized neighborhood of Bogotá) show us moments of dance, of happiness with her family and with the community when she was little. Marina lost that kind of family and social practices since she was a child. Its known space was strongly linked to community life, to the region's folklore, food, cultural manifestations and friendship ties between neighbors.

Precisely childhood plays a central role in the known space that reveals *Los colores de la montaña* (The colors of the mountain) (C. Arbeláez, 2011). The everyday life of Manuel, the protagonist child, passes between going to school, helping his father and playing football with his friends, scenarios full of freedom and dreams. The film develops the story of the displacement of a peasant family that lives by working their land and raising animals; it is precisely these, the land and the office, part of the known space that reveals the feature film. In one scene, the wife suggests the father leave, leaving that area, but the father replies: "*This is the land of my children, they will not be better elsewhere*" (C. Arbeláez, 2011).

The school is the other part of the known space, because it is located in the film as a central place of interaction and loss, since at the same time it is a witness and victim of forced displacement. We attend the calls to the list silenced by the absence of students who have migrated and a precarious education because the displacement also reaches teachers, who also flee due to the threat. Teachers that may or may not be replaced. The forced displacement interrupts all these social structures, all the bonds and consequently destroys the way of life created within and thanks to those known spaces.

The case of *Pequeñas voces* (Small voices) (J. Carrillo, 2011) is similar to the colors of the mountain. The known space is the happy life of children in the countryside, "*We had everything, nothing was missing,*" says a girl at the beginning. (J. Carrillo, 2011) The film expresses all that richness through animation, emphasizing color to give life to that joy. Oscar Andrade co-director said that after interviewing the children, the goal was to represent the space known as a happy life, with its games, its pets, its friends, school, romance and particularly its family relationships.

The unknown space, the migrant as a foreigner

The unknown space is that which the migrant ignores. It is his future represented in the city to which he migrates and in the eyes of others, who see the displaced as someone uncomfortable. In *La primera noche* and *Retratos de un mar de mentiras*, the journey into unknown space takes place in two different senses. The first feature film part of the territory that belongs to the family to Bogotá, the capital; while the second film leaves Bogotá, the unknown space, to return to the family territory.

In *La primera noche* Toño and Paulina must leave the town quickly. Paulina wants to go to Bogotá, "Beautiful life that awaits you there. Where will they live? What are you going to eat? We do not have anyone there" says Toño annoyed. The bus trip serves as a transition. At first the image is made from the outside and the window cuts the plane dividing it in two: Toño to the left in the foreground, attached to the reflection of the earth that leaves; Paulina on the

right, visibly tired and with a look of uncertainty. Then, when they arrive in Bogota, the point of view of the camera changes and the relationship within the image also changes. From the interior of the bus Paulina is now the one in the foreground, she looks curiously at the outside, the unknown space of that Bogota that is seen through the window. In the background of the image is Toño in silence. The film shows a positive side of this new beginning in the day and then moves on to the distrust that falls with the night.

Bogotá is represented as a big hostile city. The characters are lost amidst the noise, the circulation of vehicles and the people who travel indifferently. This new place is an unknown and reducing space that the film shows with general planes in which the characters look small, different and excluded from the large homogenous mass of people in the streets. The physical city is a space that assaults, it is a space without space, without field of vision, without points of reference, where everything is new and the characters do not know how to orient themselves. In addition, it is a permanent social aggression in which some men of high stratum harass Paulina; a recycler seeks his sexual favor and the police do not help Toño.

In *Retratos de un mar de mentiras*, the unknown space is played by means of a trip back to the place of expulsion. That is to say, the characters live in the unknown space, the capital, the place to which they arrived some time ago, however they try to return to their hometown, the known space, of which they remember little. Even though they are coming back, the nostalgia is also there, because the characters do not know how much the place has changed, what happens there now. Kundera in "Ignorance" helps us to understand this paradox of the known-unknown space:

"In Spanish the word longing comes from the verb yearn (to have nostalgia) that in turn has its origin in Catalan enyovar, derived from the Latin ignorare (ignorant) [...] Nostalgia appears as suffering through ignorance. You are far away and I do not know what you have become. My country is far away and I do not know what is happening to it." (Kundera, 2003, p.11)

The city is the first unknown space. The capital is a place that expels. Marina and the grandfather live in the periphery of the city, on the slopes, in conditions of poverty, without the minimum services and with the risk of dying due to a landslide. The unknown space is also the place of appearances, like the portraits of a sea of lies, of those that Jairo takes Marina's cousin. Appearances of which Marina is witnessed on multiple occasions with the interested charity of the people, with those of apparent better education than when hitting a child who has just stolen something in the street they say: *"How would this world be good if not there was so much garbage!"* (Gaviria, 2011)

To this unknown space that is the city also comes, La Sociedad del semáforo. The displaced who come from different peoples, traditions and ages settle under bridges, in parks, in small pensions when they have some money, and most of the time, in the street. The traffic light society works at a crossroads, where they have a few seconds to convince the public of the cars to give them a coin in exchange for a short circus, poetry or candy show. In the shortage of unknown space you can meet friendly people and another not so much, or with the police that chases them. *"This is the city with more sons of bitches per square meter,"* says Raul, one

of the characters. The displaced when they arrive in the cities do not find a way to integrate, they are easily excluded and it ends up being the same street (cold, dangerous, immense) that gives them back some of the humanity that they have stolen, being able to find food, create social bonds and again be important to others.

In *Los Colores de la Montaña*, unknown space is suggested; We do not see at any time the place where Manuel and his mother will arrive after leaving their property. However, we can recognize the unknown space through Manuel's childhood. The film suggests that symbolic displacement in which Manuel replaces his father, after he is taken away by the armed groups. In pictures, Manuel leaves the house, approaches a cow and tries to milk it. It is a simple gesture, but significant. It is a child who loses his known space, that is his childhood, and must necessarily grow up and become an adult, that is the unknown space. The situation leads us to the issue of family fragmentation and how children with forced migration are forced to transform themselves, to assume roles for those who are not prepared, to change their cosmogony.

In the first fifteen minutes of *Pequeñas voces* the film deals with the unknown space through the testimonies of the children who have the main role in the story. "*I do not like Bogotá, there are fights and they even stab each other*" says one of them. In large cities we can recognize other forms of violence that unbalance and also remember the painful moments of dead or missing relatives. Another child mentions: "*In the house we are happy, but not in the neighborhood*". The perception of community and trust is not the same in the house as in the neighborhood. Life in the neighborhood does not easily and quickly replace life in the countryside, because they are not the same ties or the same relationship with the environment. For example, in the neighborhood there is no common past that is transmitted orally. In general, mediations change, which in Martín Barbero terms, are what give structure to the uses of communication. (Barbero, 1987, cited by Sunkel, 2002, p.291) Thus, in the unknown space, the loss community and its social practices are missed. Another testimony tells: "*There are times when my father works putting asphalt in the streets, other times he does not have a job*", the city as a source of exclusion, where everyone is far away from everyone and opportunities are elusive. A mother, a father, a displaced peasant family loses their means of production in consequence, and the fact of not finding work or having only precarious jobs reduces the possibility of finding a place for them in their new community.

Representations of women and men, faces of resistances

The woman is the main character in two of the five films. Women are the portrait of the victim who tries to protect their own, and consequently, they are the first displaced people and even the most numerous, because men are more often recruited or killed by armed groups. On *La primera noche*, Toño's mother says "You run away to hide

'cause we are putting our chest here!" Mom knows that when men go to war, they never return and, consequently, the woman must endure to remain widowed or abandoned, to leave or to face alone the actors of the war to defend her territory, her life and the life of children. Precisely Toño's mother acts as a collective conscience: does not have a husband and does

not want to leave her house; she refuses to leave her land and her family's house. Paulina, on the other hand, decides to leave with her two children. In the city Paulina is more exposed to the objectification of the female body, there she is seen as a sexual object and prostitution is shown as an almost inevitable consequence for displaced women who arrive in the cities, "A woman as beautiful as you are, could find work easily here if you know the right people. I know the people. If I want I can introduce them." (Restrepo, 2003)

Marina in *Retratos de un mar de mentiras*, is a woman who resists the mistreatment of her grandfather, and of the people, who think she is crazy because of her withdrawn attitude, product of the constant and confusing painful memories of her childhood. The first battle is against her memories. Marina, who at the beginning of the film does not speak, only decides to do it when she begins her return trip, a way for the director to highlight that intimate journey of the character in which she does not want to recover the land to sell it, but to rebuild herself symbolically, to try to understand the wounds of the past that torments her.

Other female characters show fear in the face of aggression and exile, and then, when the anguish is unbearable, they decide to migrate. For her part, the school teacher in *Los colores de la montaña*, reveals another face of resistance. She is the one who insists on claiming to the violent that the school is a space for children and for infants, a territory that must be removed from war.

The man in a first context is represented as a guerrilla, a paramilitary or a soldier, because it is men who make war. But in a second context as a father, a farmer, a child, a victim who is quickly killed or disappeared. The films show that some men identify with an illegal group and that others are pressured to take up arms. Parents and children in *Los colores de la montaña* and in *Pequeñas voces*, are men who work the land and raise animals to feed their families.. They are farmers, not insurgents, but they are obliged to help some group of the conflict in one way or another. If these men resist or refuse they are kidnapped or killed.

The men in *La primera noche*, are young people who, faced with the unemployment options and conditions to have a decent life in the countryside, see in the guerrilla, in the army or in the paramilitary groups, an option to improve. Wilson chooses the guerrilla directed by his uncle and abandons his partner and his children, while Toño chooses the army to have the necessary documents to enter the university. In both cases there is a spiral of hatred, sadness and injustice. The case of Raúl in the *La sociedad del semáforo* is that of a lost and crazy man. The poet of the cables could not free himself from the past and he is pursued by the pain caused by the memory of all those he lost, drugs, violence. The myth of the eternal return is transformed into the tragedy of permanent nostalgia.

The forces of expulsion, the image of the aggressors

In the representation of forced migration, in a conflict as complex as the Colombian, we see that the forces that expel the population from their lands have different faces. Each film reveals different details of the aggressors, despite the use of almost the same violent mechanisms with the same result for the community. It is a monster with multiple heads and yet anonymous.

In *La sociedad del semáforo*, the aggressor's representation is synthesized in a phrase "me iban a echar chumbimba" a popular expression to say that someone in Bajo Baudó wanted to kill Raúl. Without saying more, the image of Bajo Baudó appears, an area in the Chocó region, where the guerrillas of the ELN, the FARC and the paramilitaries have had strong battles. The image of the aggressor is complemented by the absence of the State against the marginalized population.

In *Retratos de un mar de mentiras*, Marina's aggressors are all, from the people who discriminate her on the street, to her grandfather who beats her, to the murderers of her parents. Marina's memories quickly tell men that they are armed, wear rubber boots, wear a military camouflage dress and talk to their parents. The description is closer to the guerrillas and reveals that the family was pressured to help the insurrection. However, in the film there are other aggressors, the paramilitaries. The latter are represented in three ways. First at the beginning of the film when the delirious grandfather says "The mochacabezas come again for us", phrase that reminds the paramilitary groups, who have been known among other things, for cutting off the heads of their victims, especially those accused to help the guerrilla. In a second moment, during the trip, in the middle of the landscape that passes from the savannah, to the mountain and then to the sea, indigenous displaced persons appear on the road and the news of the radio announces that there are confrontations in the zone between paramilitaries and guerrillas. Finally, Marina and her cousin arrive in town and a group of men in civilian clothes kidnap them and force them to find and give them the property deed. Then, when they both flee, Marina clearly remembers her past and we see how, as a child, a group of men in civilian killed their parents.

La primera noche and *Los colores de la montaña* introduce the image of the guerrilla as a member of the family. In the first film, Joaquín, uncle of Toño, leads a group of guerrillas and visits his sister to ask him to leave the area because the fighting intensifies. The uncle is admired by one of his nephews who decides to be a guerrilla while the other chooses military service. It is the conflict that enters families directly and fragments them. We also see it in *Los colores de la montaña*, in which campesino children are familiar with the language of war and with the presence of the guerrillas. This does not mean that children are represented as accomplices of armed groups; on the contrary, children see conflict as an adult game until the moment when they are forced to grow up:

- *If my brother was here, he would rescue us the ball. Don't you see that there they are taught to dig up the mines without being exploited. But he is far away.*

- *Hey, and his brother, why did he leave? I was bored?*

- *No, he left one morning, supposedly for the coast to know the sea. But that would be a lead coast.-*

- *jajajajaja - Julián. Would you like to go to that coast?*

- *To that lead coast? I do not know, because if my brother is there, it will might as well.*

In *Los colores de la montaña*, sometimes it is not known clearly to which group some of the characters belong, because it is more emphasized in the aggression and less on the face of the aggressor. However, there are also paramilitary groups. At the beginning we see written about the wall of the school, "The people with weapons. Win or die". (Arbeláez, 2011) This is a slogan that highlights the guerrillas in the first part of the film. On the contrary, in a second moment of the film, the phrase of the wall changes "Guerrillero put on the camouflaged or die in civilian". (Ibid., 2011) This change highlights the entry of paramilitary groups, who at the end of the film dominate the territory, kill Julian's father and make Ernesto, Manuel's father, disappear.

The image that *Pequeñas voces* highlights is less constructed by the psychology of the characters and is more explicit both in the plans and in the dialogues. The film identifies several actors. Everyone uses weapons and we see them in combat. The guerrilla with its camouflaged and red tape, walks quietly through the streets of the city, visits the shops and regularly enters the houses of the peasants to recruit children and young people. After recruiting them, they torture them with intense training or kill them. The military enters the area more spectacularly. Their presence is represented with tanks, helicopters and checkpoints to verify documents. The paramilitaries, on their part, dressed in boots and jeans, arrive at the houses of the peasants and kidnap the head of the family.

Representation of the State

According to the films analyzed, the State is another armed actor in the conflict, although it represents legitimate force. All regular or irregular armed forces have the power to provoke terror. The State, in addition to being militarily strong, becomes an aggressor, a force of expulsion due to abandonment, its precarious institutional presence in some regions of the country, McCarthyism and its complicity with other illegal actors.

La primera noche, sees in the army, the State. The military see the population as enemies, labeling them as accomplices of the guerrillas in the combat zones. The army commander asks a group of inhabitants why they do not leave the town knowing that it is a war zone, they respond: "To go where," "That's not my problem," the military chief replies. (Restrepo, 2003) At one point in the film, the army remains motionless and silent while the population is being massacred by the paramilitaries. In the city, the police are also hostile, do not help and treat the displaced with contempt.

La sociedad del semáforo imagines a police state. The police assimilate the migrants as delinquents and provocateurs of public disorder. On the other hand, *Pequeñas voces* and *Los colores de la montaña*, have a similar look of the State. For both, the State is a powerful armed force that uses helicopters to fight. The moment in which the boy Manuel in *Los colores de la montaña* feels more afraid is when the army arrives in a helicopter and flies over the house; we never see the helicopter, but the loud sound and the way Manuel trembles evoke the children's fear of total confrontation. Also in *Pequeñas voces*, the State is represented in the military anxiety. The battalions go through the harvests and interrupt the daily life of the

peasants with the same violence as the other groups. The fear of confrontation is a feeling that does not differentiate armed actor.

Retratos de un mar de mentiras, shows the duality of a State present and absent at the same time, a State that helps and at the same time violates. This is how we see the military doing controls on the road giving an idea of security, while minutes before the negligent police mocked Marina. In the same sense, the film evokes the policy of the State that seeks to return the usurped land to its true owners. Marina and Jairo are true owners and hope to recover the lost territory. However, the difficulty of a real restitution is illustrated because there are different interests in keeping things as they are; among them groups that use violence and fear to make the population renounce any claim to recover their lands. A policy of the State without accompaniment of the State.

Temporality and places of memory

A large part of the analyzed films build their story about the idea of memory through flashbacks that the characters tell, and in others from the facts that the characters live in the present of the story. Thus the past of the characters becomes the spectator's present. Films begin in the present and then travel backwards in history using flashbacks or dreams to show who the characters were and develop the plot of the story in a back and forth between both times. Consequently the viewer enters the chronology of the story, even if the facts are not counted chronologically, that is to say that in the story the past is the present.

The film narrative makes the viewer identify with the past of the characters, because it is in that past that the understanding of the present is found. If analyzed in terms of psychoanalysis we could speak of a trauma and it is in past events that this takes place. So to tell the facts, to enter into them through memories is what psychoanalysts call the return of repressed memories. A way to expose what is hidden and to see the story as a knowledge technique.

On *La primera noche*, the memories return chronologically, as Toño and Paulina advance in the story. There is no specific mention to the time represented. The director does not choose a precise date or an explicit scenography that can locate the story at a particular time. However, the connection between the different secondary characters and the opposition of the configured spaces (the countryside and the city) can indicate, to a spectator who knows the context, an era close to the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties.

The flashbacks appear in relation to the diegesis of the film and are largely happy memories for the characters, which can demonstrate the intention of giving that past the category of lost treasure, of motive of nostalgia. The structure of the film maintains a constant relationship between the past, present and future. Selon Koselleck (1993, pp. 333-357) the tension between the space of experience and the horizon of waiting produces historical time. Precisely the film shows that the tension between the search of the characters going to the capital to find a better future (horizon of waiting) and the past that reveal the memories (space of experience) produces the time of forced displacement, the present that they live.

On the other hand, *Retratos de un mar de mentiras* is a story told chronologically, despite the fact that the story proposed by Carlos Gaviria begins with an adult character that we will later see as a child thanks to memories and dreams inserted. In this film the migration is also in the past, that is, in the origins of the character. Thus, although the story progresses linearly, the film travels to the past, and the physical journey of Marina with Jairo is the metaphor that illustrates it, because it is precisely about revealing that past. The story tells a trip back to the territory of origin where the displacement occurred. In the search for lost memories, the film introduces a time or horizon of waiting that agrees with the space of experience thanks to the narrative tools.

Two of the films analyzed do not reveal a temporality in obvious relation to the past, as if the films mentioned above do; on the contrary, they privilege the present. Forced migration is counted in stories that operate linearly and that do not use flashbacks. Therefore, in these films, migration is represented in the present, which means that forced displacement is not in the space of experiences, but in the daily action from which we can see the horizon of expectations.

This is the case of *La sociedad del semáforo*, where the narrative is linear. In it, every day seems to repeat the same behaviors of the displaced community. The daily reiteration of actions, a product of the lifestyle established by migrants, allows us to think of this mechanism of repetition as a replacement of memory. They seek to escape the memory, being the reason why some prefer to stay on the street. Memory is at the same time a treasure, but also a great burden for each displaced person.

La sociedad del semáforo works on a crossroad and uses the time between the traffic light changes to work. Precisely, they wonder how to increase that duration. The idea of stealing more time, the time needed to increase your income, becomes a tool of history to extend the present. The director Rubén Mendoza speaks of forced migration from the present, from the daily absence and makes it less from nostalgia and loss. The use of daily life as a mechanism of temporary repetition demonstrates the economic, social and family displacements that the forced migrant must face.

The daily life of peasant children is the mat on which forced displacement walks in *Los colores de la montaña* by César Arbeláez. However, it is not the same daily routine or the same present expressed in *La sociedad del semáforo*. The starting point is different. In the latter the beginning of the story of everyday life is after migration, in the field of nostalgia. On the other hand, in the colors of the mountain the time of that daily life is the one before the displacement. The director tells Manuel's story in a linear way, without using flashbacks or dreams, only making use of normal life in the field until such time as displacement is imminent. In the film forced migration is a temporary break, it is a situation that transforms the daily life of Manuel, his family and his friends. So the time of a child that normally includes play, school and family is immediately transformed into the agitated responsibility of the adult; when teachers and children leave school, education stops; a temporary rupture that disintegrates social institutions in a before and after fear.

Although history is always told in the present, it is not the same present, because forced migration is the cause and also the catalyst. There is, therefore, in Manuel's character what

we may call a condensation. That is, when violence changes the horizon of expectations, a successive present of the character (a biological time) is reunited with the new present of the same in the story (a more psychological and social time) that will displace the present of what is awaited by Manuel.

The look: narrative operations and motives of the authors

Up to this moment, the most relevant representations of the forced displacement of the analyzed films have been highlighted. Taking into account that the cinematographic works summarize the ideas that their authors share with society at the moment of the reception of the film, we will use the narrative operations that were found related to the representations and the answers in the interviews made to the directors, to examine what is the proposed discourse of each film and situate the point of view of the director.

In *La primera noche*, light is used to divide happy memories with the dark moment of displacement. The scenes in Bogotá take place almost all at night, while the memories appear luminous during the day. In addition, the identification of the aggressors is carried out in an advanced way, the film wants to fuse the idea of the aggressor not only in one, but in all. The director begins the film with an escape at night, after a group destroyed a small town called Esperanza. Precisely, all this climate of despair, confusion and darkness is the goal of Luis Alberto Restrepo, who wants to convey an intimate story based on real events. The ideas of the military and of the paramilitary accomplices in the massacre of a population and that of whole families crossing the streets of the big cities, are part of a script that first mixes a cause, the macabre alliances between representatives of the State and a group illegal, and secondly a consequence very little visible so far, forced displacement. It is worth remembering that at the time of the premiere of the film, 2003, the number of displaced people in Colombia was higher than in any other year to date. It is then a film that tells the story of a country so abused and frightened that it has lost all capacity for love and forgiveness, like the characters in the film.

The displaced population that migrates to Bogotá or, in general, to the big cities, generally does not find where to settle and at that moment it is the street that receives them. *La sociedad del semáforo* uses the language of the inhabitants of the street, uses the hostility of the noise and chaos of a big city to tell the story of the victims of the conflict, abandoned by the State and by themselves, who are “margin of society,” says Rubén Mendoza, the director; “Because he who has nothing, matters little.”

The frenetic pace of the camera and the extradiegetic music that evokes the internal journey caused by the drug are also at the service of the story of Mendoza, who feeds on his own life story, since he suffered the displacement when he was a child and he feels distant from Bogotá, because it is a city that is not his. The idea of backward movement, that is, of seeking a return to say goodbye, is repeated frequently in Rubén Mendoza’s short films and films. It is a lost search, because you never return to the same place. Those lost searches in *La sociedad del semáforo*, like returning the body of a dead man a long time ago to a city that already forgot it; or the apparatus to control the semaphore time that never works; or

the little baby shoes that Raúl wants to send by mail. Mendoza tries to show that there is an own impossibility in the fact of returning, and that in the face of this impossibility, it is in the street where the displaced, whether by violence, social injustice or personal abandonment, express a dissatisfaction that reaches anarchy

A different view from the point of view of the children is the cinematographic proposal of *Los colores de la montaña* and of *Pequeas voces*, which, in spite of having elements in common, use different narrative operations. In *Los colores de la montaña*, real places are used in the mountains of Antioquia to capture peasant realism. The daily life of the children goes through the whole film, that is why the camera accompanies them in games, in school, in friendships and at the same time allows violence to hide in the spaces of children, almost outside of the field. There is no shortage of the regular elements suggested by these two environments: the life of a child and conflict. In fact, the principal uses a wall outside the school as a transition plan. Then we see the messages of the guerrilla and the paramilitaries as a great painting made by children.

On the other hand we do not see the aggressors up close. The director's strategy is to locate physical violence in general or out of field, whether these direct or indirect actions of the actors of the conflict. This strategy makes the identities of the armed groups invisible, but places the causes of the displacement of Manuel, his family and friends in the center of the film. Another striking choice of the director Carlos César Arbeláez is to integrate the school to the problem. The daily call to list at school is an absence marker that places displacement as a problem and points to three losses: Manuel's lost friends; the reduction of the number of students for the teacher and the loss of future for a peasant village. At the end of the film the camera remains in a backward traveling (subjective image of Manuel) who leaves the house in the foreground, while Manuel moves away. This last plane is a synthesis of the author's discourse, because it values the feeling of loss and the beginning of the displacement.

Jairo Carrillo, director of *Pequeñas voces*, makes an animated film guided by an abundant material of testimonies of children victims of violence and displacement, but also of children and young victimizers. This view of children is evident throughout the film, because they are precisely the characters and storytellers of the story through their voices. Even the simple aesthetics of the animation is made from original drawings made by the children, which shows the interest of the director to reaffirm the look at the conflict from the children.

Unlike *Los colores de la montaña*, Carrillo's film explicitly shows violence. The camera puts the combats and the faces of the victimizers in the foreground. The rudeness of the testimonies gives strength to the visual treatment that shows all the cruelty expressed in the words of the children. The dramatic use of color accentuates the most tragic moments, and the presence of fades to black or others helps to reduce the tension between testimonial changes. Carrillo divides the film in three basic moments. An introduction that shows us the characters and allows us to identify the field in the middle of a happy and free environment. We then went into intense combat, highlighted by a sound landscape full of explosions and threatening voices. Finally, a pseudo "happy end" that synthesizes the stories and offers consolation in the face of the suffering left by displacement.

Conclusions

The known space revealed by the topography, the house, the type of productive work, social practices and even nostalgia are related to rurality. Afro-descendants and indigenous people are not reflected in the films. The migrants represented are people who come from the countryside, peasants or children of peasants who grew up in the cities due to displacement. This representation shows the field in a sweetened way. A space where in normal conditions people have everything: means of production, friends, practices in community, happiness; but when the actors of the conflict intervene, threats and anguish appear. The dead become part of daily life and the damage to infrastructure and means of production affect rural work, so the peasants have no choice and must remove their territory to survive.

If the known space is rurality, then urbanity becomes the representation of unknown space. The images of the films focus on Bogotá as the image of all the big cities in Colombia, where the phenomenon of forced displacement is not indifferent. In addition, as the country's capital, it is the city that receives the largest number of displaced people. On the other hand, the changes begin from the moment when the population knows that it must remove its territory, because the physical displacement, evident or tacit in the films, is clearly related to the symbolic movement, of which the latter is the most important for the representations of feature films. It is not necessary to show the trip to represent the changes in the identity, as for example they do it The society of the semaphore and the colors of the mountain. It is about the abandonment of the known space and the films structure their story in the unknown space or until the beginning of the displacement, which does not hide the rupture of the bonds and the practices in community.

The unknown space has a double face. On the one hand, it is a hostile place that privileges more the individuality than the community. On the other hand, it is the space where identities are lost and, consequently, the characters can remain on the tragedy of nostalgia or, as García Márquez describes it in relation to oblivion in *Cien años de soledad* "when the patient got used to his condition. wakefulness, memories of childhood began to be erased from his memory, then the name and notion of things, and finally the identity of people and even the consciousness of one's own being, to sink into a kind of idiocy without a past " .

All the actors are responsible for the forced displacement, as shown by the specific non-reference to the aggressors. This homogenization on the part of the aggressor's representation reduces the spectacle of the tragedy and concentrates the gaze on the narrative that narrates of the victims, the causes and the consequences of the displacement.

The films represent, above all, the abandonment of the territory rather than the expropriation. The latter occurs when the expulsion groups cause the displacement to seize the land by force or to gain a profit on the territory in a private way, for example, to control the production or transit of the drug. However, these economic and specific motivations are not represented in the films. Even though most of the expulsion groups are in the sample, the drug traffickers are not represented, who are also actors and responsible for forced displacement. Thus, the discourse supported by the films lacks an important reference, although the

directors acknowledge that the complexity of the topic makes it almost impossible, and even an error, to play in a single tape all the actors that favor the displacement, although they accept that the Drug trafficking is a key element that is treated less from the point of view of the displaced population.

The sample reflects an absent, passive and at times complicit state of the paramilitary groups. According to the films, the State is seen fighting the illegal groups in the countryside or with roadblocks, but far from the population that has been damaged. The constructed image is that of a precarious state before displacement, and indolent when migration occurs.

Two of the films emphasize the tragedy of women with displacement. Women resist, especially on their own, the atomization of families resulting from the loss of their families and forced migration; a migration that you normally make with your children. In the big cities, they find themselves in the midst of misery and prostitution. On the contrary, men make war. They belong to that repetitive cycle in which if they are not killed, they are recruited to continue the conflict.

The filmic discourse supports the idea that displacement produces poverty and precariousness. It illustrates the expropriation of the land, the loss of territory, the means of production and then the fragility and individualism in the cities, which accentuates the vulnerability of the population.

Of the five feature films studied, one of them was released in 2003 and the others between 2010 and 2011. For the filmmakers, the absence of fiction films that had the theme of forced migration during this era was the product of a self-censorship that starts with blindness. That is, for not recognizing what happens. It would not be a case of censorship by the State through the Film Development Fund, but of an economic censorship in which the films that did not have an easy distribution in theaters suffered enormous production problems.

Films represent the loss of identity as a consequence of displacement rather than a cause. In this work the tapes showed that women came to the cities without references, wanting to forget, because the memory is synonymous with pain and because who they were in their territories was lost.

The films barely enunciate some mechanisms of resistance to displacement such as the school, the associations and the community, without introducing them centrally in the story.

The feature films were chosen for their plot intimately related to forced displacement. These films, made in a context of slow and difficult production, are places of memory for Colombian society, are places of reunion, of question. their main characters clearly narrate some of the stories of forced displacement, which meant at the time, a very strong change in the discourse transmitted by the cinema and that contrasted with the televised speech or even state statements. The fact that they are fiction films and do not offer precise historical data of an era or event, does not reduce the importance and impact of their discourse. The challenge is an interpretive challenge. They speak of forced displacement as a continuous tragedy in time, which seeks, in the evidence of the gesture of the cinematographic narrative, an acknowledgment in history. It is for this reason that they are places of memory, because they destabilized the historiographic discourse.

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