

Towards a National Cinema:
An Analysis of Caliwood Films by Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo and Their

Fundamental Contribution to Colombian Film

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation proposes a re-evaluation of the films of Caliwood—a close-knit group of film fanatics who produced socially-minded independent cinema in Cali, Colombia—and the group’s contribution towards a national film industry. Focusing primarily on the works of Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo during the period ranging between 1971 and 1991, this study analyzes six key films—*Oiga vea!* (1972), *Cali de Película* (1973), *Agarrando Pueblo* (1977), *Pura Sangre* (1982), *Carne de tu carne* (1983)—which showcase the evolution of the group’s production from experimental documentaries to pseudo-documentaries and fictional films. Additionally, *It All Started at the End* (2015) is analyzed because it is the last film produced by Luis Ospina and it showcases the history of the group from his own perspective. In totality, these films represent a political stance derived from the tenets of the Third Cinema movement—a call for a revolutionary cinema which reverberated throughout Latin America—which denounces neocolonialism, the capitalist system, and the Hollywood model of cinema as mere entertainment for profit. Furthermore, this comprehensive analysis of Caliwood’s films covers a representative sample of their film legacy, as well as their critique of socio-political and cultural issues in Colombia. The reflections yielded from this study propose a reframing of Colombian film history and acknowledges the importance of Ospina’s and Mayolo’s contribution to the development of a “national” film tradition in Colombia.

RESUMEN

Esta disertación propone una revisión en torno a la cinematografía de Caliwood—un grupo de cinéfilos caleños que produjeron un cine independiente de carácter social— así como su contribución a la fomentación de una industria nacional de cine en Colombia. Por lo tanto, se analizarán seis filmes que se lanzaron entre 1971-1991, los cuales fueron dirigidos principalmente por Luis Ospina y Carlos Mayolo: *Oiga vea!* (1972), *Cali de Película* (1973), *Agarrando Pueblo* (1977), *Pura Sangre* (1982), *Carne de tu carne* (1983). Estos filmes demuestran la evolución filmográfica de Caliwood que se desplaza desde documentales experimentales, a pseudo-documentales, y posteriormente a complejos largometrajes de ficción. Además, se analiza *Todo comenzó por el fin* (2015) porque es la última película que produjo Luis Ospina, la cual muestra la historia del grupo desde su propia perspectiva. Asimismo, los filmes en cuestión representan la postura ideológica del grupo que se deriva de la iniciativa propuesta por el movimiento del Tercer Cine—un llamado a la creación de un cine revolucionario que tuvo gran auge por toda América Latina—el cual postula una denuncia ante el neocolonialismo, el sistema capitalista y el modelo de cine de Hollywood cuya intención radica en el lucro. Por otra parte, el análisis de los filmes propuestos en este proyecto presenta una muestra representativa que evidencia la impronta crítica del grupo en torno a los problemas socio-políticos y culturales del país. Por ende, las conclusiones procedentes de este estudio plantean una reformulación del cine colombiano a través de la contribución de Ospina y Mayolo hacia el desarrollo de un cine “nacional” colombiano.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandma who dedicated so many years to raise me with the best possible care and unconditional love. Though she only completed school until the third grade, she knew the importance of education and made sure that each day I made it safely to school, and did her best to support me through my journey. And to my dear husband, thank you for your love and encouragement, for all your editing work and your patience.

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INTRODUCTION

The mere mention of “Caliwood” evokes a sense of interest given its etymological association and satiric take on Hollywood. Yet, despite its similar sobriquet, Caliwood, as a group, sought to greatly differ from Hollywood and its capitalistic approach towards cinema. The group of self-proclaimed cinephiles from Cali achieved the unimaginable feat of creating an artistic haven in a country which at the time was deeply torn by divergent ideological and political views. Their vision led to the production of many films that shaped the most concrete notion of “Colombian Cinema” that the country has ever seen. Their cinematic style was heavily influenced by the movement known as Third Cinema (1960s-1970s) that decried neocolonialism, capitalism, and Hollywood’s lucrative take on cinema. In “The Changing Geography of Third Cinema” Michael Chanan explains the nature of the movement: “Third Cinema, however, is the expression of a new culture and of changes in society. In a broad-spectrum, third cinema renders an account of reality and history” (5). Hence, the movement aimed to integrate the human experience in relation to political and social settings; consequently, it did not limit itself to any particular genre or subject. This humanistic intent is evident in many Caliwood films—a filmography that consists of 31 short films, 10 feature films, and 4 television series produced between 1971 and 1991, before the disintegration of the group.

Although many critics argue for the existence of a national cinema, this study seeks to highlight the diverse elements that have contributed to the attempt at consolidating such a thing as a “Colombian cinema” based on cinematic production and historical data. Thus, the objective of this analysis is not to disprove other critics, but rather to underline the works produced by Caliwood, which have undeniably become a

fundamental component of Colombia's film catalogue, aesthetics, and film theory. As such, it is important to recognize that Colombia's film industry is not as well developed as other Latin-American countries—like Mexico or Brazil—despite the existence of organizations such as Focine¹ funded by the government to foster the Colombian film industry in 1978. Unfortunately, Focine was shut down in the early 1990s due to its perceived failure to produce its intended results, according to Álvarez (6). In Ospina's last film, *It all Started at The End* (2015), Sandro Romero makes a few remarks concerning the support that Caliwood received from Focine and the way its closure affected filmmakers. One of the most prominent features produced during the period under Focine was *Mansión de Araucaima* (1986) by Carlos Mayolo. According to Gabriela Martínez in "Cinema Law in Latin America: Brazil, Peru and Colombia," the film was centered upon the love and passion experienced by the occupants of a tropical mansion, where each character represented a sub-section of society “—a priest, a servant, a mercenary, a disabled pilot and a seductress and domineering woman” (13). This film had political and social undertones, with an emphasis on the characteristics and objectives of a commercial film, which led to its relative success.

Caliwood members envisioned the city as their creative playground; however, they often sought shelter at a home named *Ciudad Solar*,² which became an epicenter for

¹ In 1978, FOCINE (Compañía de Fomento Cinematográfico) was created and funded by the state for the development of national cinema. According to Gabriela Martinez in “Cinema Law in Latin America: Brazil, Peru and Colombia”, FOCINE was responsible for the development of a stronger film presence in Colombia.

² Ciudad solar was located in the Barrio Versailles in Cali, Colombia. This house belonged to the family of Hernando Guerrero, who founded the cultural house, which later became a shelter to many artists, like Luis Ospina. The name was inspired by the

filmmakers and other artists alike. Indeed, cohabitating in this house led Luis Ospina, Carlos Mayolo and Andrés Caicedo to venture into experimental and social filmmaking through an extensive collaborative effort. Some of the most notable films from their partnership are: *¡Oiga vea!* (1972) directed by Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo; *Cali de película* (1973) by Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo; *Agarrando pueblo* (1977) by Carlos Mayolo and Luis Ospina; *Pura sangre* (1982) by Luis Ospina; *Carne de tu carne* (1983) and *Mansión de Araucaima* (1986) by Carlos Mayolo. These films are fundamental since they represent the foundation of Caliwood and its contribution to Colombia's cinema. Since these films were produced through the lens of the Third Cinema movement, they stress social issues, and can therefore be labeled social cinema.

In 1947, film theorist André Bazin implied that there is truth in every film, a notion that was rejected by film critics, and was later revised by critic Robert Cardullo in an attempt to shed light on Bazin's rationale. Originally, Bazin implied that film was a mirror of reality due to the objectivity of the images portrayed, thus making it capable of revealing a different dimension of reality—a social imaginary,

The realistic destiny of cinema—innate in photographic objectivity—is fundamentally equivocal, because it allows the realization of the marvelous. Precisely like a dream. The oneiric character of cinema, linked to the illusory nature of its image as much as to its lightly hypnotic mode of operation, is no less crucial than its realism. In a certain sense, cinema

Italian classic, *La città del Sole* by Tommaso Campanella, due to its utopic and socialist interpretations.

cannot lie, and every film can be considered as a social documentary (Bazin 40).

In “Cinema as Social Documentary: The Film Theory of André Bazin, Revisited,” Cardullo argues that Bazin was far from naïve, in spite of those that thought him to be an idealistic critic who believed documentary represented a solid truth. Indeed, Cardullo asserts that while Bazin recognized that truth can be represented objectively through cinema, he was also aware that the sense of perceived reality was a product of an artifice, “In a word cinema functions in such a way that we can believe (to some extent) that what we see on-screen is true. But it does not mean that cinema can reproduce truth. On the contrary, the innate realism cannot be separated from its potential to create believable illusions” (Cardullo 36). Though initially this notion of an “imagined reality” based on reality can be quite contradictory, one must seek to uncover the fundamental surrealism, because as Bazin put it, it is a fantasy derived from reality. Cardullo expands on that notion, “the content of a dream or hallucination may be false, of course, but the fact that it is dreamed or hallucinated is itself true” (36). In sum, both Bazin and Cardullo propose that films can reveal the hidden imageries, dreams and desires of their audience. Film, then becomes a tangible reflection of humanity, and as such can be considered a “social documentary” (Bazin 40).

Social documentaries were among the first forms of cinema produced by the group, setting a precedent for the rest of their films, which remain socially ‘minded’ in spite of genre. While many of the films produced by Calwood were considered fictional, their elements serve to implicitly demonstrate “real” issues within their culture. Their primary focus was to make a socially conscious cinema that would reflect the problems

that affected their way of life and their society in a broader sense. This is clearly seen in *Mansión de Araucaima* (1986), based on a short story by Colombian writer Álvaro Mutis published in 1973, who sought to create a gothic story in a tropical environment. Since each character represents a segment of society, and eroticism constitutes one of their central issues, they are immersed in an atmosphere of instability, mystery and violence. The counterpart of this film is *Cali de película* (1973), a film categorized as “counter” *pornomiseria*, a genre that can be defined as the mercantilist exploitation of the misery and poverty of others through film or other forms of media, a striking theme that became popular abroad, where it served as a foil to its audience’s opulence. Yet, more than a lucrative film genre, *pornomiseria* provided a way for filmmakers to voice their concerns about the country’s social ills. One of the most noteworthy of these films was *Gamín* (1978) by Ciro Durán, a documentary about street children that included shots of their everyday life in poverty and staged recreations of pitiful situations, such as stealing car radios, to evoke sympathy from the audience and gain international acclaim. It was the members of the self-styled Grupo de Cali and the renowned filmmakers Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo who opposed this type of filmmaking because they felt that exploiting the suffering of others for financial gain was not ethical. So, along with other members of Caliwood, they produced the documentary *Agarrando pueblo* (1977), a satire of *pornomiseria*.

The inclusion of the film *It All Started at the End* (2015) is vital to this study, because it summarizes Caliwood production, despite the fact that it was produced many years after the dissolution of the group. This documentary is a powerful testimony to Caliwood’s vision, an homage to members that had passed as well as to their contribution

to a movement that shaped Colombian Cinema. Additionally, *It All Started at the End* is unique because its self-reflexive visual narrative renders it a documentary about its own creation. In the absence of this film, it would become difficult to fully understand the true impact of Caliwood and its cinematic production within the scope of this analysis.

Studying the lives and the productions of film directors involved in Caliwood—primarily of Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo—almost half a century later means rethinking events that appeared in their filmmaking and their representation as Colombian filmmaking pioneers. It also means critically thinking and analyzing Colombia's socio-political situation throughout the 1900s to better understand the origin of their screenplays. However, Mayolo and Ospina's productions, undeniable prove that the directors were acutely aware of the issues affecting their society, and this is evidenced through their revolutionary and thought-provoking films. Moreover, Caliwood films employed the representational powers of cinema to illustrate social phenomena that affected Colombia such as corruption, nepotism, inequality, poverty, and the ideological divide between the left and right political parties. The polarized political system and its effects on Latin American nations are manifested in the films produced under the umbrella of New Latin American Cinema, which aimed to portray the struggles for cultural and economic autonomy.

Latin American film has adapted and evolved along with the tenets proposed by popular movements, like Free Cinema. This movement emerged in the 1950s, its films were “free” in the sense that they were produced outside of the confines of national propaganda as well as those of the film industry, much like the movement that followed, known as Third Cinema. Free Cinema brought about many cinematographic trends, such

as its focus on the working class; a trait that can be easily identified within many of the documentaries produced by Caliwood. An example of this is *Oiga vea!* (1972), directed by Ospina and Mayolo. The primary purpose of this film was to portray the Pan American Games of 1971—which took place in the city—from the perspective of those who were not represented in the official documentary put forth by the state, the underprivileged citizens unable to attend the games. In contrast, *Carne de tu carne* (1983), directed by Carlos Mayolo, can be categorized as a socio-political film since it focuses on the 1956 bombings that devastated the city of Cali during the military dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla.

Another contemporary movement that influenced Caliwood was Third Cinema (1960s-1970s), which decried neocolonialism, capitalism, and Hollywood and Europe's lucrative take on cinema. This movement had its roots in Argentina. The name arose from the manifesto *Hacia un tercer cine* written in 1969 by Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino. Third Cinema inspired a new trend in Colombian cinema in the 1970s, in which filmmakers evoked larger debates in socio-historical practices, culture, national identity and underdevelopment. These films addressed social inequity, and took a stand against the status quo. According to Umberto Valverde in *Reportaje Crítico al cine colombiano* (1978) Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo, among others arise from this Third Cinema movement. In addition, Valverde argues that the movement was also labeled “marginal cinema,” “militant cinema,” “independent cinema,” as he lists some of the most notable Colombian films produced according to the tenets of Third Cinema, such as: *Chircales* (1972), *Campeños* (1975) by Jorge Silva y Marta

Rodríguez; *Colombia 70* (1970) and *Qué es la democracia* (1971) both by Carlos Alvarez, and *Oiga vea!* (1972) by Carlos Mayolo and Luis Ospina (26).

Umberto Valverde recognized the value of these productions despite the emergence of "espontaneísmo, la falta de rigor, el populismo . . ." (26). On the other hand, while focusing on Caliwood and its contribution to Colombian film, it is important to note that many critics question the existence of "Colombian Cinema." This is a position taken by academics such as Umberto Valverde, and more recently Juana Suárez in her book *Cinembargo Colombia: ensayos críticos sobre cine y cultura*, where she states: "Existe una discusión en el país sobre si hay o no una historia y una industria del cine colombiano o si, por el contrario, éste se compone simplemente de una serie de películas" (9). Her book recognizes the importance of an open discussion on the existence of a national cinema, its history and industry; however, it does not seek to resolve that question. Thus, the objective of this study is to determine the contribution of Caliwood—as a collective—to Colombian film, given the absence of studies on the combined work of the group, their style and evolution. Despite the abundance of literature on their individual work of its members, memoirs, and brief reviews on their films, there is no in-depth study of their filmography that recognizes or highlights their collective role in the development of a "national" film industry, despite the fact that Colombia lacks a stable film industry, as noted by Juana Suárez (10).

In order to better situate this analysis from an academic perspective, this study is based on film theories such as "Towards a Third Cinema" (*Hacia un tercer cine*) a manifesto by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino; "For an Imperfect Cinema" by Julio García Espinosa; and "Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films" written in 2011

by Teshome H. Gabriel, a film and television critic in the developing world. “Towards a Third Cinema” is important because it proposed a non-commercial cinema that appealed to the political awareness of the masses. Similarly, “For an Imperfect Cinema” urges the filmmaker to stand outside of the molds of traditional filmmaking in order to create a raw and revolutionary cinema that is not concerned with aesthetics, quality or technique. Moreover, Teshome H. Gabriel states that Third World film “initiat[ed the] coexistence of film art with oral traditions,” (199) a new perspective through which Third World Filmmakers challenge and reshape “accepted filmic language practices,” creating a progressive style of cinema (201). When it comes to Brazilian cinema, the work of Glauber Rocha is critical, thus, “An Esthetic of Hunger” is referenced as it sheds light on the social and political realities of Brazil through Cinema Novo, a cultural phenomenon that would later blend into the Third Cinema movement. *Cinembargo Colombia* (2009) by Juana Suárez underscores the historical value of Colombian cinema and its relationship to cultural and national identity. Likewise, *Sobre cine colombiano y latinoamericano* (1989) by Carlos Alvarez provides a historical and critical perspective of Colombian film. *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity and Politics in Latin America* (1996) by Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood; as well as *The Politics of Documentary* (2007) by Michael Chanan provide insightful information related to the nature of cinema in Latin America, as well as to the concept of nation and the differing political elements that influence and shape the making of documentary (social film) in Latin America. Collectively, these critical works provide a comprehensive introduction and a discussion of the conception and development of film in Latin America, as well as the current direction of the cinematic industry in Colombia. Thus,

the perspectives mentioned above allow for a closer examination of Caliwood's film through the societal and cultural implications exhibited within the films.

The first chapter of this dissertation, "*The Genesis of Caliwood's Cinephilia: A Brief Analysis of Latin American and Colombian Film*" introduces Caliwood, as well as Colombian films and its antecedents to provide a historical and theoretical framework for Latin American film. This chapter explores the emergence of Third Cinema, and it delves into the revolutionary model for film that inspired Caliwood, as well as other Latin American cineastes. It also includes a brief review of the national cinema of Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, and Colombia that provides a point of comparison that is crucial to understanding Colombia's place within Latin American Cinema. Many literary works have been referenced in order to accurately place Caliwood's films within the period between 1971 and 1991, among them are: *New Latin American Cinema Vol. I and II* (1993) by Michael T Martin³; *Experimental Latin American Cinema* (2013) by Cynthia Tompkins; and *Reportaje crítico al cine Colombiano* (1993) by Umberto Valverde. The first section of the chapter points out the central argument behind this study, its methodology, theoretical framework and objectives that consist in analyzing Latin American film movements and their impact on Colombia's film industry and the emergence of Caliwood. The second section delves into the film periods of Colombia, and their impact on the emergence of Caliwood. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the cinematic movements of the time and their influence on Caliwood's films. Lastly,

³ *New Latin American Cinema*, Volume I, includes the following theories, which are referenced in this study: "Towards a Third Cinema" by Solanas and Getino; "For an Imperfect Cinema" Julio García Espinosa; and "An Esthetic of Hunger" by Glauber Rocha.

the chapter provides a brief socio-political and historical background of Colombia to contextualize Caliwood's films, before closing with a brief history of Caliwood itself.

Chapter 2: Cali, Caliwood's Muse: A Look into Caliwood's Early

Documentary, analyzes the documentaries *Oiga vea!* (1972) and *Cali de película* (1973), which are among the first films produced by Ospina and Mayolo. These documentaries are significant because they highlight the cinematic starting point of Caliwood, and therefore become a touchstone to analyze the development of its cinema, and to review their styles, genres and themes as film production progressed. By contrasting social classes in Cali these highly socio-political films question Colombian government and society. Their critique is directed towards the representation of cultural practices, social inequality, and governmental incompetence. Chapter 2 also focuses on documentary modes and it considers the evolution of the genre in Latin America, taking into consideration the critical works of Bill Nichols and Julianne Burton on the origin and classification of documentary.

Chapter 3: Vampirism and Pornomiseria focuses on the fictional film *Agarrando Pueblo* (1977), known in English as *Vampires of Poverty*. This film exaggerates the aesthetics and techniques of poverty porn documentaries, as it portrays filmmakers who exploit Latin American poverty and underdevelopment for profit. Originally produced as a response to *pornomiseria* films, this mockumentary denounces the opportunism and dishonesty of directors making "social documentaries" in the Third World to obtain international acclaim at film festivals. This chapter not only explains the origin and generic conventions of *pornomiseria* films, but also of Caliwood's involvement in critiquing this cinematographic approach. *Agarrando Pueblo* further validates

Caliwood's change in film style and genre, as the group step into the category of satirical pseudo-documentaries, which paved the way into Ospina and Mayolo's next wave of fiction films.

Chapter 4: *The Intersection between the Tropical Gothic and Caliwood* shows Ospina and Mayolo's shift in interest in relation to documentary. The two films analyzed, *Pura sangre* (1982) and *Carne de tu carne* (1983), share a socio-political and cultural undertone but take a stronger fictional route. *Pura sangre* is an allegorical representation of the "vampirism" present at the center of capitalism in Latin America. Likewise, *Carne de tu carne* is a careful reconstruction of the 1950s, including the atrocities committed during the clashes between liberals and conservatives despite the political pact they entered, known as the National Front.⁴ *Carne de tu carne* seeks to reveal the sinister governmental and familial structures of the time through the metaphor of the incest taboo. This chapter shows the ideological evolution of the directors, who combine fiction and current events to critique the social hierarchies in Colombia, the exploitation of the underclass, and the violence experienced throughout the nation. These films corroborate Ospina and Mayolo's commitment to Third Cinema through the depiction of a broken society.

It All Started at the End: A Conclusion analyzes Luis Ospina's last production, a self-reflexive documentary that describes not only his life and the work, but also that of the other members that made Caliwood into what it was, a creative force of inspiration.

⁴ The National Front was a pact or political agreement between liberals and conservatives in force in Colombia between 1958 and 1974. The main objective of this political agreement was the reorganization of the country after the presidential term of the general and dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla.

This film is essential to understanding the origin of the group that made Cali the mecca of Colombian film. Indeed, Ospina stated: “Cali was the pioneer of film in Colombia” (Emblin1). Furthermore, this film provides a close look into Caliwood’s invaluable work, as it constructs a collective testimonial of the evolution of Colombian cinema rendered by its own members. The intersection of the issues presented in these films reflect the socio-political issues that affected Colombia then, and continue to contribute to Colombia’s underdevelopment today. In sum, Caliwood’s films reveal a country deeply torn by opposing ideological and political stances, and they do so from a critical perspective aimed at focusing on the tension between the past and the present.

CHAPTER 1

THE GENESIS OF CALIWOOD'S CINEPHILIA: A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF LATIN AMERICAN AND COLOMBIAN FILM

¿Ha muerto el cine?

Todos los días, en todas las ciudades del mundo, millones de personas asisten al cine.

Ese extraño arte que se desnuda en la oscuridad para hacer visible un mundo que nos obsesiona y nos atrapa, llevándonos hacia el sueño y la ilusión: “El cine es sueño”; “fábrica de sueños”. (10)

-Umberto Valverde, *Reportaje crítico al cine colombiano*

COLOMBIAN FILM IN CONTEXT

Colombia's relationship with the cinema spans over 90 years, and its film history includes four different periods, according to Umberto Valverde in *Reportaje crítico al cine colombiano* (1993). In his study, Valverde devotes the first period to the film pioneers, who appeared in the 1900s. This initial stage of cinema, which ran from the turn of the century until the beginning of the Great Depression, was the era of the silent film in Colombia. The second period began with the advent of the sound film, and ran from the early 1930s through the end of World War II. The third period proposed by Valverde extends from 1947 to 1958. This stage is marked by the political violence that overtook the nation⁵ and only ended with the pact of the Frente Nacional.⁶ During this period of

⁵ As supported by Hernando P. Martínez in “Historia del cine en Colombia”.

⁶ The Frente Nacional refers to a pact or political agreement in which both the conservatives and the liberals rotated power, intercalating for a period of four presidential

great crisis no substantial cinema was produced in Colombia. In the fourth period, Colombia experienced the ascent of documentary and experimental feature films. This last, and perhaps most significant period, took place from 1959 to 1976, and covers the entire phase of the Frente Nacional agreement witnessing the emergence of experimental Latin American films (Valverde 14). It not only encompassed Colombia, but all of the subcontinent and became known as “el nuevo cine latinoamericano” (The New Latin American cinema) inspired by the tenets of the Third Cinema Movement. This new cinematic wave reshaped the industry in Latin America and gave rise to a group of film aficionados in Colombia known as the Grupo de Cali or Caliwood. This crew of enthusiasts would produce some of Colombia’s most significant films and earn international acclaim. Caliwood’s catalogue is comprised of 31 short films, 10 feature films, and 4 television series—mostly charged with a socially minded undertone. This group left behind a film legacy that will not be easily trumped by current and future filmmakers. A fifth period is in full motion today, and it could be considered as the current state of Colombian cinema— a new boom in the film industry, a profusion of talented directors, successful films, and a celebrated international film festival presence. Nonetheless, the fourth period may be the most critical for the development and continued evolution of Colombian cinema, as Caliwood pioneered the most notable initiative toward filmmaking in the nation. Consequently, this dissertation focuses solely on Caliwood and its contribution to Colombia’s national cinema. Caliwood demonstrated their passion and conviction for film, which led to a partnership of motion picture

terms from 1958-1974. The primary objective of this agreement was to reorganize the country after the dictatorship of general Gustavo Rojas Pinilla.

enthusiasts that laid the foundation for a reawakening of socially-minded film in Colombia. Led in part by Luis Ospina, Carlos Mayolo, and Andrés Caicedo, their common interest in film led them to the development of a resilient audiovisual tradition in a chaotic country that was fragmented by violence, corruption, death, and drugs.

When discussing the history and work of Caliwood, mentioning Luis Ospina's documentary, *It all Started at the End* (2015), is inevitable. At first glance, this documentary seems to reflect Ospina's work and life by the director himself who, during the initial phase of filming, was suffering from a serious and nearly fatal illness. However, a closer inspection shows this film to be an extensive journey through the origins of the cinematographic movement that transformed Cali, as well as the country's cinema. Thus, the documentary proves that everything (Caliwood's genesis) began at the end. This film unfolds through a series of intertwined narratives that document the lives and careers of the director and his film comrades. Each of these parallel narratives stem from the central point of congregation for Caliwood, Ciudad Solar.⁷ An artistic refuge where the creativity of Caliwood was nurtured and developed, Ciudad Solar was located in a central and upscale neighborhood of Cali. Despite the war, violence, and social unrest of the period, Cali came to be known as the mecca of Colombian cinema. In the same way, the Cali Group became known as Caliwood, a name that became synonymous with the movement it started, and its productions paved the way for a modern cinema

⁷ Ciudad Solar was located in the Versailles neighborhood in Cali, Colombia. This house belonged to the family of Hernando Guerrero, who initially founded the cultural house which later became a refuge for many artists, such as Luis Ospina, Carlos Mayolo, Andrés Caicedo. The name was inspired by the Italian classic, *La città del sole* (1602) by Tommaso Campanella, in part due to its utopian and socialist interpretations (*It All Started in the End*, approx. 23:05)

with a socialist and urban undertone. Additionally, aside from providing a memory and a work of vital historical value, *It All Started at the End*, offers a unique chronological journey through the era of Caliwood, using the various works produced by the group as points of reference along the way. The film delivers a unique perspective on Caliwood and its members by directly incorporating content from those that once were part of the group. *It All Started at the End* is a documentary built on a recollection of memories, notable moments, and testimonials that, like pieces of a puzzle, come together to construct the far-reaching Caliwood narrative from the 1970s to the present.

LATIN AMERICAN FILM ANTECEDENTS

In Latin America, cinema arrived shortly after the invention of the Lumière brothers, known as the “cinématographe.” According to Peter Rist, one of the first countries to receive it was Argentina in 1896, followed by Uruguay in July of the same year (2). This information is important because it provides meaningful contextual data that is relevant to the analysis of film in Latin America. It is also conducive to the discovery of key ideologies and film movements that influenced Colombian cinema in the 1970s; the decade that Caliwood was inspired by innovative film techniques and socialist-minded film perspectives, like that of the Third Cinema and Free Cinema. Third Cinema was characterized by its strong tendency to deny neocolonialism, capitalism, and lucrative Hollywood film productions, according to David William Foster (466); whereas, the Free Cinema movement inspired many cinematic tendencies, like the focus on working-class characters and social criticism as the main subjects for their low cost and rudimentary films.

The Third Cinema movement took place during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, and was the primary source of influence on the production and stylistics of Calíwood. These movements shaped and influenced Calíwood's work, and this is reflected mainly through the cinematography of Luis Ospina, in films such as *El bombardeo de Washington* (1972). Furthermore, it is critical to consider the filmographies of most prominent Latin American countries (in terms of film production)—among them Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico—in order to better contextualize and understand Colombian film within that framework.

COLOMBIAN CINEMA

Colombian cinema, like any other national cinema, is a historical process with an industrial, artistic, and social dimension. The term "Colombian film" refers, in a broad sense, to cinematographic productions made in Colombia. However, the genre also includes works with a broadly Colombian theme, or directed and/or principally produced by Colombians. The history of cinema in Colombia began with the arrival of the cinématographe in 1897. The invention of the Lumière brothers, which had made its grand public opening in Paris in 1895, caused such a profound impact worldwide that many foreign cameramen began to seek new horizons to explore through their camera lenses. Many turned their gazes towards the New World, as Ana López points out (54). Several pioneers of the film entered the Colombian territory that same year, and the first exhibitions were held, initially at the Teatro Colón located in Venezuela, then Barranquilla, Bucaramanga and eventually the capital. In Bogotá, the first film premiered at the Municipal Theater in August 1897, according to Soraya Hoyos, Ernesto Moreno,

and Diana Rojas (60). The arrival of the Cinématographe to Latin America launched a new industry and novel platform of expression for territories that yearned to unite in a common popular art form. Groups like Caliwood understood that film was more than entertainment, it was a means to inform, unite, and reform.

The most significant period for Colombian cinema, the Caliwood era, emerged following the creation of the Ley de Sobreprecio in 1972-1978. This law played a key role in the development of the industry in Colombia, as explained by historian Ana María Higuera González:

El reconocimiento de las dificultades de producir un cine colombiano que compitiera con las grandes industrias internacionales de exhibición y de distribución sin ayuda oficial, impulsó la llamada Ley del Sobreprecio. El 6 de septiembre de 1972 se publicó la resolución 315 de la Superintendencia de Precios que fijó una tarifa para la exhibición de los cortometrajes y largometrajes colombianos. La entidad autorizó cobrar un sobreprecio especial por cada boleta de entrada a los teatros que presentaran películas colombianas con el fin de fomentar la industria cinematográfica nacional. (109)

According to Luis Alberto Álvarez, the Ley de Sobreprecio had a significant impact on film production between 1972-1978. In his study, Álvarez focuses on highlighting the development of documentary film as a product of the Ley de Sobreprecio, and its benefit to several filmmakers, among them Luis Ospina, Carlos Mayolo, Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva. The law, which intended to incentivize the development of the film industry in Colombia, became an unexpected source of income

for the national industry of film exhibition, and as Valverde put it, “De esta manera, lo que no se había hecho en 65 años se intentó hacer en uno solo” (32). Though well-intended, this sudden impulse to promote the film industry proved unsuccessful, and in 1974 the Ley de Sobreprecio went out of effect. This was due in part to the creation of Focine in 1979, as noted by Higueta, as well as the fact that most films did not meet the law’s standards of length and quality:

...duración mínima de ochenta minutos para el largometraje y siete minutos para el corto; autorización del Comité de Clasificación para ser exhibida; los cortos no podían tener anuncios o menciones a personas, entidades o productos comprometidos con la financiación; los cortos sólo podrían ser exhibidos con tres películas distintas durante un lapso de solo cuatro semanas por película en un año. (Higueta 109)

Furthermore, Higueta remarks that the creation of Focine reformed the panorama of national cinema, making the law irrelevant. Another significant phase of film development in Colombia began with Focine,⁸ a government entity that sought to strengthen film development in the country. Focine promoted national film projections to movie theaters throughout Colombia, at a time when U.S. and Mexican productions dominated the film market in the country. Under the direction of the Colombian Ministry of Culture, Focine was able to finance film productions, generating revenue that would

⁸ Compañía de Fomento Cinematográfico (1978-1993) founded by Colombian ex-president Alfonso López Michelsen, who wanted to create an organization to encourage the development of a national film industry. This was a fundamental point for Colombian cinema, according to Patricia Restrepo.

then be passed onto filmmakers to fund their projects. Juan Guillermo de Ramírez describe Focine's contribution to national cinema in further detail:

En 1978 se crea la Compañía de Fomento Cinematográfico, Focine, entidad adscrita al Ministerio de Comunicaciones que ayudó a la realización de alrededor de 29 largometrajes en un lapso de diez años. Las historias se escribieron con un tono más experimental, con un lenguaje convencional y representativo. Las comedias nacionales utilizaron fórmulas del cine mexicano. Focine desempeñó el papel que generó sentido y disparó la producción del cine en Colombia, la generación de nuevos directores y un desarrollo técnico. (13)

Focine's system was rather simple; the organization would own the film, distribute, screen it, and preserve it indefinitely to obtain the profits, which would be disbursed to finance filmmakers. However, in 1993, Focine was terminated, which affected the national film production. In the absence of Focine, some small independent film companies tried to maintain a constant level of production during the first decades of the twentieth century, but the lack of economic support and strong foreign competition eventually disrupted the country's film initiatives. The lack of government funding also led to the disbanding of Caliwood and their collaborative filmmaking.

Prior to the closure of Focine, a large number of films subscribing to the tenets of the *pornomiseria* genre, garnered international acclaim. The term *pornomiseria* was coined by film Caliwood to refer to films that profited from poverty, transforming human beings into objects and instruments for discourse from their own condition. The desire for profits above all else led Colombian directors down a perilous path, where misery was

presented as an antithesis, a spectacle at which foreign audiences could marvel. One of the most notorious films from this perspective was *Gamín* (1978) by Ciro Durán. This documentary about street children emphasized child poverty and featured staged scenarios highlighting their dismal circumstances. In these scenes' kids are seen stealing car radios to survive, being abused, or suffering from drug addiction as they inhaled pungent ketones from shoe glue. While the director seeks to evoke sympathy from his audience this type of cinema generated a high level of controversy both in terms of the creation of a social conscience and its impact on international audiences. Likewise, directors sought to redefine the cruel daily life of Latin American peoples and reshape international perception. In Colombia, those who led the criticism against this form of cinematographic representation were the members of the self-styled Grupo de Cali (or Caliwood), and mainly the renowned filmmakers Carlos Mayolo and Luis Ospina. These two film directors produced the documentary *Agarrando pueblo* (1977), which was a satire of the pornomiseria films.

In addition, given the focus on the fourth period of Colombian cinema and in particular Caliwood's productions, it is pertinent to highlight the stylistic tendencies derived from Free Cinema that are present in documentaries released during this period.⁹ Free Cinema films were free because they were produced outside of the limits of national propaganda or the boundaries postulated by the film industry. They were low cost films, usually shot in 16mm black and white, with an emphasis on total freedom of expression.

⁹ Free Cinema was a documentary movement that emerged in the United Kingdom in the mid-1950s. The term refers to an absence of intentional propaganda or deliberate box office appeal.

Free Cinema could also be considered a precursor to Latin America's Third Cinema. An example of this type of cinema is *Oiga, vea* (1971), directed by Ospina and Mayolo, which aimed at portraying the city of Cali and the 1971 Pan American Games from the standpoint of those who were not represented in the official documentary subsidized by the state—the people who belonged to the lowest strata and lived at the margins of society. On the other hand, *Carne de tu carne* (1983) by Carlos Mayolo is cataloged as a more sociopolitical film. The historical context of the film is set during the military dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla and the explosion of August 7 1956, which devastated the center of the city of Cali. This film exposes the nationwide state of hostility in the 1950s instigated by Pinilla's authoritarian regime. There are only hypotheses surrounding the cause of this colossal explosion. However, it is known that several army trucks carrying approximately 54,000 kilos of dynamite deployed from the city of Buenaventura and headed to Bogotá. While parked overnight in the city of Cali they mysteriously detonated, according to César Augusto Ayala Diago (1). Later, Pinilla would attribute this tragedy to the opposition—the liberals—but neither party ever claimed responsibility for the explosion. This film employed the social documentary characteristically associated with Free Cinema, while incorporating some fictional characters that contributed to the complexity of the plot of *Carne de tu carne*. Many of the films produced by Caliwood align with the Free Cinema style, as well as the tenets of the Third Cinema Movement, which rose parallel to Free Cinema.

These trends continued through the 1980s and 1990s with the work of Víctor Gaviria, another renowned director whose films are known for dealing with social problems in his hometown of Medellín. He is well-known for creating scripts based on

first-hand accounts of real events by the people that experienced them. Gaviria also uses real life characters as actors in his films, known as natural actors. As Cynthia Tompkins underlines in her book, this is a technique typical of Italian neorealism (1943-1952), as well as the British documentary movement (1926-1946), which introduces an element of rawness into films (10-12, 104). Some of these films by Gaviria are: *Rodrigo D: No Future* (1990), *La vendedora de rosas* (1998), “*Sumas y restas*” (2005), “*La mujer del animal*” (2017) as well as the ongoing and unreleased project titled: “*La muchacha del ascensor,*” the true story of a murder that occurred in 1968 in Medellín. Gaviria is a prime example of a current Colombian director whose films represent the nation-centric topics of the country’s cinema. Thus, in order to carry out a holistic analysis of the cinematographic panorama of Colombia, it is important to reflect on the relationship of its cinematic development with the rest of Latin America.

BRAZILIAN CINEMA

Shortly after the invention of the cinématographe, cinema arrived in Brazil. The first film was projected in 1895, just half a year after the introduction of the device. As a result, filmmaking pioneers like the Italian-Brazilian Affonso Segreto¹⁰ quickly became caught up in the film fever of the time. According to Randall Johnson and Robert Stam in *Brazilian Cinema* (1995), the high level of involvement of different Brazilian cinematographers contributed greatly to the evolution of the country's cinema. From 1908

¹⁰ Affonso Segreto supposedly filmed in Baía de Guanabara in 1898 and introduced the Lumière film equipment to Brazil for the first time in the same year, according to Randall Johnson and Robert Stam in *Brazilian Cinema* 19.

to 1912 cinema began to evolve, both in the United States and in Brazil. During that time, Brazil experienced a *belle époque* of cinema, producing about 100 short films per year. This high rate of production allowed Brazil to hold a film exhibition in 1911, where the talent and ingenuity of Brazilian filmmakers was showcased. Several American businessmen and individuals from the North American film industry were present and witnessed the raw potential of the film industry in Brazil, as explained by Randall Johnson and Robert Stam (21). As a result, Brazilian cinema achieved prestige in the industry and came to be recognized as the mecca of foreign cinema. In fact, many comparisons were drawn between the first American and Brazilian films because they had many aspects in common. For example, *Exemplo regenerador* (1919) is an outstanding case of early Brazilian film because it exemplifies the high quality of Brazil's cinema (Johnson and Stam 22). It was directed by Brazil's Gilberto Rossi who like the American director D.W. Griffith, would include his trademark prominently in all of his films. Since dialogue was displayed on-screen during the silent film era, the director would place his trademark in the upper and/or lower area of every caption. This technique allowed their names and films to be instantly recognizable in the film industry worldwide. Contrary to the success of *Exemplo regenerador*, the film *Limite* (1930) by Mário Peixoto was not well received by the public in its day. However, over time it came to be considered a masterpiece of the silent film era, along with *Ganga bruta* (1933) by Humberto Mauro (Johnson and Stam 22, 25). In 1930 the film studio Cinédia was founded by Adhemar Gonzaga and it was devoted to the production of popular dramas and burlesque musical comedies, a genre that was negatively referred to as *chanchada* (Johnson and Stam 27). The well-loved *chanchadas* often portrayed satires of Hollywood

movies, an element that made them extremely popular among Brazilian spectators. During the decades of 1940s and 1950s, the production house of Atlântida and Vera Cruz continued the production of the chanchadas and the emulation of American cinema. This created a static period in terms of the production of “momentous” Brazilian cinema (Johnson and Stam 29). The few serious films of this period, such as *Carnaval no fogo* (1949) and *Garotas e samba* (1957), have often been dismissed for being perceived as overly commercial and Americanized. However, recent revisionism has sought to restore the legitimacy and cultural value of these pieces in the Brazilian film canon, as can be seen in *Cinema: A Trajectory within Underdevelopment* by Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes. Gomes contends that *chanchadas* were fundamentally maintaining the loyalty of the Brazilian audience, and kept Brazilian cinema as authentic as possible due to their “incapacity for copying” (Martin 263). During this time, the Brazilian telenovela, especially the *novela das sete*,¹¹ attained great popularity and contributed to keeping Brazilians tuned-in to their nationally produced entertainment as mentioned by Mário Kuperman in *Novelas nervosas* (2006) (192). This type of production was characterized by the burlesque spirit of the chanchada and, despite being ignored by the intellectual elites, was widely popular and attracted large television audiences.

As noted by Johnson and Stam, in response to the chanchada genre of 1950s, the cinematic movement known as Cinema Novo arose in the 1960s and created an impact that changed the direction of Brazilian cinema (32). This “New Cinema” was fueled by Italian neo-realism and by the French New Wave and it echoed other Latin American

¹¹ “Novela das sete” was a term given to the novelas produced by the Rede Globo channel and broadcast around seven p.m. from Monday to Saturday)

film manifestations of the same period. Cinema Novo was a modern and experimental cinema that took root all over Latin America, but particularly in Brazil. The Brazilian director Glauber Rocha, a very political filmmaker from Bahía, quickly became the most notable Cinema Novo director, often considered the ‘leader’ of the movement. In fact, it was Rocha who coined the concept of “La estética del hambre” which he presented in 1965 in a conference about Latin American cinema in Geneva where he explained: “Ahí reside la trágica originalidad del Cinema Novo delante del cine mundial: nuestra originalidad es nuestro hambre, y nuestra mayor miseria es que este hambre, siendo sentido, no es comprendido” (52). Glauber Rocha’s work has many symbolic elements, and strong political denunciation accompanied by remarkable aesthetic components, such as his impressive staging, an element that made his work appealing to intellectuals. Rocha often spoke of his films as a deviation from what he considered to be the vision of the colonizer, for whom poverty was an exotic and distant reality, as well as for the colonized who considered his third-world status shameful. For this reason, the director sought to portray the misery, hunger, and violence from this perspective, suggesting the need for a reform, or at the very least a revolutionary cinema. *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (1964) and *Terra em transe* (1967) are two of his most well-known films. In these films, the transition of Brazilian cinema becomes more evident, as it adopts a more political and social tone.

Another notable undertaking in Brazilian film was the *Retomada* movement, which took place between 1995-2005. Laura Rossi explains that the films produced during this period “embodied the esthetics of social realism and spoke to issues of social engagement and poverty. The most distinguishing characteristics were shooting on real

locations and incorporating Brazilian culture and the oral tradition of its people” (2). Some of the most noteworthy films from the *Retomada* period are: *Central do Brasil* (1998) and *Que horas ela volta* (2005), both of which present stories that are deeply rooted in the social issues of their time as well as inequality. Therefore, Cinema da Retomada shares certain qualities with the cinema of the 1970s in Colombia, especially Caliwood productions, as well as Third Cinema. The thread that links these films together is its concern with social realism and its denunciation of oppression through cultural production, such as film.

ARGENTINIAN CINEMA

As noted by many critics, it is indisputable that Argentina has also been a leader in the Latin American film industry, as Paul A. Schroeder states in his book *Latin American Cinema: A Comparative History* (2016). The Lumière cinématographe debuted at the Odéon Theater in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1896. According to Ana López, Argentina had a great advantage over other Latin American countries in terms of early cinema production: “Arguably, Buenos Aires was ahead of the pack. Looking at some of the most salient indicators typically used to assess modernization, Buenos Aires was the center of national industrial activity, a reliable electrical infrastructure that serviced business interests, and two telephone companies” (51). Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, benefited greatly from the industrial and technological advances of the century, which facilitated both the arrival and the production of cinema in the country. In 1897, Eugenio Py, using a Gaumont camera, filmed what is often incorrectly credited as the first Argentine film, *La bandera argentina*, which consisted of a flag of Argentina

waving in the wind in the Plaza de Mayo. However, the credit of producing the first actual film truly belongs to the German-Brazilian Federico Figner, who screened the first three Argentine films on November 24, 1896 (short films consisting of images of Buenos Aires). Despite this, Py continued to gain popularity and spent several years producing films for exhibition at Casa Lepage, a photography store in Buenos Aires. He is considered to have produced the first Argentine documentary, *Viaje del Doctor Campos Salles a Buenos Aires* (1900), which he followed with the production of *La revista de la Escuadra Argentina* (1901). As López points out in her study, by the time this film screened, the first projection rooms had opened, which were part of the production, distribution, and exhibition system for transnational films developed by Max Glücksmann in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile (53, 56).

At the same time, López notes that other Argentine artists continued experimenting with film equipment, producing short films and documentaries. Some examples include Eugenio A. Cardini, who filmed *Escenas callejeras* (1901), and Mario Gallo, whose *El fusilamiento de Dorrego* (1908) was the first Argentine film with a 'point of view' narrating the rise and fall of the first governor of Buenos Aires from a nationalist and romantic perspective (Schroeder Rodríguez 42). Others, like Ernesto Gunche, directed early documentaries. The decade of the 1910s was notable for many cinematic firsts in Argentina, a national success for Argentine cinema was *La nobleza gaucha* (1915), inspired by *El gaucho Martín Fierro* (1872), written by José Hernández. A year earlier, *Amalia* (1914) became the first nationally produced feature film, based on the novel by José Mármol. And in 1917, *El apóstol*, a satire based on president Hipólito Yrigoyen became the first animated feature film in world cinema.

Argentine film continued to advance through the 1920s-50s, such as José A. Ferreyra's: *Palomas rubias* (1920), *La Gaucha* (1921) and *Buenos Aires, ciudad de ensueño* (1922). In 1930 *Adiós Argentina* debuted the first soundtrack in Argentine film, *Muñequitas porteñas* (1931) by Ferreyra, and *Tango* (1931) by Luis Moglia Barth. In the 1940s, there were several successful films, like: *Historia de una noche* (1941), *La dama duende* (1945) by Luis Saslavsky, and *Malambo* (1945) by Lucas Demare and Hugo Fregonese. In 1948 and 1950, Leopoldo Torres Ríos produced *Pelota de trapo*, and *Crimen de Oribe*, respectively. Some notable films in the 1950s include: *Las aguas bajan turbias* (1952) by Hugo del Carril, and Mario Soffici's film adaptation of *Rosaura a las diez* (1958), a novel written by Marco Denevi.

During this time Argentine cinema faced a period of decay due to the national instability that stemmed from the collapse of the nationalist government in 1955, as underlined by Clara Kriger: "El cine estuvo signado por una paralización de la producción cinematográfica, la suspensión de los créditos y la persecución de los hombres y mujeres de la industria cinematográfica que padecían la inclusión en listas negras, especialmente los ligados al peronismo o la izquierda" (21). The proscription of the Peronist party led to social unrest, which was fueled by the constant interruption of the democratically elected governments by military coups. *La hora de los hornos* (directors 1968) is a noteworthy film-mosaic injected with a revolutionary *praxis* that was the driving force of the film. The directors of the film sought to decry the "perpetuated exploitation and repression of the proletarian masses of Argentina" as mentioned by James Roy MacBean (33). They sought to awaken Argentinas to a new sense of national identity, separate from their colonial roots. This is the film that launched Third Cinema

throughout Latin America, and made it possible for filmmakers to openly address the politics of the Third World.

In 1973, Perón returned from his 18-year exile in Spain and was elected president for his third and last term with Isabel, his wife, as vice president. Perón's death in 1974, was followed by a period of national chaos, in which Isabel's presidency was overthrown by another military coup as mentioned in *Life After Dictatorship* (2018) by James Loxton and Scott Mainwaring (133). The deposition of the Peronist party led to one of the bloodiest periods in Argentina history, the dictatorship of 1976 to 1983, known as the Dirty War. During this perilous period the Argentinian military junta or civic-military dictatorship of Argentina some 9,000 to 30,000 people disappeared. In *Little School: Tales of Disappearance and Survival* (1998) Alicia Partnoy states that the majority of them went “. . . to detention centers like the Little School. Among them were over 400 children who were either kidnapped with their parents . . . All but a few of the disappeared still remain unaccounted for” (16). The period of military dictatorship in Argentina proved to be the determining factor that hindered the development of the country's cinema. For this reason, it was not until after the return of democracy in 1983 that Argentine cinema produced a new profile. This was the start of the first wave of the New Argentine Cinema, a film movement that occurred in two waves. One of the filmmakers who stood out during this period was Fernando “Pino” Solanas with the well-known *La hora de los hornos* (1968). Other films sought to denounce the events that took place during the dictatorship, among them *La historia oficial* (1985) by director Luis Puenzo, which explores the issue of illegal adoptions that were possible through military ties, and was awarded an Oscar in 1986. The arrival of democracy allowed filmmakers to

produce a very raw and contestatory cinema that condemned the repression imposed by the Dirty War in a blatant manner. Some other films pertaining to this chapter of Argentine film are: Pino Solana's *Tangos* (1985), Hector Olivera's *La noche de los lápices* (1986), and *Sur* (1987), directed by Alejandro Doria. Likewise, Alberto Fischerman's *Los días de junio* (1985) and *Lo que vendrá* (1988) by Gustavo Mosquera, touched upon the topic of life in exile and the longing to return to Argentina.

The latest period of contemporary New Argentine Cinema came about in the 1990s, and was distinguished by its pro-independence stance and a change of focus surrounding the country's classic cinema. Some of the most notable films from this second wave include *Picado fino* (1994) by Esteban Sapir and *Pizza, birra, faso* (1998) by Bruno Stagnaro and Israel Adrián Caetano. Other films continued with the same tendencies, using realistic characters and nonprofessional actors, making them low-budget films. On the other hand, popular culture centered films took to the Argentine screens with series of classics like *Cien veces no debo* (1990), an irreverent take on the typical Argentine middle-class home by Alejandro Doria, *De mi barrio con amor* (1996) by José Santiso, which explores life in the south bohemian neighborhoods of Buenos Aires.

Given the lack of access to state funding, Argentina's contemporary cinema is inspired by Third Cinema films with a strong emphasis on independent film production and revolutionary cinema. Independent films are characterized by their tendency to reflect the director's style and addressing specific topics, and though they may be funded by state organizations, the funding is minimal in comparison to the films in the United

States, so they look like independent films. Italian Neorealism also had a fundamental influence in shaping New Argentine Cinema, as Tompkins explains:

Cubans Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa and Argentine Fernando Birri traveled to Rome to study filmmaking at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in the early 1950s. Returning to Argentina in the mid-1950s, Birri founded the Escuela Documental de Santa Fe. In so doing he drew from Grierson's definition of the documentary as a genre that offered a creative elaboration of reality based on actual events, nonprofessional actors and issues emerging from specific locations. (10)

This influence continues in the last New Argentine Cinema due to lack of funding. In the 2000s, this approach can be seen in films like: *Blessed by Fire* (2005), and *Chronicle of an Escape* (2006) directed by Israel Adrián Caetano.

Argentine and Colombian cinema produced in the late 1960s and most of the 1970s have a lot in common. These similarities can be attributed to Third Cinema and the theories being written around the region at the time, which linked the nation's cinematic productions through the ideas and concepts that solidified Third Cinema. In her article, Paraná Sendros, reexamines the topics of the challenges of Argentine life during the dictatorship, as a recurring theme in Argentinian film:

Sobre todo, interesó el ensayo político de Fernando 'Pino' Solanas y Octavio Getino en *La hora de los hornos* (1968). Ambos cineastas pertenecían al Grupo de Cine Liberación y realizaron un trabajo provocativo e innovador, que obtuvo varios premios de la crítica y del público en el exterior. Esta película no se proyectó en los cines argentinos,

se exhibía forzosamente, en funciones clandestinas como desafío al gobierno militar de turno. Mucho cine de agitación se desarrolló por esos años. (2)

La hora de los hornos reflects the director's urge to utilize cinema as a tool for revolutionary activism. The making of this film is directly tied to the Grupo Cine de Liberación and their manifesto *Hacia un tercer cine* (1969) that was written by Solanas and Getino. Many thematic, stylistic and ideologic parallels can be drawn between the Caliwood film *Carne de tu carne* (1983) and *La hora de los hornos*. These films share not only a similar historical and social background, but also are stylistically related by the guidelines established by the Third Cinema platform. Moreover, both films prove to be of the same revolutionary character typical of the Third Cinema, denouncing the injustices of an oppressive government. *Carne de tu carne* examines the dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla in Colombia, while *La hora de los hornos*, according to James Roy Macbean, is meant to represent the struggle for a revolutionary transformation of Argentine society” (31). The proliferation of these Latin American films through film festivals abroad, as well as publications through well-known channels like the ICAIC and its *Documental* (1961), and the journal *Cine Cubano*, were vital in the establishment of Third Cinema as a movement, also known as New Latin American, Imperfect, Revolutionary, and Novo (Paranaguá 50-53). The films of Caliwood and the Grupo Cine de Liberación both strive to denounce socio-political injustices within their nations, to stir its audience act in the name of liberty, and to subvert the system that represses them. The result is the creation of a socially conscious cinema with a unique perspective, a bold approach, and a strong cultural focus.

MEXICAN CINEMA

The history of Mexican cinema dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when enthusiasts of the new medium began documenting historical events—particularly the Mexican Revolution—and produced several films that have recently been rediscovered, according to Emilio García Riera (59). The origins of early filming are usually associated with director Salvador Toscano Barragán, as noted by Georges Sadoul, “En México, desde el año 1897 el ingeniero Salvador Toscano Barragán compra un aparato Lumière y se pone a filmar, durante veinte años, la historia y las revoluciones de su país, en 50,000 metros de apasionantes documentos, materia de un montaje editado en 1954, *Memorias de un mexicano*” (Sadoul 377). This is one of the first documentary films produced in Mexico that demonstrated a sociopolitical concern.

Furthermore, Carl J. Mora notes that by the year 1906, sixteen movie theaters had opened their doors to accommodate the popularity of cinema in Mexico City. Two years later, in 1908, political films appeared, which according to contemporary criticism, are often considered propagandistic (Mora 21). However, Mexican cinema, as well as the cinema of Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil, was affected by the censorship that took place under the dictatorial regime of Victoriano Huerta in 1913. This dark phase of Mexican history was followed by a period of political destabilization that truncated the cinematographic process of the country for many years. However, starting in the 1930s, Mexican cinema was revived, and a golden age emerged that lasted through the 1960s. During this period Mexico dominated the Latin American film industry. Carl J. Mora, in "Mexican Cinema: Decline, Renovation...", points out that during the 1930s the Mexican film industry shot films of considerable success, such as Arcady Boytler's *La mujer del*

puerto (1934), *Redes* (1936) by Fred Zinneman and Emilio Gómez Muriel, *Janitzio* (1934) by Carlos Navarro, *Dos monjes* (1934) by Juan Bustillo Oro, *Allá en el Rancho Grande* (1936), *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* (1936) and *La Zandunga* (1938) by Fernando de Fuentes (Mora “Mexican Cinema” 51). Thus, Mexico’s film trajectory is lined with many well-known and successful films.

During the 1940s, the full potential of the industry developed. The actors and directors became popular icons and even figures with political influence in various spheres of Mexican life. The industry received a boost as a result of Hollywood reorienting its efforts towards propaganda films during World War II. With the United States and the European countries focused on the war effort, this left a void in the film business, as explained by John Ramirez (210). Without competition from the US film industry, Mexico dominated the film market in Latin America during most of the 1940s. Argentina, however, did not bear so well as the US interrupted the success of its film industry by withholding access to film stock. This celebrated era of Mexican cinema also saw the emergence of Mario Moreno Cantinflas, known as the Mexican Charlie Chaplin, according to Carl J. Mora (5,6).

During the 1960s and 1970s, many horror and cult action films were produced and some of them featured the professional fighter El Santo, and Luis Buñuel premiered his latest Mexican films: *El ángel exterminador* (1962) y *Simón del desierto* (1965). The period that covers the decade of 1990s until the present has been considered as the era of New Mexican Cinema. During this time, Mexican filmmakers, among them Arturo Ripstein, Alfonso Arau, Alfonso Cuarón, and María Novaro produced high-quality films. Some of the most prominent films are: *Como agua para chocolate* (1992) by Alfonso

Arau, *Cronos* (1992) written and directed by Guillermo del Toro, *El callejón de los milagros* (1995) by Jorge Fons, *Sexo, pudor y lágrimas* (1999) by Antonio Serrano. At present some of the most recent films of Mexican cinema, such as: *Amores perros* (2000) by Alejandro González Iñárritu, and *El crimen del Padre Amaro* (2002) by Carlos Carrera, *Arráncame la vida* (2008) by Roberto Sneider mark a significant shift in Mexican cinematography, as it was one supported and sponsored by the Mexican government.

The New Mexican Cinema emerged officially with the cinematographers of the 1990s, like Del Toro, who sought to emphasize issues related to gender roles and identity. Likewise, a great urgency was placed on the recovery of Mexico's historical past and on the representation of the day's social problems. For this, the filmmakers shot their films around urban spaces, which represented the urban middle class and appealed to the formation of a global youth culture, as Michael T. Martin and Bruce Paddington explain (115). In their study, Martin and Paddington interview the filmmaker Francisco Athié, who is considered one of the most representative directors of the New Mexican Cinema. In it, Athié criticizes the highly commercial motivations of Hollywood. Moreover, the director points out that, despite the threat of globalization, the production of a national cinema is, in fact, still possible. For this, the Mexican directors will have to decide between the production of a cinema that promotes the cultural identity of the nation and the production of a commercial cinema (116). Hence, Mexican cinema is destined to face an uncertain period regarding the direction of its films, as mentioned in Athié's interview: "Despite the present success, the future of Mexican cinema is uncertain. The major theater chains are foreign-owned, and Mexican audiences largely prefer Hollywood fare"

(Martin and Paddington 115). Although this may be true, Mexican cinema is confronted with a gross cinematic bipolarity, since the country's film production is fragmented between two types of cinema: a highly commercial cinema influenced by Hollywood, and a nation-focused cinema. In comparison with Colombian cinema, Mexican cinema proves to be the more advanced, since it has the support of multinational entities that promote the production of a high-quality commercial cinema. However, both countries share the aspiration to produce a cinema of immense cultural depth that unravels the essence of the nation's socio-historical and cultural legacy. Thus, the focus on the construction of a social cinema serves to unite the nations of Latin America on a common art platform to open a discourse on the roots to social, cultural, and ideological issues that result in the fragmentation found within Latin American countries.

CUBAN CINEMA

The illustrious Cinematographe device arrived in Havana on January 24, 1897 with Gabriel Veyre, a Mexican Film Director after having traveled through several cities in Latin America. According to Alfonso J. García Osuna, the first documentary produced in the island was *Simulacro de incendio* (1897) a short silent film directed by Veyre, himself (García 10). According to García, this film was successful because the Havana moviegoers felt a sense of locality, as the movie was filmed in their city. After the Spanish-American War in 1898, the film industry became a steady business in Cuba with the theater Polyteama as the highest-earning film production locale (García 11). From 1904 to 1909, the film industry was affected by the sociopolitical changes that the nation was experiencing, such as the foundation of the Workers Party in 1904, which was fueled

in part by the Marxist ideologies of Carlos Baliño, the assassination of Enrique Villuendas, and subsequent reelection of Tomás Estrada Palma, the nation's first president (García 11). In 1906, Enrique Díaz Quesada filmed what is considered the oldest Cuban documentary, *El Parque de Palatino* (1906). The same year, Díaz also produced *La Habana en agosto de 1906* and *La salida de palacio de Don Tomás Estrada Palma*, the latter a short propagandistic documentary in favor of the president (García 11). According to García, in 1907 Cuba's population surpassed 2 million. In 1907 Díaz Quesada shot *Un duelo a orillas del Río Almendares*, which delved into the fast changing demographic of the island at the time. The first identified work of fiction *Un turista en la Habana* was also filmed in 1907 by Díaz Quesada, this film was "a classic of tourist promotion" (García 12). These films along with historic review films shot by Díaz Quesada like, *El capitán Mambí o Libertadores y guerrilleros* (1914), represent the early stages of Cuban cinema. The subsequent phase of Cuban film can be divided into two periods— pre and post revolution cinema. Prior to the Cuban Revolution, the film industry was relatively stable, with many producers, actors and musicians, such as Miguel Santos, Rita Montaner and Bola de nieve, who traveled to the island to produce music, as well as films. Noteworthy examples of pre-revolutionary film include: *La virgen de la Caridad* (1930), which starred Miguel Santos, and *Romance del palmar* (1938) by Ramón Peón, who at this point was producing the majority of his work in Mexico. According to García, *La virgen de la Caridad* is important "...not just because it is the only extant silent feature, but because it is the first that really delves into the life of rural Cuba and the psychology of its naïve inhabitants" (22). *Romance del palmar* was a significant film, because it was the most successful sound film produced on the island.

After the revolution enveloped the nation, the film production plummeted and many films disappeared due to their sensitive content. The post-revolutionary period of Cuban cinema began in 1959 with the formation of *Dirección de cultura del ejército rebelde* (the predecessor of ICAIC), a film department that sponsored documentaries like *Esta tierra nuestra* (1959) by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa. The film depicts how the unfair distribution of land pushed the rural men (campesinos) to support the revolution. Another García Espinosa documentary, *La vivienda* (1959) is important, because it discusses the profound disparities in housing conditions that existed among social classes in Havana. In 1960, the Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC), a government funded organization, was launched under the direction of Alfredo Guevara, to promote the Cuban film industry. The ICAIC established the film journal *Cine cubano* in 1960, and quickly became the backbone for Cuban cinema. According to Thompson and Bordwell, “By 1965, the ICAIC ran all production, distribution, and exhibition in the country” (499). In addition to this, the ICAIC established mobile projection units called *cine móviles*, “trucks that visited remote areas to hold screenings” (499). Alfredo Guevara continued at the helm of this institution up until 1980, and the ICAIC was key to the development of Cuban film, which became identified as radical and anti-imperialistic. In fact, the first decade of operation of the ICAIC is thought of as the Golden Age of Cuban cinema, as many outstanding films were produced within this period, like, *Lucía* (1969) by Humberto Solás and *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. According to Thompson and Bordwell, in the early 1960s the ICAIC focused on producing short documentaries, which offered a beneficial training opportunity for novice filmmakers and circulated government policies

(499). During this time the most outstanding film producer was Santiago Álvarez, notorious for his innovative use of found materials, which included clips from other films, cartoons, and even photographs, making his style a collage of sorts. Álvarez directed many films during this decade such as, *Now!* (1965), *Hanoi, martes 13* (1967), and *79 primaveras* (1969). This brings Cuban cinema into a new phase marked by political unrest. However, despite Cuba's association with Russia, Cuban cinema questioned the nature of revolutionary art and rejected Moscow's socialist realism, as highlighted by Thompson and Bordwell (499). Instead, due to García Espinosa and Gutiérrez Alea's formation in Italy, Cuban cinema adopted the Italian episodic structure introduced by Roberto Rosellini's *Paisan* (1946), as seen in Gutiérrez Alea's *Historias de la revolución* (1960). In 1961, the neorealist script writer Cesare Zavattini contributed to the script for *El joven rebelde* (1961) by García Espinosa (Thompson and Bordwell 499). Cuba's revolutionary cinema emerged from 1966-1967, during which time Castro sought to strengthen its economy by calling on the Cuban people to make immense sacrifices. During this time, filmmakers began looking outside the neorealist model and began looking for "strategies of cinematic modernism [...]. They also drew on characteristic art-cinema techniques: abrupt flashbacks, hand-held camera work, elliptical editing, and the mixing of staged footage, documentary, and animation into a cinematic collage" (Thompson and Bordwell 500). The revolutionary era of Cuban cinema led to many other innovations that shifted style and genres. This meant that Cuban filmmakers were not just mimicking European models of cinema, but like Brazil and its Cinema Novo, Cuba was experimenting with new and unique approaches that allowed them to politicize and demystify filmmaking. Because of this, film auteurs turned to politicized modernist

techniques. Expert directors, such as Alfredo Guevara urged other Cuban film producers to collaborate on this new wave of Cuban cinema, urging them “to reveal all the tricks, all the resources of language; to dismantle all the mechanisms of cinematic hypnosis” (Burton 18). The film genres constructed during this period elevated Cuban cinema and differentiated it from European and Brazilian experimental film. *La primera carga al machete* (1969) by Manuel Octavio Gómez, was one of the films that came out of this experimental phase. This film recreated the 1869 revolt, where according to Thompson and Bordwell, the machete symbolized the weapon of the oppressed sugarcane cutters (500). The success of this film was significant because it conveyed the demand for an “imperfect cinema” as expressed by García Espinosa in 1969. Following this vein, *La primera carga* was done in the manner of a news report with persuasive to-camera¹² interviews, direct sound, hand-held shooting and high-contrast film shoot led to the creation of a film that was raw and improvised in style, yet realistic and relatable to its audience.

In the 1970s, Cuban filmmakers began experimenting with Soviet techniques from the 1920s, which consisted in modifying modernist techniques to propagandistic cinema as seen in films like, *Los días del agua* (1971) by Manuel Octavio Gómez (Thompson and Bordwell 503). From 1972 to 1975 Cuba experienced a cut in film production due to problems with the national economy and later discordant debates founded on disloyalty made film producers back away from experimental and politicized films to adopt a more popular and profitable route to filmmaking, which led to the release

¹² Filming style for documentary interviews, refers to direct to camera interviews, where the subject being interviewed looks and speaks straight into the lens of the camera.

of films like Sergio Giral's *El otro Francisco* (1974) and *De cierta manera* (1974) by Sara Gómez. Through 1975, Cuban film was internationally acclaimed. In fact, Thompson and Bordwell claim that "while the Cinema Novo films succeeded chiefly with elite viewers, the Cubans demonstrated that Third World cinema could blend modernist conventions with narrative forms to which mass audiences have become accustomed" (503). The highly experimental period of the imperfect cinema was followed by the Post-Cold war era, in which the island's film industry suffered greatly. During this time cost of production was the main concern due to the nation's economic crisis, *Madagascar* (1995) directed by Fernando Pérez, "was made against all odds, during a time when Cuba's state sponsored film institute was experiencing shortages of virgin film stock, fuel to transport crews and equipment, food to provide a meal to those working long days, and the hard currency necessary to edit, produce and distribute films" according to Ann Marie Stock (69). This film is a clear model of the low-budget films produced during this period, which employed the local scenery of cities such as Havana to set the plot of the films and utilized local residents as actors and extras to keep production costs low. This model of cinema, though rugged in production, has established an authentic and nation-focused cinema for Cuba, which will undoubtedly evolve over time with increased resources.

NATIONAL CINEMA, IDENTITY AND COLOMBIAN CINEMA

The concept of identity has been explored by many academics, like Doris Sommer in *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1993), and later by Benedict Anderson, who in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2006) attempts to identify the origin of the problem of

national identity. In both cases, it is concluded that the conception of national identity is a continuous debate, since Latin America, for the most part, continues to face difficulties recognizing its own heterogeneity. Therefore, the development of its cinema faces the arduous task of presenting itself as a cultural product that represents and defines nations that still lack social homogeneity. However, and as Anderson proposes in his book, the issue of national identity is a debate in progress, which requires a more solid structure insofar as society continues to seek a way to identify and define its uniqueness. For this reason, the diverse means of expression, including cinematography, become essential platforms for the reconciliation, construction, and production of any field of cultural content.

The cinema of the countries mentioned in this introductory chapter has evolved to a great extent. Their respective film industries have adapted to the different historical and political climates that impacted the development of the industry. In addition, Latin American cinema has been influenced by the various different film movements that modified its style, as well as its thematic content. In Brazil, the Cinema Novo movement changed the landscape of cinema with its emphasis on the social equality and intellectualist movements that obtained distinction in the country between 1960-1972. Likewise, it is important to note that Cinema Novo emerged in response to the great contrast of social classes and racial malaise that existed in Brazil at the time, which is corroborated by Umberto Valverde:

El Cinema Novo brasileño, toma la resolución de elevar el cine de su país al rango de fuerza cultural, lo que no era ni había sido jamás. En contra de las producciones de Veracruz y las comedias de costumbres o musicales,

se levanta este movimiento de jóvenes . . . de acuerdo con las condiciones precarias de la producción cinematográfica y permitiendo un cine ligado a la problemática social . . . no se fundamenta en un programa político y cada realizador lleva a cabo su filme de acuerdo a sus convicciones. De todas maneras, demostró como ningún otro, su capacidad para adentrarse en su realidad y expresarla significativamente (12-13).

The films produced under the ideology of Cinema Novo opposed traditional Brazilian cinema, which consisted mainly of musicals, comedies, and epics in Hollywood's style. Glauber Rocha was widely considered to be the most influential filmmaker of the movement. Nowadays, the movement is often divided into three sequential phases that differ in tone, style and content. The first phase extends from 1960 to 1964, and represents the original motivations of the movement, promoting equality and intellectualism. During the second phase, from 1964 to 1968, the cinema became a political weapon due to the military takeover of Humberto de Alencar Castelo (Johnson and Stam 73). The third phase of the movement took place between 1968 and 1972.

The cinematographic movements of Mexico differ from those of South America, most notably in their differing timelines. Mexico led the film industry in its golden age (1930-1960) while the cinema of South America was still in its early stages. Also, because of its proximity to the United States, Mexican cinema has been highly influenced by Hollywood. However, in the 1990s, the movement of the New Mexican Cinema deviated from these mainstream trends. This cinematographic current was led by directors like Francisco Athié, who contributed an urban perspective, as well as a more socialist approach to the country's cinema. However, as previously noted, the current

state of cinema in Mexico is divided between a fairly commercialized product and one that seeks to convey the past and present social reality of the country.

Meanwhile, the cinema of Caliwood was fuelled, in part, by the current Argentine Third Film movement, as well as the Free Cinema of Europe. Despite not having a movement of its own, Caliwood's cinema became recognized in Colombia as a pioneering cinema, concerned with the representation of the social topics that preoccupied Colombian society at the time—among them the infamous and clandestine drug industry, social unrest and violence, and political agitation. Lastly, it is important to reiterate that the intent of this cinematographic panorama is to place Colombian cinema in context and to denote the parallel evolution of cinema across Latin American as a product of great cultural importance. On the one hand, examining the sociohistorical context of these movements reveals similarities throughout all of Latin America, such as the tension of the political environment in the countries in question during the twentieth century. On the other hand, the various cinematographic movements demonstrate the unique social concerns within the respective Latin American countries at the time. These issues are represented through the creation of a series of new film movements that attempted to restructure the focus of their respective national film industries. The movements that emerged in the decades between 1960-1990 sought to motivate a more socially conscious cinema that rejected the modalities of commercialized cinema. This progressive socialist cinema was based on a socially conscious philosophy and viewed its role as to intervene on behalf of the people it represents, as a form of cultural liberation. The cinematographic material that was produced during this period proved that cinema has the ability to renew itself. Likewise, the works of this time serve as a barometer of

social consciousness, insofar as they seek to represent the true state of the various Latin American cultures.

CONCLUSION: LATIN AMERICAN FILM

In closing, it can be seen that Caliwood was as important to Colombia as Cinema Novo was to Brazil, or the New Argentine Cinema was to Argentina, though it never reached the magnitude of either movement on its own. Nevertheless, Caliwood played a crucial role in the development of a national cinema for Colombia. It introduced the nation to a socially conscious cinema that put on full display the ideological dichotomies that divided the country. It also exposed the national audience to the reality of the social climate through satirizing the pornomiseria genre which had been presenting a skewed and self-serving view of Colombia to the rest of the world. The social documentary *Agarrando pueblo* (1977), directed by Luis Ospina, in particular serves as a biting critique of the profit driven pornomiseria films. Similarly, *Oiga, vea* (1971) by Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo critiqued *Cali, ciudad de América* (1971), the national propaganda film put forth by the national government to promote the Pan American games in Colombia. Caliwood's documentary *Oiga Vea!* demonstrates how the young pioneers of Caliwood sought to capture life from the viewpoint of those who could not speak up for themselves, among them afro-Colombians, who were often ignored and treated as second-class citizens, as well as the impoverished people of Cali who lived in makeshift homes in shanty communities. Caliwood, in essence, became a group of filmmakers who strove to portray reality in its rawest state, so as to bring awareness to its audience about the unacceptable social reality of Cali.

CHAPTER 2

CALI, CALIWOOD'S MUSE: A LOOK INTO CALIWOOD'S EARLY DOCUMENTARY

The transgressive social visions of *Bacurau* and *Parasite* may have helped prepare us for the chaos and iniquity of the COVID-19 era, but long before those films of class warfare, there was Luis Ospina. In Latin America, the revolution had a blueprint in the brazen works of the late Colombian director, who made over 30 films energized with the snap of genre and the spirit of revolt. (1)
-Ela Bittencourt, "Blood on Their Hands: Luis Ospina"

This chapter will explore two documentaries produced by Caliwood: *Oiga vea!* (1971) directed by Carlos Mayolo and Luis Ospina, as well as *Cali de Película* (1973) by Luis Ospina. These documentaries are significant because they were among the first produced by members of the group, thus laying the foundation for all Caliwood productions, which were notably political in content. These short films are key to understanding the evolution in filming style and cinematic interests of Caliwood due to their socio-political content. Also, these two documentaries are notable for the manner in which Caliwood contrasts social classes and catechesis the national government, social structures, and the local government of Cali—thus the title of this chapter. Cali is a key element to Caliwood, because the city was not only the place where the group was founded but it also became a source of inspiration and the backdrop to their films. As Bittencourt mentions in her article and interview with Ospina, he thought of himself as a lone pioneer, a man living in a paradox of wanting to belong to a movement, while

simultaneously remaining free from the creative limitations that define any and all movements:

A perennial outsider, he was reluctant to enshrine himself as a persona or a movement. Which seems ironic, of course, because when he co-wrote the 1978 “Poverty-Porn Manifesto” with Mayolo, he put into words the anger that to this day Latin American filmmakers express at seeing their countries’ misery exploited, and exported abroad. His ethical concern with representation on screen, not only in documentary but cinema as a whole, fuels the preoccupations of directors like Mendonça and Dornelles. And the idea that took hold of Caliwood back in the 1970s—that provincial stories are, in fact, universal, and each province is its own world—resonates strongly today. (2)

Many topics are explored through these films, among them customs, faith, corruption, sexuality, poverty, exploitation and social class stratification in Colombian society. Though short in duration, *Oiga Vea!* and *Cali de película* offer critique, symbolism and valuable ethnographic footage of Cali where images and sounds play a key role. These factors are fundamental in describing Caliwood and their approach towards social film as is evident through their critique of the sensationalist profit-making pornomiseria films. In an interview with fellow director Jorge Navas, Ospina stated Caliwood’s scrutiny of the cinema of misery, which they thought of as opportunistic. Ospina said: “Así como en el cine porno el sexo se convierte en mercancía, en este tipo

de cine¹³ se estaba volviendo la miseria una mercancía, entonces por eso le pusimos pornomiseria” (Ospina 8:10-8-23). As such, Caliwood decided to defy the norm and decry a cinema that would convert people’s suffering into mere entertainment for profit, rather than “un cine de denuncia,” which was originally one of the main motives for this type of production. Cali was also concerned with urban local matters, issues that affected the people of Cali particularly, but were also relatable, in a broader sense, to the rest of Colombia and Latin America. However, in the beginning their films aimed specifically towards a “caleño¹⁴” audience, as can be observed in *Oiga vea!* and *Cali de película*. Consequently. In order to better represent its societal and cultural context, Caliwood employed the use of significant leitmotifs arising from metaphors and symbols uniquely related to Cali. The significance of these motifs will be explored in depth further along in this chapter.

As Felipe Gómez recalls, Third Cinema came at a critical period for Latin America when “the times were inflamed by violent social confrontations, the multiplication of regional foci of conflict, and a worldwide movement toward decolonization spearheaded by some of the so-called ‘Third-world countries’” (1). This led filmmakers to unite in a movement of their own, a new “continental project” as noted by Zuzana Pick. This project was a composite of a common vision by filmmakers from all corners of Latin America, a call to denounce a society and governments through the camera lens, to be a voice for the oppressed and to expose all these issues to the world.

¹³ Here Ospina is referring to “Cine de misera” or Pornomisería as Caliwood christened it.

¹⁴ People from the city of Cali (Cali’s locals) are known as Caleños.

This call originated from Solana and Getino's manifesto, "Toward a Third Cinema," which urged all producers to use their films as a rhetorical device to inform and empower their respective audiences towards a common objective, as Gómez reiterated, "... it stated an explicit intention to use the camera as a rifle and the projector as a gun, weapons for a film-guerrilla capable of participating in the global process of decolonization and liberation"¹⁵ (1). The films produced within the scope of the Third Cinema movement represent a declaration for decolonization, as well as a deep desire to construct idiosyncratic national cinemas, to redefine film according to Latin America's film industries, so as to not be influenced by foreign film trends, a most notable being Hollywood with its worldwide influence. Thus, revolutionary filmmaking implied the construction of solid 'national' film industries to capture national realities, or as Tomás Gutiérrez Alea said, a "socially productive cinema" which he argues, is "genuinely and integrally revolutionary, active, stimulating, mobilizing, and—consequently—popular" (110). This form of popular cinema would ideally spread through Latin America and mobilize its citizens to social awareness and to break away from the remnants of colonization and other forms of social oppression. Gutiérrez Alea argues that the objective of social cinema is "... elevating the viewers' revolutionary consciousness and to arming them for the ideological struggle which they have to wage against all kinds of reactionary tendencies" (111). Gutiérrez Alea adds, that was much as cinema should be informative, it should also contribute to the viewer's "enjoyment of life" (110). So as a

¹⁵ Felipe Gómez is paraphrasing from "Toward a Third Cinema" by Solanas and Getino, which states: "In this long war, with the camera as our rifle, we do in fact move into a guerrilla activity" (49).

form of entertainment, social cinema has to strike a balance in its content in order to be enjoyable, but also realistic and profound. As Gutiérrez Alea proposes, this would be a cinema that provides diversion, but also equips the viewer with an awareness of the social issues, and suggestions regarding how to react accordingly: “We also wonder what that new awareness and action consists of that should be generated in spectators once they have stopped being spectators, that is, when viewers leave the movie theater and encounter once again that other reality, their social and individual life, their day-to-day life” (Gutiérrez Alea 110). Thus, social cinema poses an interesting challenge for the Latin American film industry, and that is to create a cinema not meant to be a form of escapism, but rather one of deliberation. Gutiérrez Alea also makes an important distinction between consumerist cinema and social cinema, where the first is a symbol of “commodity”, and the latter seeks to answer questions related to our world, society and culture. Socially-minded cinema seems to go hand-in-hand with documentary, as documentaries are a primary vehicle for elevating complex issues to the national agenda in engaging and thought-provoking means.

As noted by Michael Chanan the first expressions of documentary in Latin America ensued around 1955 in Peru by director Manuel Chambi (770). Initial attempts at documentary film were seen as a form of marginal cinema, however their production was significant because they revealed a newfound desire by filmmakers to explore their own culture as a form of self-expression, sometimes through a nationalist and social perspective. In Latin America, documentaries became a platform for discovery and experimentation that surveyed topics of national and even local identity. Local and national identity was one of the most poignant themes portrayed in Caliwood

documentaries as seen through their focus on social issues both in Cali and throughout Colombia.

In the 1970s, documentary film experiments using the anthropological method were led by prominent directors like Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva. An example of this style of film is *Chircales* (1972), as Chanan indicates (773). However, in spite of many efforts Colombian cinema has not been able to solidify a stable film industry, and this issue has affected documentary production as well. As Colombian cinema evolved during the 1970s, a large number of *pornomiseria* films were produced in the country and as mentioned previously *Gamín* (1978) by Ciro Durán is representative of this documentary trend. Caliwood strongly advocated against this type of film, and its byproduct was *Agarrando Pueblo* (1977) or in English: *The Vampires of Poverty*. This film denounced the practice of filming the misery of others for fame and profit, while also highlighting the ethical codes that are to be observed when filming from the perspective of the Other.

Documentary is a complex cinematic genre due to its ability to approach wide-ranging topics through diverse perspectives and objectives. Typically, a documentary is a non-fictional motion picture, generally produced with a specific point of view. Originally short in duration and referred to as actuality films, documentaries were meant to be informative. Indeed, the term “documentary” was coined by filmmaker John Grierson in 1926 to refer to non-fiction films. Later, in *Representing Reality*, Bill Nichols described these types of films in the following manner:

Documentaries are fictions with plots, characters, situations, and events like any other. They offer introductory lacks, challenges, or dilemmas;

they build heightened tensions and dramatically rising conflicts, and they terminate with resolution and closure. They do all this with reference to a ‘reality’ that is a construct, the product of signifying systems, like the documentary film itself. Like the constructed realities of fiction, this reality too, must be scrutinized and debated . . . (107)

Nichols’s notion of the referential reality created in documentaries is an important component. Documentary films employ a variety of signifying systems, like photography, to represent a reality and in doing so they respond to the basic human interest of attempting to recreate reality. A documentary filmed in a realistic style will purport to represent reality as a ‘portrait’ of the world, while still subject to a point-of-view that is marked by its time, space and environment. As noted by Daniel Eagan, other critics like Pare Lorentz have described documentary as “a factual film which is dramatic” referring to the affective element employed in documentary film in order to make it appealing to its audience; but this notion of documentary excludes travelogues, newsreels and educational films (242). Revisiting André Bazin’s film theory, Robert Cardullo concluded that it is critical to define the basis upon which cinema denotes reality. In his revision of Bazin’s theory, Cardullo notes that Bazin knew that the sense of perceived reality represented in a film is a product of an artifice, but Bazin believed that through its representation of reality cinema presented the viewer with a solid truth. Cardullo elaborates on this concept: “In a word cinema functions in such a way that we can believe (to some extent) that what we see on-screen is true. But it does not mean that cinema can reproduce truth. On the contrary, the innate realism cannot be separated from its potential to create believable illusions” (Cardullo 36). Thus, the “imagined reality”

portrayed in film is a depiction of reality, thus an analogy of a solid truth; or as Bazin put it: “a hallucination that is also a fact” (16). The question remains, why is documentary so critical for Latin American cinema? Solanas and Getino explain why by expanding on the basic function of cinema:

The cinema known as documentary, with all the vastness that the concept has today, from educational films to the reconstruction of a fact or a historical event, is perhaps the main basis of revolutionary filmmaking. Every image that documents, bears witness to, refutes or deepens the truth of a situation is something more than a film image of purely artistic fact; it becomes something which the System finds indigestible. (46)

In “Rediscovering Documentary” Chanan elaborates on Solanas and Getino’s concept of documentary:

For more than twenty-five years a new cinema has been developing in Latin America, carving out spaces for itself even under the most inimical circumstances, a cinema devoted to the denunciation of misery and the celebration of protest . . . In this burgeoning movement that would become known as New Latin American Cinema, documentary held a central position. (201)

In this article, Chanan argues that the lack of context in “the cultural political field” that is given to Latin American film leads to a deep misinterpretation of its content, mainly due to the disassociation of the narratives and discourses behind the films, especially when seen from an international perspective that would not take into consideration elements like: “the divide of cultural imperialism, the radically different

ways in which oppositional cinema positions both the viewer and the filmmaker” (216). More broadly, Chanan deconstructs New Latin American Cinema, focusing on the fragmental genre of documentary, which is a Latin American way to redefine its culture, the people and the political issues that shape the respective countries. However, documentary is not just useful in the redefinition of cultural and national identity, as it also distinguishes Latin American film’s resistance to development of more authentic and relevant film forms. In yet another article titled: “Rediscovering Documentary” Chanan expands on the importance of documentary for Latin America: “A film thus breaks through the *culture of silence*—Freire’s concept for the condition of ignorance, political powerlessness, lack of means of expression, backwardness, misery—in short, dehumanization” (209). In its brief 28-minutes, *Oiga vea!* reflects many of the issues expressed in Freire’s concept, and Solana and Getino’s Third Cinema manifesto, as it deals with the topics of poverty, oppression, class and racial inequalities, topics that are widely discussed in other Latin American Film manifestos. As seen below in Figure 2.1, the subject sitting on a makeshift chair is facing a child who lacks footwear, and both of them are surrounded by chickens meandering around. The exposed brick in the background is a common sight in Colombia’s underserved neighborhoods (subject A).



Figure 2.1 Caliwood interviews subject A in a poor neighborhood of Cali

The image above belongs to an interview in *Oiga vea!* The subject—whom we will refer to as subject A, because his name is unknown—is asked the following:

Interviewer (presumably Ospina): ¿Usted practica algún deporte?

Subject: Si, la natación.

Interviewer: ¿Dónde lo practica?

Subject: En los ríos, porque aquí no hay sino las piscinas que son para los que puedan pagar. Inclusive las piscinas oficiales del gobierno, como son las de los gimnasios. Allá es pal'rico, pal'que pueda pagar y pagar el transporte y todo eso, pero para el pueblo no hay piscinas públicas. (21:34)

The interview demonstrates the disparity between social classes in Cali at the time of the VI Pan American Games, which took place in 1971. Appalled by the changes mandated by the government to transform Cali into a “modern” Latin American city, the group decided to not only record the process, but to also document it from the perspective of those who did not benefit from these government directed initiatives, mainly the people from underprivileged communities seen in the documentary. This outcast

demographic, as stated in the above interview, could not afford to use the city's public pools, because they were often too far and conveniently located in well-to-do neighborhoods. The people who lived at the margins of Cali's society could not afford to attend the VI Pan American games, rather they were forced to observe the event from the periphery. Throughout the documentary, the directors attempt to unmask the corruption and insincerity of the Misael Pastrana Borrero¹⁶ administration and its misrepresentation of Cali. In *Oiga vea!* Caliwood accomplished its objective to display the experience of the Pan American Games from the perspective of the poor, for whom admission fees were far above their reach. However, Caliwood's most significant contribution was giving those citizens a voice to break through what Chanan's defines as the "culture of silence".



Figure 2.2 The face of a disappointed onlooker who could not get a good view

¹⁶ Misael Pastrana Borrero was the president of Colombia at the time of the Pan American Games. Despite having a progressive presidency and many international recognitions for his environmental initiatives; his presidency was strongly criticized over the perceived mishandling of resources for the Pan American Games.



Figure 2.3 An onlooker's hand grasping a metal fence

Ospina and Mayolo present a combined variety of scenes that display the stark contrast between the social classes, going from shanty areas to beautiful neighborhoods with paved streets and large homes. Figures 2.2 and 2.3, represent the separation of social classes mentioned previously by presenting the viewer a glimpse of what it was like to be present at the Pan American Games, yet not be able to enter the arenas. Instead the characters shown in these images are seen gripping the metal barrier that prevents them from entering the event and to sit next to the elite who could afford to pay for admission; presenting irrefutable evidence of social disjunction. In *Oiga vea!* reveals that Cali is more than the affluent city portrayed in the government publicity, it incorporates slums and the neglected communities that were avoided in the official propaganda. *Cali, ciudad de América* (1971)¹⁷ directed by Diego León Giraldo is an example of a government-commissioned documentary that rendered an idealistic view of Cali by presenting the city as a wealthy, developed and modern metropolis. Through the combination of the participatory and interview documentary genres, Ospina and Mayolo succeed in capturing meaningful footage from their direct interactions with the subjects in *Oiga vea!*

¹⁷ Not much is known about the feature length documentary: *Cali, ciudad de América*, only the last 10 minutes of this documentary remain.

that reveals the forgotten marginal communities of Cali, the poverty that envelops these areas, and the first-hand testimony of various subjects.

Critics like Bill Nichols and Julianne Burton have written extensively on the topic of mixed modes in documentary films. In fact, Burton identified four specific modes commonly used in documentaries: expository, observational, interactive and reflexive. According to Burton, the interactive mode is characterized by the “voice of the filmmaker in relation to social factors, images of testimony and demonstration, general predominance of monologues and dialogues with varied use of interviews in direct or indirect address” (4). The interaction mode is central to *Oiga vea!* as it is applied in the repeated contact of the filmmaker with the subjects, which also entails the use of the observational mode. The use of monologues is another feature of the interactive mode, in *Oiga, Vea!* The voiceover provides socio-historical context. The monologue’s orator, President Pastrana Borrero, speaks of inclusion and a brotherhood that does not take social status, money or race into account—a statement that reflects an air of hypocrisy given the contrasting images on the screen

Detrás de estas puertas quedan los distanciamientos, los antagonismos, las discrepancias, los egoísmos. Aquí solo hay campo y espacio para la generosidad. Es el deporte el gran escenario popular moderno en el que se reconoce afortunadamente sin repliegues a cada ser como un hermano; igual en dignidad y cual fuera de su raza, su país, su lengua, sus creencias. Es por antonomasia una actividad inspirada en la tolerancia, la bondad y la comprensión . . . (22:53-23:40)

The words uttered by the host are contrasted with images of those excluded from the event. Some are seen grasping the outside of the fence and trying to get a look inside (Figure 2.3) and they are heard whistling and heckling in protest at their inability to be inside the arena. The film also shows a man dressed in traditional Colombian clothing with a pack strapped to his back standing outside the event, the lens lowers and shows the man's footwear, he is wearing *alpargatas*¹⁸ among a sea of leather shoes. The directors not only unmask the falseness behind the hosts opening remarks, but they also prove with compelling images that the Cali that Colombia is trying to present to the world is not a modern city, but a place of underdevelopment, where social divisiveness and injustice are the norm. The film goes further into social inequality as the filmmakers walk through the neighborhoods of Cali's less fortunate, asking questions and engaging with their subjects to extract their narrative, their experience and perspectives on the event. The following interview with a male (Subject B) from an impoverished community reveals intimate details of his experience:

No pues, que ojalá pues, pudieran de algún u otro medio mostrar a las delegaciones extranjeras no la mentira que le muestran aquí en Cali, porque aquí tienen gente especializada en sacarlos a ver únicamente sitios que ya tienen bellos. Deberían de sacarlos por acá a ver verdaderamente Colombia. Cali no estaba preparada para Juegos Panamericanos (*Oiga vea!* 11:54-12:14)

¹⁸ Traditional footwear made out of fabric and woven straw and typically worn by farmers. This type of footwear is common throughout Latin America, as it came from Spain.

As this man shares his thoughts on the insincerity perpetuated by the Colombian state, images of his impoverished neighborhood: El Guabal, appear on the screen displaying mothers humbly dressed, barefoot children, unpaved streets, and homes made out of scraps of bamboo and other materials. In his interview, Subject B is hopeful that this documentary will reach Pan American authorities to show them what it is like for an average Colombian, who like his father, had been an employee of the government for many years, yet he was not able to afford a better standard of living.



Figure 2.4 Ospina Interviewing subject B



Figure 2.5 Women observing their children play

However, poverty wasn't the only issue in these underserved communities. Due to the lack of general infrastructure these neighborhoods were often devastated by floods as another man explains (Subject C) showing photos from previous floods. This feature

demonstrates yet another characteristic of Burton's interactive documentary mode, as the photographs serve as a means of "testimony and demonstration" (4). While the film does not explain how these communities came to be there, it does shed light on the site at which various canals convene. When there are heavy rains the canals become distended with water that combined with canal blockages causes excess runoffs onto the nearby neighborhoods. The canals also presented a health and safety hazard for the residents, as some of these waterways ran with contaminated water, according to another man's interview (Subject D). Other areas had ominous labels, like the "canal de la muerte" or death canal, because many children had lost their lives while trying to bathe in it.



Figure 2.6 Barefoot Subject D talking to Ospina

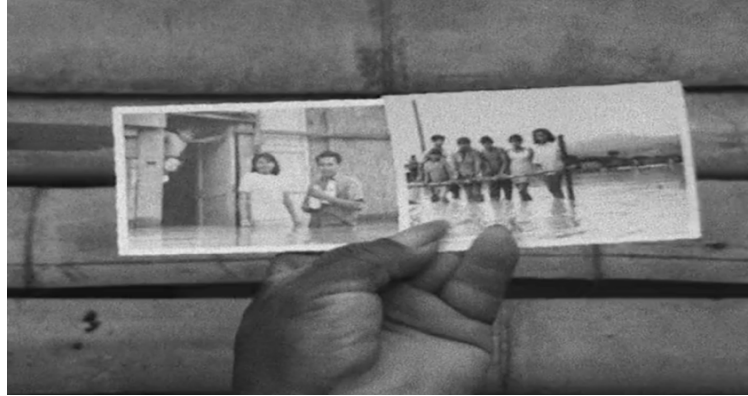


Figure 2.7 Subject C showing photos from previous flooding in the neighborhood

Yet despite all this poverty Cali's government urged people to pay their taxes as seen in Figure 2.8, which states that progress in the city will continue after the Pan American Games, a compromise that would continue to exclude these forgotten and deprived communities. According to Felipe Gómez, *Oiga vea!* was filmed on a B/W 16mm camera that Mayolo borrowed from the agency where he was employed at the time (6). As mentioned, the directors were driven by a sense of urgency to document the changes brought about by the Pan American Games. The transformations that the city was seeing in 1971 heightened the ongoing urban and political violence, as well as racial, and ethnic inequality and discrimination. Figure 2.8 appears at the end of the film and it, once again, creates a sense of intense irony as the government urges its citizens to contribute towards a cause through the payment of their taxes, a call for patriotism. Nevertheless, throughout the film the directors have repeatedly demonstrated that the ruling class only takes into consideration their own, which creates a cycle of corruption that impedes social progress and equality. This also affects the overall sense of national identity—so widely discussed in Third Cinema and found to be lacking—often defined as a “cohesive whole.” However, a nation cannot be “whole” without equality, thus there

can be no patriotism without national identity. There is a high degree of dependability in these concepts, much like the dependable relationship between the citizens of a nation and those who govern them.



Figure 2.8 A Billboard urging Cali's citizens to pay their taxes



Figure 2.9 Children tell Ospina about police violence

In Figure 2.9 we can see destitute children hanging out of the Pan American train windows. This train was provided by *Ferrocarriles Nacionales*, in honor of the Pan American games in an effort to provide free transportation to underprivileged citizens, as mentioned in the documentary, and also noted by Michele Faguet's article,

The neighbourhood of El Guabal was chosen because it was the starting point of the Pan American Train Line, which was set up as a temporary form of public transportation connecting the poor neighbourhoods of Cali to the city centre so that residents of these areas could travel for free (in crowded, seat-less carriages) to the games—only to be excluded from them upon arrival. This meant that the journey itself became a popular pastime for hundreds of children, who rode the train back and forth all day long. (6)

Subject B, explains that the train was nothing more than a futile effort to help people get to the Pan American games: “Ese es el famoso tren que nos habían dicho aquí para los VI juegos Panamericanos, eso es para transportar ganado. Un tren hecho a puntillazos ahí remechado, y el tren es sin asientos. Cabe la gente ahí apreturada, uno no sabe...gente enferma o qué, falta de higienización” (15:12-15:30). In the following scene, some kids tell Ospina about the physical punishment they receive from the police. Throughout this segment various police officers are seen carrying cables and sticks with which they threaten to hit the children present in the area. The officers relied on violence and intimidation to keep these children in line while riding the train, given that these were not the typical bourgeois children accompanied by parental figures. These children would most likely use the train to take them to the city where they could observe the games from afar, hangout and perhaps even beg for scraps. This scene resembles scenes in *Tire dié* (1960) by Fernando Birri, a documentary about the children in the neighborhood known as "Tire Dié" in the city of Santa Fe, Argentina, who wait daily for the passing train to ask for money from the passengers, shouting "Tire dié!" (toss me a dime!). In

Oiga vea! the unwarranted mistreatment of children and other people by state officials epitomizes the common dynamic between the voiceless and the powerful in Colombia. In a sense, the filming of this documentary is a rebellious act, as Caliwood films the fenced and guarded spaces from the outside, thus aligning with the “outsider”. This is the breakthrough action that ultimately circumscribes *Oiga vea!* to the Third Cinema movement.

Cali de película takes a more satirical approach to documenting the famed *Feria de Cali* (Cali Fair). A city-wide celebration of the region’s cultural diversity that is famous for its colorful parades, salsa dancing marathons, bullfighting and street parties. This documentary opens with church bells ringing in Cali as a foreshadowing metaphor of the dichotomy between the church, Cali’s culture and its affinity for the devil. In this film, Caliwood was interested in capturing the “dark side” of the fair as a symbol of commodity, fetishism and discriminatory displays of cultural appropriation. *Cali de película* is a 14-minute-long color film, and it was shot in 35mm. It is composed of 10 separate sequences: 1) Sights of Cali, 2) The street market, 3) Horse caravan, 4) Beauty pageant parade and contestants, 5) Women of Cali, 6) Bull fighting, 7) Sugar cane and haciendas, 8) Guarapo¹⁹, 9) Work spaces, 10) Salsa and dancing. Unlike *Oiga vea!* where the interviews are fundamental, *Cali de película* adopts a *cinéma vérité* style that attempts to record with minimal intervention on the filmmaker’s end. If we consider Burton’s classification for observational mode documentary as a film which “Emphasizes impartiality, intimate detail and texture of lived experience, behavior of subjects within

¹⁹ Pressed sugar cane beverage

social formations...” (4). Caliwood’s documentary echoes Burton’s precepts for documentaries in the apparent neutral approach of the filmmakers as they document Cali and its people. In the year that *Cali de película* was filmed (1973), Cali registered a vast urban development due to two important factors: the development of the Cali Pilot Plan of 1950, which according to León Darío Ospina Restrepo, was an initiative led by the CIAM (Congresos Internacionales de Arquitectura Moderna) to modernize and transform urban spaces, and the VI Pan American Games in 1971. Therefore, before delving into the documentary, it is important to discuss the ideas of growth and progress that the city identified with from the first decades of the 20th century. This initiative was nothing other than a preclusive model that the elite used to establish themselves as the backbone of the city, which sharply widened the gap between the different socioeconomic strata, while affluent neighborhoods became more metropolitan and poor areas remained undeveloped. This urban disparity might be the reason why Ospina and Mayolo became interested in the matter—despite their status as young members of the elite class—and began blurring the divisive cultural lines drawn by the tragic atavisms of their elite precursors. The young directors were also influenced by socialist ideas shared internationally in the following years: Cuban Revolution 1953-1959, the Summer of Love in 1967, and May 68 in France. From this point on, new political discourses, countercultural movements (galladas²⁰, youth fashion, hippies, leftist student movements) and an appropriation of the imaginary of “caleñidad” appear through a series of cultural and social dynamics, such as the adoption and production of salsa caleña. As such, it is

²⁰ A group of young people who shared similar opinions and would get together for discussions, protests and social interaction.

important to define cultural production in order to better understand it in the context of Caliwood and *Cali de película*. As Pierre Bordieau put it, the field of cultural production is understood as:

... a universe of belief which produces the value of the work of art as a fetish by producing the belief in the creative power of the artist. Given that the work of art does not exist as a symbolic object endowed with value unless it is known and recognized—that is to say, socially instituted as a work of art by spectators endowed with the aesthetic disposition and competence necessary to know it and recognize it as such. (229)

Thus, *Cali the película* is a creation of significant cultural production given its many representations of artistic and ethnic symbols that are recognizable to Cali natives for whom devil masks, crosses and parades, costumes—among other figures shown in the film—hold an explicit value within the city’s celebration, and for the country’s collective cultural heritage. While the fair is still celebrated between December 25th and 30th every year, the documentary displays the way people celebrated the Cali Fair in December of 1972. The film did not have a cast, but instead recorded the daily and spontaneous interactions of Cali’s residents. The film begins with a display of Catholic churches in the city, then it moves onto a panoramic view of the Cali, which is followed by a shot of the *Cerro de Las Tres Cruces* (hill of the three crosses showed in Figure 2.10) and a voiceover announces: “En Cali pusieron las tres cruces para que no entrara el diablo, pero el diablo estaba adentro y no ha podido salir...” (1:00), which seems to imply that the devil lives among the people of Cali, thus making him into the prominent cultural figure that he is.



Figure 2.10 Cerro de Las Tres Cruces

This introductory exhibit of churches, crosses and the devil, establishes a series of leitmotifs that attempt to construct a representation of Cali and its culture. The Catholic churches and the crosses are symbols that demonstrate the relationship between the city and the religious institution, which extends to the rest of the country, as Colombia is largely a Catholic country. The link between the church and the Colombian state extends from the colonial period and continues to have a strong influence in the country's social constructs, like religion and its tendency to moderate morality and human affairs, while society and law uphold them; or the constructs of heaven/hell and God/devil. The devil is a prominent character in Cali's culture (Figure 2.11),



Figure 2.11 Devil mask for sale

He is often mentioned in salsa songs and during the Cali Fair, many people disguise themselves as this diabolus renegade (Figure 2.12).



Figure 2.12 Children disguised as devils

He is a main character in the Cali Fair, as vendors sell masks made in his likeness and people dress up in an effort to emulate him. Curiously, the background music over the scene of the market is what seems to be a melody of Jingle Bells, which is often associated with Santa Claus. Though the Cali Fair is celebrated over Christmas time, Colombian's Christmas tradition revolves around the "Niño Dios" (a venerated image of Child Jesus, who plays the role of gift giver), rather than Santa Claus. As in *Oiga vea!* The counterpoint between images and sounds is fundamental. The film's sequence is linked in a swift and precise way, according to the festive events that we see. The soundtrack sometimes accompanies the moving images and at other times it operates as a satirical commentary, highlighting the problematic nature of an event or situation. It is possible to mention three scenes in which satire takes on special relevance. The first of these is the horse parade, in which some drunken riders are about to fall off their mounts, and a second scene with other men disguised as indigenous characters while listening to a musical composition typical of a spaghetti western. It is followed by a street show starring a man and a trained horse, and then the devil appears, first under the figure of a

man in disguise, then under that of a child. Later, the viewer is exposed to a sequence made up of various images, where the blending image becomes that of the beauty queens. The close-ups of this sequence show us a queen defying danger by modeling, greeting and jumping on a diving board in a swimming pool, all with vaguely oriental music; then several more queens appear getting off parade floats, while off-field comments are heard from various women who talk about the incidents they must do to avoid dropping their crowns or suffering other mishaps.

The image of the devil seems to be a recurrent staple throughout most of the documentary's sequences. Local and (mainly) oral legends have always denoted the presence of the devil in Cali as heard from the very beginning of the film. In fact, the Three Crosses, erected in 1837 overlooking the city, were placed there in order to keep the devil out, as the voiceover narrates. This is where symbols come into play, as the film begins contrasting crosses and churches to more obscure and satanic imagery. This juxtaposition reflects the social dichotomy between good and evil, or religion and superstition that is so prevalent in Cali's culture. Moreover, a local myth tells that the archdiocese of the city—tired of the antics of the devil who was said to dance in fire circles disguised as a bat—decided to commission the three enormous crosses to safeguard Cali. However, this exorcism failed, and the devil remains in Cali to this day; this is common knowledge not just to Cali's natives, but also to other Colombians. As such, the devil is a recurring character that has become a symbol for the deep-seated hierarchical social order of Cali, as it is present in cultural festivities, local lore surrounding salsa music, and in the erection of important landmarks, like Figure 2.10 demonstrates. Social issues relating to inequality, violence and narco-trafficking are often

interpreted as a byproduct of the devil's presence in the city. The city has fetishized the image of the devil to such an extent that it has become a staple of Cali's popular culture, as its *fútbol* team is known as “*los diablos rojos*” (the red devils) with a devil as its mascot.

A famous township in the outskirts of Cali called Juanchito has yet another legend regarding the apparition of the devil in the Holy Week of 1986 in a popular salsa dancing club that used to be named Agapito, though others say that it happened in another establishment called Changó, according to journalist Santiago Cruz “Fue aquí donde, dicen, se apareció el diablo en Semana Santa. Que el tipo vestía elegantemente, que era buen mozo, eximio bailarín, y que al irse el fluido eléctrico comenzó a oler a azufre y se escuchaban como los cascos de unos caballos a galope. Que echó candela y que varias personas sufrieron quemaduras de tercer grado” (Cruz 1). During the late 1900s, Juanchito became an icon for salsa music and partying. It was also a haven for drug traffickers, whose money attracted many famous musicians, like Celia Cruz and Héctor Lavoe. The township also became immortalized through the songs of El Grupo Niche “Del puente para allá” and Richie Ray and Bobby Cruz “Amparo arrebató” which is played in *Oiga vea!* as a man dances salsa in his underwear by the river (22:17).

In exploring the “devil-belief” in Latin America, particularly in Colombia and Bolivia, Michael Taussig notes that in “the southern end of tropical Valle del Cauca” Afro-American peasants “enter into contracts with the devil in order to increase their production and hence their wage” (13). These rural societies associate money with sin and immoral deeds. Thus, when yearning to obtain more income, they seek help from an entity that epitomizes evil. As Taussig attempts to arrive at an interpretation of this

“devil-belief” in these cultures, concluding that they associate the desire for material gain (which indirectly involves capitalism) as something deriving from evil, rather than good. The film also portrays a city that enjoys unrestrained celebrations—especially during the Cali Fair—even though it has a strong religious tradition, as evidenced through the many churches and religious icons put in display throughout the city. Once again, the directors of *Cali the película* continue to draw dissimilarities, this time contrasting the social forms and codes of Cali’s citizens against the archetypes present in religion and culture.



Figure 2.13 Man dressed as a native and drinking Aguardiente

The function played by these symbols and motifs embodies the complex dichotomy between Cali’s conservative cultural origins and the modern liberal attitude of caleños. The public displays of alcohol consumption, the barbaric treatment of animals in bullfighting, as well as the boys playing with guns are all accepted socio-cultural practices that perhaps Caliwood is attempting to denormalize through the vivid, and at times, shocking scenes in this documentary.

Other motifs in the documentary reveal widespread cultural appropriation, as can be seen in Figure 2.13. Many Colombian festivals, such as Huila’s San Pedro festival, the Carnival of Barranquilla and the Blacks and Whites Carnival in Pasto are famous for their

embellished and exaggerated displays of other cultures and races (Figures 2.14 & 2.15). Despite the long tradition of these cultural events and the normalization of the displays, often seen as comical, they remain culturally insensitive, as they are rooted in a deep history of oppression and discrimination. However, authorities in the subject matter continue to allege that these displays of race impersonation are nothing but a celebration of cultural integration, and firmly maintain that they are a focal point of the country's cultural heritage. Caliwood's application of satire to criticize these displays of cultural appropriation is evident in the burlesque, ridiculous and exaggerated behavior of various impersonators in the film, as seen below.



Figure 2.14 Man dressed as a native



Figure 2.15 Man impersonating an Afro-American

Another important motif that appears repeatedly in the film deals with Cali's culture of violence. There is plenty of literature from different perspectives on this topic, for example: *Civilization and Violence: Regimes of Representation in nineteenth-Century Colombia* (2002) by Cristina Rojas; *Literature, Testimony and Cinema in Contemporary Colombian Culture: Spectres of La Violencia* (2008) by Rory O'Bryen; *Systems of violence: The political economy of war and peace in Colombia* (2013) by Nazih Richani;

Between legitimacy and violence: A history of Colombia, 1875–2002 (2006) by Marco Palacios, and countless others articles and books. These works are a small sample of the vast collection of studies that delve into Colombia’s history with violence and its undeniable link to social progress, political instability and underdevelopment. However, in this film the director’s goal was to present a brief illustration of the predominant issues in Cali’s culture during the Cali Fair.

The image below (Figure 2.16) offers an interesting perspective into children and their common exposure to violence through games involving toy guns.



Figure 2.16 Boys with toy guns

Perhaps this is Caliwood’s admonition to its national audience, signifying that the violence carried out by adults originates in misguided children’s experiences. Another aspect of violence in Colombia’s culture involves bullfighting, which is a traditional event held in Cali that has recently been met with disapproval throughout Colombia. However, in 2015 and 2018 the constitutional court ruled that bullfighting was not to be outlawed, as it was part of Colombia’s cultural heritage (Figure 2.17).



Figure 2.17 Bullfighting in Cali

As a matter of fact, Colombia is lacking in significant legislation regarding animal rights and protection. The horrors of bullfight are not limited to bulls. Horses are also subjected through horrific abuse as they are severely injured in the arena. In *Cali de Película* a horse is laying on the ground with its insides strewn all around him, in the scene men are seen stuffing the horse's organs back into its body and sewing it, preparing it for another round. The rawness and gore of this scene appear to be nothing short of a critique for the inhumane and barbaric treatment of those animals.

In short, *Cali de película* offers a unique and direct insight into the daily lives of caleños and their culture. The content of this documentary contains footage of great historical and ethnographic value, as it provides a look into the Cali Fair of 1972 and the customs of the time. The documentary evidences the importance of salsa music in Cali, and it does so throughout the film, choosing to end it with a group of people dancing salsa in “agüelulos”²¹ demonstrating Cali's fondness for salsa and dancing. The social

²¹ An informal afternoon party that took place at restaurants where it was prohibited to serve alcohol to minors and would consequently serve juices from a fruit called “lulo.”

documentaries of Ospina and Mayolo determine their concern for exposing the urban issues that affected their capital in the late 1960s and 70s. In *Oiga vea!* the director's pointed scrutiny in regards to the VI Pan American Games was evidenced in the interviews, and the subject's testimonies. In addition, this documentary provided a clear observation of the disparities between social classes, and its compelling images and poignant narratives illustrated the struggles of the neglected communities of Cali. The use of motifs in *Cali de película*, provided insight into the city of Cali and its people through the use of evocative metaphors and symbols like the crosses, the devil masks, churches and scenes of contradiction that contest Cali's religious background. Caliwood's passion and concern for documenting Cali motivated them to expand the scope of their interests, which consequently led to an evolution of their filming style and technique, as the group began to experiment with fiction. This in turn progressed into the production of remarkable pseudo-documentaries and feature length fictional films, some of which will be analyzed in chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 3:

VAMPIRISM AND PORNOMISERIA

Colombia's socio-political conditions in the 1960s-1970s had a crucial impact in the formation of Caliwood and the themes explored in their films. During these decades, many Latin American countries were experiencing fascist dictatorships prompted by far-right militant groups, which led to repression and censorship. In countries like Argentina, Brazil and Chile, the documentary was a tool for cultural expression and resistance, which led to the creation of revolutionary film manifestos that shaped the project we now know as New Latin American Cinema. Contrary to the rest of Latin America, Caliwood was influenced not only by the movements developing within its own continent, but also by North American and European counterculture of the 1960s, which was marked by rock music, the hippie movement, underground references in art and protest movements that deviated from mainstream cultural norms, as can be seen in Ospina's last film, *It All Started at the End*. Additionally, Caliwood experienced the bellicose whirlwind of the Colombian conflict known as the *Conflicto Armado Interno de Colombia*, a complex war that lasted over 50 years—making it the longest civil conflict in Latin American history—between the government, far-right paramilitary movements and far-left guerrilla groups. As a result, all Colombians were impacted by massive violence and death until this conflict ended (briefly) with the signing of the Colombian Peace Deal in 2016. Thus, Caliwood's films reflect a combination of cultural and ideological influences, stemming from the experiences of residing in an unstable and turbulent country, as well as the *Zeitgeist* of drugs and boundless parties. Notwithstanding, through intense dedication and devotion to social film, Caliwood directors pursued their art and slowly awoke to the

reality of their country, as evidenced by their films. The thematic and aesthetic elements of Calwood's documentaries and fiction films align with New Latin America Cinema's quest to produce transformational social films. In addition to the shared rejection of the Hollywood system, Latin American filmmakers were aware of the symbolic impact resulting from dichotomies such as West and non-West, superior and inferior, strong and weak, or of Latin America and postcolonial rejection of its colonial roots. For instance, as evidenced by the graphic images of Yellow Journalism that surfaced during the Spanish-American war (1898), Cuba was often displayed as a woman or child in desperate need of the West (Uncle Sam) to escape from the grasp of Spain, its colonial oppressor.

The impact of colonialism was widely discussed after the publication of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), which presents a critique of the effects of racism resulting from colonization from a historical and psychological perspective. Fanon explains "The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority" (93). Similarly, in *Managing the Organizational Melting Pot* (1997), Michael B. Elmes, Anshuman Prasad, Pushkala Prasad and Albert J Mills, discuss the colonizer's perspective, "...the colonizing consciousness sees the colonized as being, at the same time, a grave threat and as something too weak to pose a credible threat, as something needing to be contained that never can be fully contained, and as beings representing pure difference who can, nonetheless, be assimilated in the totalizing narratives of Western history" (303). The repercussions of Latin America's clash with colonialism continue to this day in the continent's battle to define national identity, and to achieve progress in regard to development and economic liberation. The deepening economic and cultural dependency, which increased underdevelopment throughout the

continent, was often represented in different artforms, such as cinema, given its role as a means for popular expression. Indeed, the manifestos of the New Latin American Cinema called for an exploration of social concerns. They were postcolonial in terms of providing a “setting and expanse for the consideration of New Latin American Cinema as a national and continental project (including the diasporic/exilic experience), committed to a social practice that at once opposes capitalist and foreign domination and affirms national and popular expression” (Martin 16).

Agarrando Pueblo is a film influenced by many of the major manifestos of New Latin American Cinema included in Martin’s anthology, among them: “Hacia un Tercer Cine” (1969) by Argentinians Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino; “An Esthetic of Hunger” (1965) by Brazilian Glauber Rocha; “For an Imperfect Cinema” (1969) by Cuban Julio García Espinosa; Argentine Fernando Birri’s “Cinema and Underdevelopment” and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea “The Viewer’s Dialectic” (1988) also from Cuba; all of which represent the ideological struggle that reverberated through Latin America revealing its societal problems and proposing a call to action and reform. In “An Esthetic of Hunger,” a signifier of resistance and transformation, Rocha explains the dilemma between Latin America’s hunger and its misunderstood international perception, “Thus, while Latin America laments its general misery, the foreign onlooker cultivates the taste of that misery, not as a tragic symptom, but merely as an esthetic object within his field of interest. The Latin American neither communicates his real misery to the ‘civilized’ European, nor does the European truly comprehend the misery of the Latin American” (Martin, *New Latin American Cinema* 59). In 1965, the Brazilian director

goes beyond the relational gap that hunger evokes, to explain how the hunger felt by Latin Americans is in part a sequel of past, present, and future colonization:

For the European observer the process of artistic creation in the underdeveloped world is of interest only insofar as it satisfies a nostalgia for primitivism. This primitivism is generally presented as a form, disguised under the belated heritage of the ‘civilized world,’ a heritage poorly understood since it is imposed by colonial conditioning. Latin America remains, undeniably, a colony, and what distinguishes yesterday’s colonialism from today’s colonialism is merely the more polished form of the colonizer and the more subtle forms of those who are preparing future domination. (Martin, *New Latin American Cinema* 59)

Rocha recognizes that Latin America’s development still depends on the resources and power of Western countries. This dependency stunts the continent’s autonomous development not only in the matter of independence or national identity, but also in terms of its economic and cultural processes. Although Rocha is referring to Cinema Novo, this is a notion that is accepted across all the expressions of New Latin American Cinema.

The “Aesthetic of Hunger” proposed by Rocha is a revolutionary denunciation of neo-colonial oppression in Brazil that aligns with the ideals of the Third Cinema movement, as well as the use of film as a tool to free Latin American from the shackles of colonialism. Cinema Novo films, much like Third Cinema films, focused on the portrayal of poverty through the overarching premise of hunger displaying “characters eating dirt and roots, characters stealing to eat,” much like characters in Third Cinema films like *La hora de los hornos* (Johnson & Stam 68). Likewise, poverty and cruelty

towards the underprivileged are recurring themes in *Pornomiseria* films, and as a satirical representation of these films, *Agarrando Pueblo* exaggerates the brutality and misery that is experienced by its underclass subjects. More recent Latin American films, like *Amores perros* (2000) by Alejandro González Iñárritu, focus on the violence of the underclass from the point of view of Mexico's conservative middle class, as highlighted in Ignacio Sánchez-Prado critique of the film's conventional viewpoint:

The conservative ideology of *Amores perros*, then, cannot be reduced to the story of three assaults on morality. El Chivo's story not only transmits the failure of the utopian and revolutionary discourse of the generation of the 1960s, but also, in several ways, allegorizes the interpretations of this event that the 'citizenship of fear' constructed by Mexico City bourgeoisie has incorporated into its imagery. The figure of the assassin embodies the culminating point of the process of moral decay responsible, according to this imaginary, for the emergence of urban violence (42).

Thus, to an extent, *Amores perros* replicates *Pornomiseria* films in its depiction of violence in working-class urban settings. In *Agarrando Pueblo*, violence is portrayed in scenes like that of the hostile elderly woman who rushes after the pseudo-directors to scare them away (3:04). The woman's aggressive reaction is the result of the filmmaker's intrusive actions, which stand as a form of figurative violence against the helpless subject. Consequently, her conduct resonates with Rocha's ideology, insofar as the filmmaker is to convey "violence as the authentic cultural expression of a hungry people" (Johnson and Stam 68). Furthermore, Third Cinema's approach consists of subverting cinematic codes, revolutionary models, and contesting the passive film-watching

experience of profitable cinema, qualities also shared by Cinema Novo films like Rocha's *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (1964). In sum, Rocha hopes that wherever they may be, filmmakers will devote their art medium to speak Latin America's truth and deliver it from hunger:

Wherever one finds filmmakers prepared to film the truth and oppose the hypocrisy and repression of intellectual censorship there is the living spirit of Cinema Novo; wherever filmmakers, of whatever age or background, place their cameras and their profession in the service of the great causes of our time there is the spirit of Cinema Novo . . . in the way we film a person or a house, in the details that we choose, in the moral that we choose to teach. (Martin, *New Latin American Cinema* 61)

Rocha's definition of Cinema Novo shares the tenets of Solanas and Getino's manifesto, as well as those of other Latin American film movements of the time. Once directors recognized the impact of social cinema, they sought to transform their own nations through thought-provoking films. Caliwood's *Agarrando pueblo* echoes Rocha's sentiment and desire for a revolutionary cinema based on exploration, ethics, and truth—something that is clearly outlined in Ospina and Mayolo's own *Pornomiseria* manifesto. As a 28-minute fake-fiction film, *Agarrando pueblo* was groundbreaking insofar as it critiqued the lack of integrity of *pornomiseria*, which was rampant in Colombia's cinema of the time.

Known in English as *Vampires of Poverty*, *Agarrando pueblo*'s title derives from a Colombian expression, a double-entendre that refers to deceiving and stealing from the people, in the same way a vampire would ruthlessly suck away the lifeblood of its victim.

Despite its comical, self-referential, and multifaceted elements, this pseudo-documentary offers a disdainful critique of *pornomiseria* films. *Agarrando pueblo* is a short fictional parody of filmmakers who often fabricate scenes of poverty and misery to sell their work abroad. The filmmakers appear to be unaffected by their surroundings, they show no empathy for the subjects and often make snide comments about them, seemingly to assert their superiority over those being filmed; a shameless display of epicaricacy, or rejoicing at the misfortunes of others. Throughout the film the directors insert hints to convey that the documentary is being produced for a foreign audience. Thus, the exploitation of their subjects; the fabrication of scenes; and most importantly the scenes where bystanders criticize the pseudo-directors for using their harsh reality to entertain the rest of the world are intended to amuse a foreign audience.

Curiously, the title of this pseudo-documentary was provided by a character known as Subject D in Chapter 2, the barefoot man who tells the filmmakers about the *Canal de la muerte* seen in Figure 3.1, below.



Figure 3.1 Londoño acting unhinged

Luis Alfonso Londoño, a lively and opinionated fellow who shouted at the filmmakers while they filmed *Oiga vea!* is the protagonist of *Agarrando pueblo*. In an interview with Cesar Pérez and Santiago Andrés Gómez, Ospina narrates the first encounter, “*Agarrando pueblo* nació de *Oiga vea!* porque ahí sale Luis Alfonso Londoño como un personaje un poco al margen del documental. Él fue el que nos gritó una vez: ‘¡Ajá! ¿Con que agarrando pueblo?’ Como seis años después lo buscamos a él para que interpretara su papel cuando escribimos el guión de *Agarrando pueblo*” (17).

The pseudo-documentary begins with an unscrupulous director named Alfredo García, played by Carlos Mayolo himself, who together with his cameraman, searches the streets of Cali and Bogotá for the kind of characters that would appear in a poverty porn documentary. In fact, in an opening scene the director asks what else they need for their film “¿Qué más nos hace falta? He answers his own question, “Faltan locos, mendigos, gaminos” then he proceeds to ask “¿Qué más de miseria hay?” (4:00-4:11). This exchange happens shortly after the fake filmmakers shoot a series of subjects, beginning with a man begging at the doors of a church (Figure 3.2A&B).



Figure 3.2A B/W still the man begging outside the church



Figure 3.2B Man begging outside the church naively smiles at the filmmakers after they ask him to shake this can of coins for the camera

The crew then film a woman begging in the streets who abandons her child when the cameramen approach her (Figure 3.3A); then the filmmakers return to the abandoned child and film her without consent (Figure 3.3B). Later, without a hint of remorse the director says “. . . Creo que quedó buenísima la vaina. Creo que quedamos como unos vampiros, ¿oís? Quedamos como unos hijueputas vampiros que nos bajamos ahí...” (2:39).



Figure 3.3A Child is left behind by her startled mother and filmed without consent



Figure 3.3B Confused child smiles at the camera, then is heard crying as the filmmakers walk away

Desperate to fill their quota of “poor and miserable people,” the director and his cinematographer harass an elderly woman who is going about her business. Exasperated by the men’s incessant chase, the helpless woman charges towards them with a paper bag in an attempt to intimidate them and make them stop. The woman’s angry reaction is accompanied by a mouthful of expletives (Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4 Woman reacts angrily telling the director and his cameraman to back-off

Shot in 16mm, *Agarrando Pueblo* includes four segments that total 28 minutes and 38 seconds, namely: 1) search of locations to shoot in Cali and Bogotá; 2) planning of the last scene “The future for whom?” while staying at a hotel; 3) an unsuccessful filming attempt at a vagrant's home, and 4) Ospina and Mayolo’s interview with Luis Alfonso Londoño. The film alternates between B/W footage of the filmmakers in action, and color frames that display the footage taken by the director and his cameraman. This is, perhaps, to show the contrast between what the filmmakers hope to expose (their intentions) in their film, and the reaction of those being filmed—thus, exemplifying the paradigm of the exploiter and the exploited. In the alternation of the two color-parallels, Ospina and Mayolo explore an ethical dilemma: how far can filmmakers go when filming the expression of misery?

Agarrando pueblo also contributed to dissolve the boundaries—then more rigid—between documentary and fiction, and simultaneously carried out an insightful self-reflexive exercise in the context of the Cine de sobreprecio²² which supported filmmakers, but lacked a well-structured vision for a national cinema that resulted in the production of *pornomiseria* films. According to Ospina, the Cine de sobreprecio stirred those in the film industry to “salir a filmar indios, gamines, locos, mendigos, etc., y ponerles un texto en *off* a esas imágenes. Eso después se vende en Europa como un plato exótico” (Ospina 1977, p. 36). According to Ospina and Mayolo this practice ultimately

²² “Cine the sobreprecio” were the films produced with the financial help provided by the government. The funds were the byproduct of the Ley de Sobreprecio (Surcharge Law) mentioned in Chapter 1.

spoiled Colombian cinema as well as its association with both national and foreign audiences.

In Bogotá the filmmakers approach a group of boys and ask them to remove their clothes and jump in a fountain, known as La Rebecca, to fetch coins. *Pornomiseria* critic Michèle Faguet, states this was a “well-known fountain in the city centre that, after years of neglect, had become a popular swimming spot for *gamines*” (14). Bystanders angrily discuss the despicable scenes of exploitation that they witness, but the director and his crew remain undeterred; not even when a boy gets cut by a piece of glass in the fountain. The director simply offers the boy a coin for a band-aid and the crew continues on filming their cinema mentiré, as put forth by Ospina himself in *Palabras al viento* (2007), “. . . Usamos la misma *portapak* para grabar en video los ensayos y las improvisaciones con el fin de darle verosimilitud a un falso documental sobre cineastas oportunistas que explotan la porno-miseria. Llegar a la verdad a través de la mentira. El *cinema vérité* al servicio del cinema mentiré” (72). Figures 3.5 and 3.6 are graphic depictions of the mockumentary, *Agarrando pueblo*.



Figure 3.5 Director García coaches the kids to take off their clothes and jump in the fountain



Figure 3.6 Gamines fetching coins from the fountain

One of the agitators, presumably a scripted actor (Figure 3.7), voices his opinion on the events filmed, “Aquí vienen los gringos, todo el que quiera, y es a ganarlos a ellos, a vivir de ellos, porque no hacen sino sacar libros y fotos y nunca los ayudan, ¡hombre! ¡Eso es una cosa mal hecha!” (10:34). Another man shouts in defense of the filmmakers, “¡Ya les pagaron, ellos van a ganar plata!” (10:48).



Figure 3.7 Agitator in dark suit jacket

These two men embody two different standpoints from the perspective of the exploited, one is driven by dignity and defiance in the face of injustice, and the other is motivated by need. The latter perspective is most commonly found throughout the film, as many subjects in extreme need are complacent with the filmmakers, because they hope to gain something from them. This is sadly not the case with the street performer who executed dangerous tricks, like jumping through a hoop surrounded by knives, lying down on shards of glass and even putting a small flame of fire in his mouth, all in an effort to earn a living (Figure 3.8). The fake directors take advantage of him by filming his act but fail to provide financial compensation.



Figure 3.8 Street performer jumping through a hoop lined with knives

Indeed, at the end of the show the performer asks for a small contribution but as he begins collecting funds, the film crew swiftly disappears. Human exploitation seems to be a predominant theme in the pseudo-documentary. This scene marks the end of the first segment and is followed by “The Future for Whom?” which is filmed in the director’s

hotel room as the crew prepares to film its final segment in a marginal neighborhood in Cali.

Faguet is quick to point out the similarity between Mayolo and García (the fake director) when García steps into the restroom to sniff some cocaine before leaving to film at the protagonist's home. This sequence opens with Mayolo stepping out of the shower naked to take a call. He discusses the details of his documentary with the person on the other end of the phone, and explains how the film might end up being a "tad critical" (12:40). Ramiro Arbeláez (who plays himself) sits in front of Mayolo and they agree on the final details of the film. Subsequently, Ramiro explains the changes he has made to the first part of his script, which reads: "El corolario es casi inevitable, proliferan los casos de abandono de familia, la vagancia infantil, la delincuencia precoz, demencia, mendicidad, analfabetismo..." (13:20). As Ramiro reads the script aloud, the fake family arrives and the woman is asked to change into ragged garments and to undress her children during the actual filming of the scene. The woman complies and the third segment takes place at Londoño's house, in El Guabal, the same community where the filming of *Oiga vea!* took place. However, in *Agarrando pueblo*, the film crew break into a shanty home to film their fake poor family for their phony film. Neighbors gather around to watch through the holes of the house's wooden fence; a scene that is reminiscent of the Pan American Games where people looked on from outside chain-link fences. Figures 3.11 and 3.12 are close ups shots that demonstrate the intention of the real directors, Ospina and Mayolo, to capture marginality even in the least expected place, as well as the voyeurism of the audience.



Figure 3.9 A neighbor peeking thru the fence



Figure 3.10 More onlookers

Once again, the powerless residents of El Guabal, watch from the outside as foreigners invade their space with the sole purpose of recording the state of poverty that surrounds them.

The crew makes its way into the house uninvited and begins rummaging through the belongings of the resident, rudely pointing out items that should be filmed in order to portray poverty. While the filming starts, the pretend-family (Figure 3.11) and Ramiro, who recites the second part of his script, stand in front of the camera:

...y en un plano más amplio se trata de una gigantesca masa humana que no participa ni en los beneficios de su nación, ni en las decisiones políticas, ni sociales. Víctima de un conjunto de circunstancias de un sistema no puede hacer nada significativo para alterar las condiciones. Su desidia a veces, a veces su estado de ignorancia forzoso, a veces la urgencia dramática de ganar el sustento, a veces todos estos factores juntos

y otros, impide al hombre, a la mujer, al joven marginal a hacer oír su voz... (20:27)



Figure 3.11 Mockumentary family

Suddenly, Ramiro is interrupted by a furious and unhinged man who jumps in front of the camera and screams (Figure 3.12) “Ah, con que agarrando pueblo, ¿no?” the same expression that brought them together years before at that same location.



Figure 3.12 An angry Londoño interrupts the ongoing take

A fuming Londoño continues to argue with the film crew, who repeatedly asks him to move away, not realizing that they have broken into his house, to which he replies “Solo vienen a filmar aquí para hacer reír a los demás por allá lejos” (22:07). He presents himself as the owner of the house, although his appearance and gestures refer to a very obvious iconography: he is a “savage.” His angry expression contrasts with the imposture of the film crew: while they steal and, in the last analysis, simulate the misery to obtain a profit, the “savage” claims due respect and denounces the reprehensible operation. When the producer attempts to bribe him, he responds with a gesture as eschatological as it is fair, he wipes his rear-end with their money (Figure 3.13). This scene is paralleled to the notion of the savage in relation to colonization, as the colonizing powerhouses sought to exploit the newfound territories under the guise of Christianity, as Steven Topik elucidates:

. . . whether they were Noble Savages or Ignoble Savages, the point was that they were savages. Thus, in the beginning there was neither underdevelopment nor development, but rather a moral hierarchy. The Spanish and Portuguese wanted to Christianize the people of the New World and to some extent Europeanize them, but not bring them economic development. Indeed, the Conquistadores worked to exploit what already existed rather than create anew. (548)

This was also the case with the *pornomiseria* genre, as filmmakers sought to exploit the people in underdeveloped nations, rather than using the cinematic medium to bring awareness and promote development for Latin American countries.



Figure 3.13 Londoño wipes himself with the money

At first glance, the reaction of this character seems genuine, he reproaches the commodification of misery, however, his reaction is also false—a simulation. The savage is not a savage after all, but in any case, he is an accomplice to filmmakers. This partnership is evident in the long and final segment; a relaxed conversation-like interview, in a fixed shot, which contrasts with the feverish beginning. Thus, *Agarrando pueblo*, which begins with an ethical dilemma, ends with a caveat: not everything is as it seems (Figure 3.14).



Figure 3.14 Interview with Londoño in final segment

This film attempted to denounce unethical use of poverty in documentary films, and it also contributed to undo the notion that social documentaries always presented an

authentic portrait of the subject's reality—a remark directed toward foreign audiences who enjoyed watching *pornomiseria* films. The movie also showed that even documentaries could be filmed and manipulated to show what the director wanted the viewer to see. Ospina and Mayolo introduced vampirism as a symbol of the exploitation of the underclass, becoming an overtone that appeared in films like *Pura Sangre* (1982). As a fictional film, *Agarrando pueblo*, also served as a source of stimulation for the production of more fictional films in Colombia, according to Faguet (15).

The interview with Luis Alfonso Londoño in the last sequence makes it clear that in the Colombia of the 1970s overexposure underclass was a risk taken by the underclass, given the number of ‘vampires of misery’ that roamed its cities trying to capture their daily life. However, the same interview reveals the need for filmmakers to connect with their subjects from the point-of-view of their potential for “misalignment” as expressed by Mayolo in an interview with Alberto Navarro (79). The goal for Ospina and Mayolo was for their viewers to develop "visceral awareness" through films rooted in their own experiences and to understand cultural colonialism, not through anti-imperialist proclamations, but through their own deliberations on the issues presented to them on the screen. For these unconventional Caliwood directors, there was no better way to create a revolutionary cinema than doing it alongside those who had been oppressed, or in their own terms, vampirized.

As a film produced during the early stages of Caliwood's trajectory, *Agarrando pueblo* exhibits the director's motivation to counteract the effects of *pornomiseria* films. The critique is directed at filmmakers who took advantage of the overarching theme of poverty in order to obtain government subsidies to produce low-cost films and distribute

them internationally for profit. These government driven subsidizations marked a notable period in Colombian film (mentioned in Chapter 1) known as “cine de sobreprecio” which was meant to stimulate the country’s cinematic industry from 1970 to 1980. At the time, these films were popular in Europe, as they fit European viewers’ narrative of Latin America as a poor undeveloped land inhabited by uncivilized peoples. Faguet notes that Ospina was at the Cannes Film Festival when *Gamín*, the first Colombian film, was screened at the festival (13). Ospina’s visceral rejection of *Gamín* was accompanied by the frustrating realization that European audiences craved for this type of films, which he viewed as a signal of the crisis in Third World cinema. Ospina voiced his concern in a letter to Mayolo²³,

En Cannes . . . nuestro país estuvo representado por *Gamín* con la presencia de su autor . . . La versión larga abarca todo: gamines, putas, marihuaneros, ladrones, recogedores de basura, ¿Qué más de miseria hay? . . . La pasarán en la tele. Aquí en Francia el partido mamerto²⁴ ya hasta sacó un cómic sobre gamines (La gallada de Bogotá, *les petits enfants de la misère*) y Suiza está terminando otra película llamada *El Gamín*, argumental producido por Ciné Groupe dirigida por Bernard Land. En la revista alemana *Die Stern* salió otro artículo sobre gamines llamado ‘*Die Kleine Banditen von Bogotá*’ (Los pequeños bandidos de Bogotá). (343-344)

²³ This letter was published in Ospina’s book, *Palabras al viento*.

²⁴ Referring to the Communist Party.

Ospina and Mayolo sought to denounce the genre that had appropriated and distorted the tenets of independent cinema. They resented poverty-porn films and the negative effect that this new genre ascribed to Latin America's film production, as well as the deprecating influence it had on European audiences. Their criticism of Third World poverty-porn films did not go unnoticed for Ospina and Mayolo were criticized and shunned from many European festivals. As Ospina explains:

Esto fue como un escupitajo en la sopa del cine tercermundista, y por ello fuimos criticados y marginados de los festivales europeos y latinoamericanos, acostumbrados a consumir la miseria en lata para tranquilidad de sus malas conciencias. Pero a la larga tuvimos razón porque después de la polémica la situación se volvió apremiante y comenzamos a cosechar premios en los mismos festivales que nos habían excluido. (Ospina 36)

In time, the ardent reproach toward porno-misery films was applauded, and their false documentary received many awards, among them: the Novais-Teixeira from International Film Festival of Lille, and the Interfilm award bestowed by the International Film Festival of Oberhausen.

In the 1970's Caliwood devised their own term to refer to poverty-porn films, they called it *Pornomiseria*. These films were characterized by their lack of ethics, often exploiting the poor's condition in order to generate interest and sympathy to entertain their audience and generate profits. These films were unethical, because they were oftentimes staged with non-professional actors, people who acted out their daily life, but failed to be duly compensated for their work. Often, the subjects shown in these

documentaries were filmed without consent, which Ospina and Mayolo viewed as a violation of their rights. On the other hand, *Pornomiseria* films of the time also presented a larger ethical issue, as these films were subsidized by public funds. Yet, Despite the origin of the funds, filmmakers would invest that capital into the creation of documentaries that exploited the people who funded them. For some Latin American directors, the likes of *Ciro Durán*, this was a convenient documentary genre, given that the film set and the subjects were located right in their own backyard. The term *Pornomiseria* became a label to critique films that objectify people living in poverty to entertain a privileged audience. In their unpublished *Pornomiseria* manifesto²⁵ titled “¿Qué es la porno-miseria?” (Complete text in Figure 3.15).

QUE ES LA PORNO-MISERIA?

El cine independiente colombiano tuvo dos orígenes. Uno que trataba de interpretar o analizar la realidad y otro que descubría dentro de esa realidad elementos antropológicos y culturales para transformarla. A principios de los años 70, con la ley de apoyo al cine, apareció cierto tipo de documental que copiaba superficialmente los logros y los métodos de este cine independiente hasta deformarlos. Así, la miseria se convirtió en tema impactante y por lo tanto, en mercancía. fácilmente vendible, especialmente en el exterior, donde la miseria es la contrapartida de la opulencia de los consumidores. Si la miseria le había servido al cine independiente como elemento de denuncia y análisis, el afán mercantilista la convirtió en válvula de escape del sistema mismo que la generó. Este afán de lucro no permitía un método que descubriera nuevas premisas para el análisis de la pobreza sino, que, al contrario, creó esquemas demagógicos hasta convertirse en un género que podríamos llamar cine miserabilista o porno-miseria.

Estas deformaciones estaban conduciendo al cine colombiano por una vía peligrosa pues la miseria se estaba presentando como un espectáculo más, donde el espectador podía lavar su mala conciencia, conmovirse y tranquilizarse. AGARRANDO FUEBLO la hicimos como una especie de antídoto o baño maiaacovskiano para abrirle los ojos a la gente sobre la explotación que hay detrás del cine miserabilista que convierte al ser humano en objeto, en instrumento de un discurso ajeno a su propia condición.

Luis Ospina y
Carlos Mayolo
Realisateurs de
"Les Vampires de la Misère"

Figure 3.15 Ospina and Mayolo’s poverty-porn manifesto

²⁵ The poverty-porn manifesto is found on Luis Ospina’s website, it is a scanned copy of the original, which was titled “¿Qué es la porno-miseria?”

Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo explain the two tendencies of independent film in Latin America in this way: one attempts to observe and interpret reality, the other seeks to transform that reality through anthropological and cultural reflections in film. Indeed, after Colombia enacted the Ley del Sobreprecio (1972-1978), a law that provided film subsidies, this led to the emergence of poverty-porn documentaries, a genre that adopted the methods of earlier independent cinema. Thus, misery and poverty became a recurring theme. Once a tool for analysis and criticism, misery became an outlet for avarice (Ospina and Mayolo 1). Jorge Prelorán's documentary *Hermógenes Cayo* (1969) exemplifies the second approach. Indeed, Prelorán attempts to distance his film from a purely ethnographic documentary to allow for a deeper reflection of humanity by exploring the image-maker's relationship between the individual and its culture. Thus, Mayolo and Ospina's film, *Agarrando Pueblo* (1977) is significant because it pioneered a critical insight into the ethical approach of documentary films, which expanded into an international context, as these films were produced by many other Latin American countries at the time.

Pornomiseria appears to reinforce a marked distinction between the West and the non-West, which positions the West as superior and consequently as the "saviors" of the Other. In *Agarrando pueblo* there are many references to the West, as seen in fountain scene, where the natural actors either play along with the directors for handouts, or they protest the film's intention to exploit their condition by claiming that the filmmakers are using this material to entertain Westerners with their poverty. In addition to the hierarchical contrast between social structures, cultural neocolonialism and political centrality are key concepts in the discussion on development in the Latin American

documentary of the 70s. At first, *Agarrando pueblo* is presented as a documentary rooted in misery, which underscores the consequences of underdevelopment on the Colombian population. Then, in the blink of an eye, that emphasis on the miserable life of the underclass is reversed and the inflection no longer falls on real miseries of Colombians, but on the misery of the cinematographic record of reality. The self-reflexivity of the film, added to the constant exhibition in the theaters of *pornomiseria* short films that piled uncivilized savages, *gamines*, madmen and beggars to show them in a stereotypical and condescending way to the “public,” provided a way to link socio-political criticism with film theories on the production and direction of documentaries at that time. This amalgamation arose from various audiovisual techniques, such as the alternation between the sequences filmed in color by the filmmakers of “The future for whom?” and the B/W footage of the making of the film in the first and third part of the movie. This strategy is useful because it exhibits the dichotomy presented in poverty-porn, and especially in the “The future for whom” segment, where there is a stark contrast between the tall and modern high-rises of Bogotá and the naked children throwing themselves into the public water fountain to fetch the coins that the director is tossing into the water. By choosing to incorporate contrasting elements, the directors propose a deeper analysis regarding what is considered developed or underdeveloped. In a sense, this same assessment can be made with the faux-director and production team of *Agarrando pueblo* and its subjects, given that the audience is led to wonder who is more humane and/or civilized of the two. Similarly, Faguet also reflects on the trifold correlation between the real and fake filmmakers and their subjects, “And in fact, during much of the film, the nature of the relationship between the real filmmakers and the subjects exploited by the fictional ones

remains unclear, so that an already tenuous line between documentary and fiction begins to blur” (14). This notion is put to the test at the end of the third sequence, when the character interpreted by Londoño dances erratically, immersed in a craze, sniggering out loud while entangled by the film roll he has just destroyed; suddenly he stops and in a completely lucid attitude asks: “¿Quedo bien?” (24:49).

Yet, despite the political and social undertones, Colombian film critics, like documentalist and critic Carlos Álvarez, fail to recognize Caliwood’s contribution to Colombia’s foundational cinema despite his concern for the lack of revolutionary and socially-awakening films in the country. Precisely, Álvarez stated “Y lo que precisamente hace falta es que se hagan más y mejores críticas sobre el cine nacional” (11). Moreover, this Colombian critic argues that national cinema should be regarded more highly by critics regardless of its production quality, so as to provide better feedback and help building up the national film industry: “sus cortos, medios y largometrajes, generalmente no merecen mucha atención de los críticos. Y buenos, regulares o malos, deberían ser el punto central de su atención. Sea para destacar sus valores, para ubicar sus fines comercialistas, para enfatizar sus errores” (11). However, he neglects several Caliwood films that address his preoccupation for the creation of a “cine de urgencia o cine de emergencia” as coined by Alvarez himself, which Isaac León described as: “un tipo de cine documental realizado con el objetivo de enfrentar problemas inmediatos y contribuir con ellos a la formación de conciencia de los espectadores” (181). Álvarez does mention *Oiga vea* (1972) in his list of “. . .el cine que nos proponen como camino oficial para Colombia;” however, while he goes on to disapprove of its distribution, he fails to elaborate on what an adequate process would entail: “Una falla parcial es que han sido

distribuidos por canales creados por los mismos films . . . en cambio de unir esfuerzos y crear un solo canal, con lo cual el número de exhibiciones llegaría a cifras mucho más grandes” (99). The omission of Caliwood’s work in Álvarez’s book is shocking given his perspective on the need for a better national cinema. Most importantly, it reveals the recurring lack of recognition of Caliwood’s films within the history of Colombia’s national cinema. Even more incongruous is the fact that Álvarez, an avid supporter of Third Cinema according to Michèle Faguet, would fail to recognize the militant tone and resistance driven narratives in Caliwood films. As Faguet notes, “among the film’s most enthusiastic driven supporters was Carlos Álvarez, a film critic who eventually began making documentary films in an attempt to implement and disseminate Fernando E. Solanas and Octavio Getino’s theory of a Third Cinema in Colombia” (9).

Notwithstanding, Caliwood managed to obtain national and international recognition through film festivals, and among young Colombian directors, who considered some of them as “maestros” or paragons of Colombian film. Nevertheless, much critical work is still needed in the field of film studies to evaluate and expand on the usefulness and importance of Caliwood’s films. This is especially significant with reference to their contribution to the national cinema of Colombia, as their legacy of unconventional and eclectic approaches to social filmmaking continues to inspire filmmakers. Caliwood’s continued relevance to Colombia’s socio-political climate was proven by Ospina’s final film, *It All Started at the End* (2015), a collage of Caliwood’s productions that reflect the social inequality, national insecurity and political instability of their time. Hence, the objective of this dissertation is to underscore the major contribution of Caliwood films to Colombia’s national cinema.

Finally, *Agarrando Pueblo* further demonstrates the evolution of Caliwood in terms of film production, method and style through their innovative application of *mise-en-abyme* or self-reflexivity, which yields a complex storyline that reflects their disdain of *pornomiseria* films through irony, and simultaneously provides constructive critique for the dismissal of the unethical genre. Also, Caliwood films are interconnected as to their predominantly socially focused approach, as well as in the themes, such as vampirism, that are carried over from one film to the next. The liberating potential observed in *Agarrando Pueblo* opened a small door to the carnivalization of world cinema, understood as the release from the official solemnity predominant in traditional documentary films. Caliwood's unique method to produce social critique is present even in the most minute, yet significant clips, such as the smile of the woman at the end of *Oiga vea*, the dancing scenes of *Cali de película*, and in the words and eccentric attitude of Londoño in *Agarrando pueblo*.

CHAPTER 4

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE TROPICAL GOTHIC AND CALIWOOD

El caso de Caliwood es único en el país. Este término hace referencia a toda esa movida que se dio en la ciudad de Cali durante los años setentas y principios de los ochenta. Con Andrés Caicedo, Carlos Mayolo y Luis Ospina a la cabeza, se hicieron películas, cineclubes y publicaciones. El principal distintivo de este grupo fue su cinefilia, además de su gusto por los géneros, en especial por el cine fantástico. Y es de ahí que surge el único género inventado en Colombia: el gótico tropical, esto es, una contradictoria combinación entre los elementos lóbregos del horror y la exuberancia del trópico. (2011)

-Oswaldo Osorio, “Cine de culto el Colombia”

In the 1980s, Mayolo and Ospina’s interest in film style and genre shifted from documentaries to urban gothic representations. The two films analyzed in this chapter are *Pura Sangre* (1982) by Ospina, and *Carne de tu carne* (1983), directed by Mayolo. The first film, *Pura Sangre*, is an allegorical representation of “vampirism” as an analogy that represents the arrival of capitalism to Latin America. The film is based on a legend unique to Cali, in which a bourgeois man kidnaps Cali’s youth in order to drain their lifeblood. The second film, *Carne de tu carne* is a careful reconstruction of the 1950s, focusing on the atrocities committed by the clashing National Front²⁶ that resulted in the displacement of entire rural communities in Colombia due to violence and corruption. This film seeks to reveal the sinister governmental and familial structures of the time by

²⁶ The National Front (*Frente Nacional*) was a pact or political agreement between liberals and conservatives in Colombia between 1958 and 1974. The objective of this political agreement was the reorganization of the country after the presidential term of the general and dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla and the alternation of power between the two main political parties.

using incest as a metaphor and interlacing it with urban myths and creatures that behave like zombie-vampire hybrids. These films share a socio-political and cultural undertone with the English gothic novel and its subversive potential. In his book *Surrealism and the Gothic*, Neil Matheson explores this topic, stating that the tropical gothic was created by “gauging the extent of the gothic’s undoubted grip upon surrealism, but with understanding what precisely in the gothic exercised such a fascination for the movement, how it found expression and the extent to which that influence served to shape and inform what we now know as Surrealism” (2). Critics like Marc Berdet suggest that this new-found interest in the gothic could have derived from the writer Luis Buñuel and surrealist filmmaker Alvaro Mutis, who inadvertently posed a challenge regarding the impossibility of transplanting this phantasmagoric aesthetic within the exuberance of the tropics, as Mutis himself attests:

La mansión de Araucaíma nació de una conversación que yo tuve con Luis Buñuel, con quien pasé momentos absolutamente inolvidables; los dos coincidimos en algunas cosas: en el interés por la literatura surrealista, por William Blake, por Thomas de Quincey, por los autores que interesaron a los surrealistas, pero sobre todo eso el Melmoth de Maturin [Charles Robert Maturin, *Melmoth el errabundo*, 1820] nos unió mucho en una época. [...] Una noche yo le dije a Buñuel: “Quiero hacer una novela gótica pero en tierra caliente, en pleno trópico.” Buñuel me contestó que

no se podía, que era una contradicción, ya que la novela gótica para él tendría que suceder en un ambiente gótico (1989).²⁷

The byproduct of the challenge also materialized in Colombian literary works, as seen in some of Andres Caicedo's short stories like "Destinitos fatales" and "Canibalismo," where the Caliwood writer experiments with the themes of vampirism as well as cannibalism. The gothic novel features characteristics that are not lost in its transmutation to the tropical gothic genre, such as: gloomy and decaying settings, supernatural beings or entities, curses or prophecies, damsels in distress, a burdened male protagonist, romance, and intense emotions. These elements will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The tropical gothic genre, according to Berdet, is a genre that allows the creator to construct social criticism through the use of fiction and fantasy,

¿Qué es entonces el "gótico tropical"? Historias de vampiros, zombis, incesto, canibalismo social y antropológico entre clases, sobre un fondo de antiguo esclavismo y colonialismo moderno propio de América Latina. Si se puede llamar retrospectivamente "gótico" a todas las películas y todas las novelas que importan, bajo sus trópicos, el gótico invernal nacido en los castillos de Transilvania y en mansiones victorianas, parece ser que la etiqueta, propiamente dicha, proviene de una denominación de origen adoptada por Carlos Mayolo y sus comparsas. (37)

²⁷ This interview excerpt comes from the study "Gótico tropical y surrealismo. La novela negra de Caliwood" by Berdet, who procured it from a newspaper via e-mail in 2015, as noted in his article.

In “The Tropical Gothic and Beyond...” Felipe Gómez highlights the fundamental role that Caliwood played in the development of the tropical gothic, which renders a different perspective in the analysis of Latin American cultural production, “the new readings invite us to envisage and delve into transformations arising from the gothic’s intermingling with local questions of past and present colonialism, violence, or social inequality” (52). Gómez recognizes a need to “consolidate” Caliwood’s work into a comprehensive study in order to better understand their contribution to the genre. In a sense, this dissertation has a similar objective to that of Gomez’s research (and that of other researchers that he mentions); however, their scope is limited to the films produced under the gothic tropicalism flag, while this study covers a broader spectrum of the group’s works. Caliwood’s films present a unique interpretative appropriation of the gothic, with the genre undergoing a process of transculturation and “tropicalization” that allows Mayolo and Ospina to portray a portentous reality in a violent urban setting that mirrored that of Cali—and all of Colombia—during a ten-year period known as *La violencia* (1948-1958). This time was marked by intense and violent conflict between the conservative and liberal parties of Colombia as they struggled for power. It also became the historical backdrop for *Carne de tu carne*, which takes place in 1956 when a terrible explosion obliterated the city of Cali. However, in order to elaborate on the specifics of the two films in question, one must go beyond the constructs of the gothic genre and surrealism.

While surrealism is characterized by themes like dreams or hallucinatory visuals, surrealist artists like Salvador Dalí find a balance in the representation between reality and fantasy. On the other hand, the revival of monstrous creatures in the tropical gothic

links the genre not only to the English gothic novel, but to other “horror” aesthetics that circulated in B-rated movies in Hollywood during the 1980s, such as Howard Storm’s *Once Bitten* (1985) and *To Die For* (1988) by Deran Sarafian. Beyond these connections, the intersection of Caliwood and the tropical gothic lies in the merging of those characteristics that distinguish gothic genres with local and myths and legends, like the *Madremonte*—a legend about a woman who takes her children to the forest to kill and eat them—mentioned in *Carne de tu carne*. In *Pura sangre*, the monster stems from the legend of the *monstruo de los mangones*, a local tale based on the real disappearances and deaths of dozens of Cali’s youth in the decades of the 1960s and 70s. These myths and legends about tropical monsters echo the precepts of the gothic genus. The incest taboo, seen in *Carne de tu carne*, is also explored in Gabriel García Márquez’s novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, where an incestuous couple are cursed with a monstrous child bearing a pigtail. In *Carne de tu carne*, Mayolo utilizes the subject of incest in an effort to unveil the failing social structures of Colombia, as well as the dysfunctional familial structures at the nucleus of society.

The decade of the 1980s witnessed the partnership of Ospina and Mayolo as they collaborated on many works, though they opted to direct their first fiction feature films individually. Mayolo appeared as an actor in Ospina’s *Pura Sangre* (1982) and in turn Ospina edited and had a small role in Mayolo’s *Carne de tu carne* (1983). These fictional movies were produced under the tenets of the tropical gothic and featured social representations centered around local monsters—a metaphorical technique developed by Ospina during his time in Europe, while editing *Agarrando pueblo*, which he subtitled: *Les vampires de la misère* (mentioned in Chapter 2). Thus, the vampirism allegory

became a *leitmotif* of the socio-political structures in Colombia within Caliwod films. The premiere of *Pura Sangre*, according to researcher Joaquín Llorca, placed Caliwod on the radar of Colombia's national film scene. He notes, "El estreno de *Pura Sangre* (Ospina, 1982) puso a Cali con mayor peso en el mapa cinematográfico, pues se trataba del primer largo del Grupo de Cali. *Cuadernos de cine colombiano*, órgano de difusión de la *Cinemateca Distrital de Bogotá* dedica enteramente su número 10 de 1983 a Luis Ospina" (64). In his study, Llorca also mentions that Mayolo's film, *Carne de tu carne*, received a similar response from the public.

As mentioned previously, *Pura Sangre* was an adaptation of an urban legend known as *El monstruo de los mangones*, which originated from the actual disappearance of young children in Cali between 1960 and 1970, whose bodies would be found in the city's wastelands, as writer Esteban Cruz Niño reveals in his study of Colombia's serial killers (47). Although the murderer was never captured, rumors proliferated through the urban imaginary, suggesting that it was a male who resided in Cali. The number of casualties attributed to this killer are between 30-37 children from ages 8-13, according to Jotamario Arbeláez, a journalist for *El País* (1). The legend, which originated among the people of Cali, poses more questions than it answers as the details of the disappearances, victims, suspects, and murders vary (or are omitted) between the different accounts. However, the most popular version of this urban mystery indicts a wealthy hotel owner, Adolfo Aristizábal, of using hired guns to kidnap the children. The legend claims he suffered from leukemia, which required him to receive transfusions and/or drink blood, and that he used the children for this purpose (Arbeláez 1). He is an unlikely suspect however, according to Arbeláez and his timeline for the murders—which transpired

between 1963 and 1974—due to Aristizábal’s death in 1963. Notwithstanding, the legend subsists and continues to discredit the businessman. On the other hand, Aristizábal, who in life became known for his altruist nature, also happens to be a respected and venerated figure in the eyes of certain parishioners who pray to him for the granting of miracles (Arbeláez 1). The narrative line for Ospina’s celluloid closely follows this version of the legend, which is centered around an affluent family from Cali.

The film begins with a chilling scene in a home where a terrible struggle has ensued, as bloodstained fingerprints cover the walls and bloody footprints track across the floor. As the camera turns a corner into a large hallway where a rooster wanders the area—an indication that it is morning time and the events took place in a working-class and rural area—the lens focuses on a naked corpse splayed at the entrance of a bedroom (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1 First dead body in opening scene

The camera begins to turn slowly to the right, offering a snapshot of the gory bathroom, then it enters an adjacent bedroom where another bloodied, naked body lies face down on the floor with a stab wound on its upper back (Figure 4.2). The lifeless

body appears to have feces near its buttocks, which suggests sodomy took place. To the left of the cadaver is a table displaying ample evidence that a fête occurred—empty *Poker*²⁸ beer and *aguardiente*²⁹ bottles, shot glasses, an unfinished box of cigarettes, a large ashtray, and a white substance on the corner of the table, likely cocaine. To the right of the remains, a large circular bloodstain in the middle of the bed beckons the gaze of the audience.



Figure 4.2 Second corpse in first scene

Indeed, the blood stain on the bed becomes the focal point, as the camera lens zooms into it, creating a transition into the next scene that transpires in a red-colored darkroom, where Perfecto—played by Mayolo—is developing photos from the grizzly scene. In the developing room, the camera pauses over a gold chain with a cross worn by Perfecto, then moves onto his face, grimacing as he looks at the negatives, reliving the pleasure of his crime.

²⁸ A popular lager beer brand produced in Colombia.

²⁹ A typical Colombian spirit made from anise.

Furthermore, sound plays a critical role in the darkroom scene, a sensory element that sets the tone for the entirety of the film. This tonality is characterized by a sweet, yet ominous tune, a technique often applied to horror films to elicit fear and anxiety, as stated by Jonathan L. Friedman:

The horror genre exploits music's terrifying potential to good advantage. Frequently, it is achieved using tools of twentieth-century modernism, such as dissonance, atonality, tritones, timbral experimentation, "stinger" chord and various extended instrumental techniques. It can also result from the discomfiting juxtaposition of benign or even sweet tonal music on a scene of haunting imagery or brutal violence. (103)

The combination of the scarlet lighting in the room, the character's unnatural facial expressions, and the sweet and eerie macabre tones, prepare the viewer for the terror ahead. The cross worn by Perfecto is also symbolic as it portrays a dichotomy between religion and nihilism, observed through the murders he is involved in and his life as a photographer (Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3 Perfecto in the darkroom

Despite his apparent sociopathic actions, Perfecto displays a level of complexity, particularly when he is filmed around his family. For instance, later in the film in Perfecto's photo studio, he demonstrates the appropriate 'pose' for the girl's first communion photographs (49:22). This segment represents the conflicting realities experienced by many Colombians at the time, wherein their personal lives and religious doctrines were often at odds, thus, blurring the line between religion and bloodshed. In addition, the name Perfecto is used as a satirical device that draws a sharp contrast with the character's actions and his secret life of crime. This contradiction postulates an overarching critique of a country that, despite being largely Catholic, has been involved in gruesome wars resulting in massive death, drug trafficking and mass violence that transgress the religious principles of Christianity. This socio-cultural critique is also observed in *Cali de película* in Chapter 1.

The second scene begins with a private jet returning to Cali from the United States. The objective of the trip is revealed in two brief sequences: the first shows an elderly man being unloaded from the private jet on a stretcher; and the second is a discussion between the medical specialist and the man's son, Adolfo, revealing that the family traveled to procure treatment for the patriarch of the family, Roberto Hurtado, a dying elderly sugar tycoon. At that point Adolfo receives a diagnosis stating that his father suffers from a rare disease that requires massive and frequent transfusions of blood from young males of the same blood type to stay alive (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4 Roberto Hurtado and Florencia, his nurse

Then, in the third scene Perfecto enters a blood bank to retrieve bags of blood. He returns to a red car and hands the blood to Adolfo, for whom he works as a chauffeur. A short while later a frantic Perfecto walks into a room where he tells his co-conspirators (as well as work colleagues), Florencia (Roberto's nurse) and Ever (another driver for the family) that he suspects Adolfo took the incriminating images from the car. The camera shifts to Adolfo, who sits at his desk and examines the negatives with a magnifying glass before returning them to an envelope and slipping it into a desk drawer. Then he telephones his secretary and orders her to call the "employees" into his office. A shrewd Adolfo proceeds to blackmail the trio, who have no other option but to comply with his request to supply his father with fresh blood, as seen in Figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5 The three accomplices stealing blood from a boy

This dynamic represents the common link between the upper-class and the lower-class, wherein individuals in positions of power exploit those beneath them for their own corrupt purposes. A similar exchange is observed between Adolfo and his clandestine business partners, with whom he intends to smuggle sugar into Venezuela to avoid being taxed and maximize his profit. The fact that he is ultimately swindled demonstrates how the exploiter becomes the victim of his own avarice. Moreover, this sequence of events reveals a system of societal decadence that contributes to the country's overall lack of progress.

The following scenes portray Roberto, who has morphed into a monstrous-looking invalid, and his interactions with the nurse who supplies him with the blood he needs to stay alive—the blood of the poor and hopeless youth of Cali. The disabled man lives isolated from the world in a penthouse, where he controls his economic empire through his son (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6 Roberto and Adolfo

His only contact with other family members takes place over a closed-circuit television system through which he monitors his family and staff. A large portion of the film focuses on the three coldblooded bandits that haunt the city at night in the red sedan, looking for their next victim. By this point, the color red has become a crucial motif that enhances three central themes in the film: violence, blood and death. This recurring element is also associated with vampirism, which is linked to Roberto and his medical condition. However, the allegory extends beyond the character to depict Colombia's highly stratified society in which the vampirical upper-class feeds off the weaker lower-class, leading to massive inequality. Meanwhile, the "assassins" (Florencia, Ever and Perfecto) seem to represent the Colombian Nadaist Movement (1958-1964), which is often considered a byproduct of *La Violencia*. In "An Introduction to Nadaismo," a study of the movement, Camilo Roldán, claims that Nadaism was no more than

. . . an alternate means for cultural production for a generation that lost all confidence in the institutions and values of Colombian society—cultural institutions like the Catholic Church that condoned the massacre of "godless liberals" . . . The Nadaists never offered a new aesthetic or

political vision—nothing other than the discrediting of Colombia’s prevailing order. It was nothing more than a violent response to violence.

(228)

Roldán also describes the group’s demographics, since it initially included social outcasts, among them: drug addicts, thieves, adulterous men, and homosexuals (229).

These were individuals who did not conform to accepted societal standards. This is the case with Perfecto and Ever, as the film shows compromising images suggesting that they sodomized their victims. For instance, according to Figure 4.7, Perfecto sodomizes a teen that he and his ‘colleagues’ lure back to a remote house. Once there, Florencia offered to inject them with drugs, which are actually a sedative that renders the victims unconscious.



Figure 4.7 Perfecto exits the bedroom with his pants undone the victim is naked on the bed behind him

To the extent that Camilo Roldán’s study posits that Nadaists responded to social violence and oppression with their own forms of violence, the movie underscores the degree of sexual violence evidenced in the kidnapping and rape of underage male victims, and perhaps even enjoyment in necrophilia, as it isn’t clear if the male victims are alive at that point. *Pura Sangre* offers an underlying critique of Colombia’s

chauvinistic culture, which is so deeply embedded into its societal norms, that homosexual men feel forced to live a double life, which would be the case of both Ever and Perfecto. The emphasis on sexual abuse derives from one of the many versions of the urban tale, which suggested that the remains discarded in the wastelands were the result of a group of high-class pedophiles that took turns abusing *gamines*, much like the ‘street boys’ exhibited in *Agarrando pueblo* (Arbeláez 1). It also sheds light on the source of the sexual depravity exhibited in the film, as well as in some of the actual murders, as Arbeláez recalls,

Estrenaba mis twentys y leía espeluznado los relatos periodísticos donde aparecía un niño en un mangón con los pantalones bajados, violado salvajemente y con una aguja clavada en el corazón, según me explicaron después, para hacer que el esfínter de la víctima en el momento del clímax tuviera contracciones que satisficiera más al pedófilo. Incluso circuló la versión de que las agujas eran de oro (1).

Towards the end of the film the three accomplices take a picnic by the river, accompanied by Ever’s wife and their children. This scene is interesting because of the innuendos used by Ever. For example, when he jokes about the chicken (*pollo*) being the best that he has ever eaten, he shares a look with Perfecto and they cackle. In Colombia’s colloquial speech, a “pollo” usually refers to a subject, male or female, who is very attractive or evokes sexual desire. Similarly, referring to a mosquito and alluding to the notion of vampirism Ever slaps the side of his leg and says “¡ah! ¡Este hijueputa me va chupar la sangre!” (1:29:32), which ultimately symbolizes their crimes (Figure 4.8). By

the same token, the squashing the mosquito may represent the termination of the deal with Adolfo, the wealthy vampire that extorted them.



Figure 4.8 Picnic at the river where Ever smashes the mosquito

Following that scene, without a hint of surprise or remorse Ever begins to read a local newspaper. *El Pueblo*'s cover story reports that the “monster” has been captured (referring to the *Monstruo de los mangones*), as Figure 4.9 shows.



Figure 4.9 Journal article about the capture of the killer

The film cuts to a new scene in which the presumed killer, alias Babalú, is being interviewed. When the interviewer asks if he feels remorse, the presumed killer claims that he is not responsible for what he has done because he is the byproduct of a society that failed him (1:30:56). He states, however, that his murders have not been terrible, as

he has never targeted important people, only disposable children. “Si yo he sembrado muerte, esa muerte que llevo aquí adentro, lo he hecho con la clase baja, no con personas importantes, niñitos así. Yo soy un individuo que tengo talento, que tengo muchas facilidades para cometer atrocidades...” (1:31:59). Intriguingly, the alleged murderer is caught in El Guabal, the same neighborhood from *Cali de película* and *Agarrando pueblo*; an underserved community where needy children would roam the area freely. Lastly, Ramiro Arbeláez, who plays the role of a newscast professional, recites a very similar discourse to the one heard in *Agarrando pueblo* in the scene shot at Luis Alfonso Londoño’s home (Figure 4.10):

El corolario es casi inevitable, proliferan diferentes versiones que la imaginación popular está tejiendo en torno al monstruo y su banda. Entre las hipótesis con la mayor fuerza se destaca la de una banda organizada en la que mediante sutiles artilugios llevan a sus víctimas, menores de edad, a lugares despoblados para después someterlos a sus torpezas aberrantes y luego asesinarlos... (1:06:10)



Figure 4.10 Ramiro in the television news

Ramiro's news segment is followed by the Hurtado women, who are watching the news on their television at home, then, a nun, who works as a nanny at the Hurtado home, comes to gather the children for bedtime. As she tucks the children into bed, she tells them the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*, a tale that closely reflects the events of the film. In the final scene, Adolfo, who had shot himself in an attempt to escape his dire situation and is now paralyzed and subjected to life in a wheelchair, is wheeled into the cemetery by Ever and his family. The Hurtados find the grave site surrounded by people who believe they will be granted a miracle by Roberto's saintly soul; the final satirical punch of Ospina's film.

Carne de tu Carne takes place on the night of August 6, 1956, during the dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla. On this tragic night, a military convoy loaded with dynamite explodes in the center of Cali, destroying a good part of the traditional buildings of the city and exposing the foundations of houses that for years had kept the secret stories of their wealthy inhabitants —notable families, owners of *Haciendas*³⁰ and surrounding sugar mills. The death of María Josefa Borrero de Velazco, the matriarch of an affluent family in the city, precipitates the arrival of her daughter Ana and granddaughter Margaret from the United States. This visit sets the events of the film into motion as Margaret, who is the half-sister of Andrés Alfonso, reunites with the brother she had not seen in years (Figure 4.11). Immediately, the half-siblings develop a strong attraction to one another, bonding as they smoke Camel cigarettes and listen to American music. What follows is the awaited reading of Maria Josefa's last will, in which she stipulated that San

³⁰ In the colonial period *Haciendas* included plantations where sugarcane was grown and included the machinery to refine it.

Antonia be left under the ownership of Enrique, who is her brother and the family's black sheep. Ironically, the events that bring the young protagonists closer together are the devastating explosion that nearly destroys their home in Cali and their grandmother's will, as they are sent to give the news to their uncle Enrique of his inheritance. As they journey to San Antonia, a remote hacienda in the mountains and childhood home to Enrique and María Josefa; the teenagers begin to unveil their family's past. Their incestuous relationship appears to replicate that of their ancestors.



Figure 4.11 Margaret and Andrés Alfonso

As the teens make their way to Enrique's house through the Colombian countryside, they playfully share intimate moments such as when Andrés Alfonso peeps at Margaret when she urinates (31:55), and also when Andrés Alfonso pricks his finger picking berries and Margaret sensually sucks the blood off his finger (32:55). Afterwards, Andrés Alfonso asks her, "¿No te da asco la sangre?" and she responds, "Todas las sangres saben iguales" (Figure 4.12), a statement that foretells their macabre destiny and starts the process of vampirization.



Figure 4.12 Margaret sucking the blood off her half-brother's finger

As they arrive at the family's estate, the children are greeted by the housekeeper and his pregnant wife, who watches the youths suspiciously. A short while later, as Margaret examines some flowers, she asks why an Anthurium bloom has a peculiar look to it. The pregnant woman replies, "se cruzan entre ellos y por eso se degeneran" (30:17), which foreshadows the incest that is about to take place. Andrés Alfonso and Margaret continue their journey to Enrique's remote home. When they arrive, Enrique, who was gardening, greets them and urges them to go in and change out of their wet clothes. The teens head to a bedroom to undress and Margaret puts on a white dress that belonged to María Josefa, her departed grandmother. Meanwhile, a sad Enrique, who has just heard news of his sister's death, her will, and his inheritance, states, "carne de mi carne y sangre de mi sangre, María Josefa hermana mía" (36:10), which echoes the first line of the film, and the last phrase María Josefa murmured to Andrés Alfonso before she died: "Enrique, hermano mío, carne de mi carne, sangre de mi sangre." When Margaret returns to the room where Enrique is reflecting, he immediately recognizes the dress she is wearing, saying, "ese vestido era de mi hermana" (37:58) with wide eyes as if he had seen a ghost of the past, and begins to tell the teens the history of their family. Enrique

mentions the political dissension within the family, which led to his life of solitude, and he points at a chest that contains the family's secrets. As the teens begin to rummage through the papers and photos, they come to suspect that Enrique and María Josefa had been romantically involved, leading to Enrique's banishment to the country estate. The camera returns to Enrique, who is sitting on his bed, as he inhales an unknown substance and lays back to read a letter, possibly from María Josefa. Suddenly, the lens transitions back to the adolescents. Andrés Alfonso begins to read a letter from María Josefa but just as he is about to reveal her secret, Margaret leans forward and kisses him. Later that evening, the siblings consummate their strong feelings for one another (Figure 4.13). While they are in the act, the door to the room flies open and the ghostly figure of Enrique appears sitting at the foot of the stairs laughing, but only Margaret seems to see him before he then suddenly disappears.



Figure 4.13 Margaret and Andrés Alfonso consummating their mutual attraction

Startled, the adolescents go in search of their uncle, whom they find dead on his bed. Andrés Alfonso leaves the room and as he enters another, he sees the ghosts of his family, among them María Josefa, murmuring prayers for Enrique (Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.14 Family ghosts appear in Enrique's home

Margaret startles Andrés Alfonso as she comes into the room, appearing to be in a trance. Unaffected by her uncle's death she begins to kiss her stepbrother looking directly at her ancestors who stare back at them. Unexpectedly, laughing is heard, and the siblings look up to find a goose on a wheelchair, a pig laying on a bench, and a goat on a chair, taking the place of their family members. The animals present an analogical representation of the qualities of the characters they replace, which according to Martínez is also a rhetorical technique commonly observed in surrealist works (73). For instance, the goose sitting on María Josefa's wheelchair (Figure 4.15), typically symbolizes authority, courage, devotion and loyalty in the Chinese culture. These qualities could be shared by both the matriarch and her husband, General Borrero. The General and María Josefa demonstrate devotion to family by being the family heads and ensuring the survival of the rest of the family. While valor can easily be tied to the General's military career, María Josefa demonstrates her courage by protecting Enrique from the rest of the

family. While her actions can symbolize loyalty to family, the General's loyalty is to the conservative party.



Figure 4.15 The goose sitting on María Josefa's wheelchair

The pig, on the other hand, can symbolize both positive and negative traits. Seen in a positive light, the pig denotes wealth, honesty, a hard-working person or someone who is peace-loving, according to the Chinese zodiac. On the other hand, Elaheh Fadaee's study states that the pig symbolizes greed, lust and power. Coincidentally, the pig appears in the area where the Catholic Sister Emilia and General Borrero³¹ are located, and perhaps symbolizes the wealth of the family, as well as relatives who worked hard and led honorable lives. However, it is significant that Mayolo chose to name this character Borrero, as according to sociologist Daniel Pécaut, the Borrero Olano Brothers led one of the most brutal and bloodstained factions in the Valle del Cauca, the state where Cali is

³¹ General Borrero is dressed in his military uniform and wears a blue and red band (Figure 4.14), the colors that represent the liberal and conservative parties.

located. Pécaut explains, “que trataron de controlar el departamento valiéndose de ‘pájaros’³² y de su periódico *El Diario del Pacífico*” (595). The last animal that appears in this scene is the goat, which in the Chinese zodiac symbolizes lewdness and fertility. In this scene, the goat sits in the place of the doctor of the family, Rafael Francisco Vallecilla, a character that is known for having 115 Godchildren, according to Andrés Alfonso and carries a sarcastic tone, which infers that perhaps they were his actual children. This character, played by Ospina, is shown at the end of this scene (53:49) with a malicious grin and blood in his teeth (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.16 A malicious looking Dr. Vallecilla

By his side is a character known simply as the “writer,” a family member that, as Andrés Alfonso reveals, committed suicide (17:23). The dynamic between the ghostly presence of deceased family members and farm animals signals the process of animalization that the teenage protagonists are undergoing, as they mutate from normal human beings into anthropophagus beasts. The animals are also related to the rural landscape where the film takes place, as they are common animals found in the

³² The “*pájaros*” were the squads of armed men for hire who served the landowners to attack or kill the peasants (*campesinos*).

Colombian countryside. María Inés Martínez also wrote about the relationship between animals and its fictional counterpart in the film:

En Carne de tu carne, el espectador asiste a experiencias insólitas y de horror con la aparición de muertos, la interacción entre los vivos y los difuntos y la presencia de animales no domésticos en espacios de la vida cotidiana. A esto se añade el comportamiento zombi, vampiresco y canibalesco de Andrés Alfonso y Margaret, cuyo aspecto físico se degrada considerablemente a través del film. (72)

As mentioned previously, the film was intentionally set in the 1950s during *La violencia* period, known for the gruesome confrontations between the conservative and liberal parties, represented by the colors blue and red, respectively (also seen in Figure 4.14). This historical framework allowed the director to portray the brutality that he and other members of Caliwood experienced in their formative years. This is the stirring factor behind the scenes that demonstrate political criticism, which in *Carne de tu carne*, is aimed more towards the blue party. However, the turkey scene at the beginning of the film communicates a sense of disregard for both political parties, as Mayolo, who plays the role of Ever, points his gun at the turkey and says: “Siempre me han caído gordos los pavos. La mitad del tiempo son azules, la otra mitad son rojos—siempre he desconfiado de ellos... pavo hijueputa” (4:30)—a commentary that is clearly directed towards Colombian politicians in general. Moments later, Heber approaches the turkey again, places the turkey’s beak inside the muzzle and blows its head off (Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.17 Mayolo about to kill the turkey

The tropical gothic and its intersectionality with local folktales provided a hybrid method for defiance in response to colonialism and neocolonialism, which is expressed through the generational structures of the wealthy adult members of the family and the young protagonists. Each generation represents a different stage of post-colonial influences. For example, as a descendant of a wealthy family in Cali and *hacienda* owner, María Josefa (the deceased matriarch), is a symbol of colonial oppression, historically linked to the sugar cane industry, and therefore to slavery and exploitation of the rural working class. Her stepbrother Enrique, with whom she commits incest, describes himself as “el librepensador” (39:10), revealing his alliance to the liberal party. The matriarch’s descendants are another generation of wealthy Caleños polarized by their political associations. Andres Alfonso’s father, Andrés, embodies the stereotypical moneyed conservative. According to the film, he was involved in schemes of corruption that directly affected the livelihood of *campesinos*,³³ who were forced to leave their

³³ *Campesinos* are typically farmers, or people that live in rural areas and subsist off their land.

lands, involuntarily sign them over, or at best, sell them at extremely low prices. Often, if they refused to cooperate, they would be brutally assassinated, as portrayed in Figures 4.18 and 4.19.



Figure 4.18 The bodies of assassinated 'campesinos'



Figure 4.19 Dead body strewn over a mule

Andrés and Julia's offspring are portrayed as the figurative byproduct of the elite conservative and liberal parties, who morph into monsters that feed off the blood of

working-class *campesinos* and their progeny, which is metaphorically represented in Figure 4.20. This dynamic, in turn, epitomizes the generational oppression of the rural underclass, which is an embodiment of the terms established by the *Frente Nacional*.



Figure 4.20 Andrés Alfonso and Margaret are found holding a stolen baby

Aside from these fictional analogies, the film also includes other Colombian societal stereotypes, such as having a woman of color (Aurora, the family's help) in a position of servitude. The driver, Heber, was considered to be Andrés's *pájaro* who was in charge of leading his own "flock" of men that would appropriate *campesino*'s land for the Velasco family, as noted by María Inés Martínez in reference to these groups of men:

Frecuentemente los ahuyentaban de sus tierras para obligarlos a venderlas (a muy bajos precios) al mismo terrateniente. Las tierras de la mayoría de la élite del Valle del Cauca se incrementaron durante La Violencia con la proliferación de los grupos de "pájaros." Este fue el caso de la fortuna de la familia Velasco de *Carne de tu carne*, que tenía un grupo de "pájaros" dirigidos por Heber (77).

Another stereotype in the film is presented through the superstitious *campesinos*, who believed that their misfortune originated from mythical beings, instead of their own countrymen. Mayolo brings this idea to life through the ongoing process of vampirism undergone by Andrés Alfonso and Margaret, who metaphorically stand for the authoritarian and corrupt forces at hand. The film also models the corruption of innocence through the young protagonists and their incestuous relationship, which would broadly symbolize the fate of Colombia's youth, given that their innocence is stripped away by the horrific violence rooted in social inequality and corruption.

Therefore, the representations of corruption evidenced in the film appear to point not only at the national political construct but also at the powerful Velasco family. Andrés, the father of Andrés Alfonso, is perhaps the most notorious agent of corruption. From the very beginning of the film Andrés is portrayed as a fraudulent character, starting with the scene where Ever—Andrés's right-hand man, played by Mayolo—hands him a box containing human ears, which had come from the bodies of the victims shown in Figures 4.8 and 4.9³⁴ (06:23). Another character that symbolizes venality is the military man who visits the family in their country house after the explosion. He brings two cans of cheese meant for victims in need but hands them over to the affluent family. In a scene chockfull of criticism, Julia, another daughter of María Josefa, reaches for the can labeled “quesos,” and then says, “claro, tiran la piedra y esconden la mano” (46:47). This statement is perhaps a reference to the military's involvement in the explosion—for many unsupported theories suggest that the explosion was the result of a direct order

³⁴ The origin isn't clear, when Ever delivers the box, he simply states that it was just “sent for him” (Andrés).

from the dictator of Colombia, Rojas Pinilla³⁵—and hinting at corruption within the heads of government and the military of the country. A drunk Julia reveals that the source of the cheese is the United States. Ana takes the can from Julia and with a knife scoops up a small portion of cheese, saying, “delicioso, igualito al que comemos allá” (47:25), which may point to the commodities of the First World in comparison to the Third World nations. She then goes on to mention Laureano Gómez, the Colombian president who was overthrown by Rojas Pinilla and forced to live in exile in Spain, with whom, according to her, the family had close ties. In her monologue, Julia idealizes life in the “*madre patria*,” and refers to Spain as a land of progress, order, and cultural sophistication. She also glorifies the family’s ‘royal’ Spanish roots in a somewhat satirical tone while also hinting at the family’s colonial roots.

In sum, *Carne de tu carne* is a significant film in Colombia’s national film industry because it pioneered the creation of a new film genre, the tropical gothic—the antithesis to Hollywood’s Film Noir. The tropical gothic is also significant to the nation’s cultural production, as it originated in the literary ambitions of Alvaro Mutis, a Colombian writer, who later inspired the adaptation of the literary genre into film. As Gómez emphasized in his article, the creation of the Tropical Gothic is perhaps Caliwood’s greatest contribution to Colombian cinema (51). Aside from its momentous influence, the genre provided a meaningful platform through which the group created critical films that focused on socio-political issues that affected their country and Latin America at large. *Pura sangre* reinforces the legacy left by Mayolo’s *Carne de tu carne*,

³⁵ Discussed in Chapter 1 under the Colombian cinema segment.

as well as Caicedo's fictional short-stories, which delved into the fantastic. Furthermore, both films take local legends and convert them into the center of the film's narrative. Like *Carne de tu carne*, *Pura sangre* critiques inequality and oppression through a representation of the country's hierarchical structures, which favored the elite and exploited the lower class. However, the film directs its critique directly at Cali, rather than the broader scope of *Carne de tu carne*. Nonetheless, Ospina manages to remain relatable to a wider Colombian audience due to the common social challenges depicted in the film. All things considered, and despite this new aesthetic, Caliwood remains loyal to the tenets of the Third Cinema Movement. Most importantly, though the industry never fully developed, the films produced under the tropical gothic flag significantly advanced Colombian national cinema.

IT ALL STARTED AT THE END: A CONCLUSION

Andrés Caicedo, Carlos Mayolo and Luis Ospina stood at the center of Caliwood. They were part of a group of young creative minds who had experienced the full range of consequences brought about by violence and drug trafficking in Colombia. These three visionaries symbolized an entire generation obsessed by cinema in the city of Cali. A coalition that arose from mutual interests in film and culture in the late 70s—Caliwood became significant to Colombia's film industry through the production of a collection of films, which have come to be considered a fundamental component of Colombia's film tradition. Victims of the so-called *mal de cinesífilis*³⁶, they managed to build a network that shaped the foundation for socially minded cinema in Colombia. Between 1971 and 1991, the group created a strong audiovisual tradition in a country that was being torn apart by violence, death, and drugs. *It all Started at the End* (2015) documents their collaborative effort, and its intent was to tell the story of Caliwood with the testimonials of those who remained, and from the perspective of the director, Luis Ospina. This concluding segment analyzes the self-reflexive documentary which not only shows the life and the work of Ospina, but also that of Caliwood members. As stated in the introduction, this film is essential to understanding the origin, the people and the dissolution of the group that made the city of Cali the mecca of Colombian film, for according to journalist Richard Emblin, Ospina believed that "Cali was the pioneer of

³⁶ The *mal de cinesífilis* was a term that Caliwood used to describe their obsession with film and everything relating to film, from film theory to film criticism. It is also the title of a book about Caliwood, titled: *Memorias de una cinefilia: Andrés Caicedo, Carlos Mayolo, Luis Ospina* (2015) written by Sandro Romero Rey, a member of the group. Romero Rey is also responsible for the label by which they are now known, Caliwood.

film in Colombia” (1). In addition, this conclusion encapsulates Caliwood’s invaluable contribution to the cinematographic evolution of Colombian cinema. The intersection of the issues presented in this final film also reflect Colombia’s social, political, and cultural problems of past and present. This film echoes the sentiment of previous films by continuing to adhere to the tenets of Third Cinema by focusing on the life and the work of Caliwood in terms of the social concerns that drove their initiative to produce films in and about Colombia. As the last living director of the group, Ospina aspired to immortalize his fellow cinephiles in *It all Started at the End*, which he believed would be his last film due to his battle with cancer at the time of production. Thus, the film is an homage to the fallen members of Caliwood, among them Andrés Caicedo and Carlos Mayolo. Nonetheless, the film presents a personal and collaborative perspective, as it includes is a collage of clips from Ospina’s personal archive, his own testimony, as well as the contribution of other members whom Ospina interviewed himself on a number of topics, ranging from the origins of the group to the production of the different movies. In this manner, the documentary displays characteristics belonging to all the documentary modes proposed by Julianne Burton, being simultaneously expository, interactive, and reflexive (4). It is expository, because of Ospina’s omniscient narrative function throughout the film, and the process through which he gathers and presents the information provided in the documentary, while attempting to remain objective. The interactive mode is reflected in the interviews between Ospina and his subjects, and also through the images and clips incorporated throughout to corroborate those narratives. Finally, this film is self-reflexive, as it is a documentary about its own creation, and thus

the images and clips included become a mirroring apparatus that evidences the different periods of the group and transports the audience through time and space.

It All Started at the End is structured as five segments and an epilogue that delve into the lives of the Cali Group “gang” as Sandro Romero Rey described. The first part is titled “*Itinerario de una cinefilia*”, and it begins in the kitchen of Luis Ospina’s residence in Bogotá with a reunion of most of those who belonged to Caliwood. This first section serves an introductory role, providing historical context and valuable background information. The second section of the film, *Relaciones peligrosas*, focuses on Andrés Caicedo, his relationship with Patricia Restrepo, and their involvement in a complicated love triangle that would eventually unravel in a series of events that led to the suicide of Caicedo. This chapter also explores the life of Carlos Mayolo and his relationship with Beatriz Caballero, with whom he eventually shared the rest of his life. The third segment “*Caliwood*”, focuses in depth on the origin of the group, their ideals, visions and its end when they were evicted from their home, *Ciudad solar*. The fourth section, titled *La celebración*, explores the manner in which Caliwood escaped the tension and violence in Colombia through celebrations, drugs, and sex. It also conveys the memories of Carlos Mayolo, his life with Beatriz Caballero, his legacy, and the debilitating conditions that ultimately lead to his death. Lastly, in the fifth segment Luis Ospina returns to where it all started, Cali, in a type of ceremony, *recogiendo sus pasos*. The film’s plot is presented *in media res* with footage from Luis Ospina’s health ordeal. Throughout the film the audience witnesses the twists and turns of the director's battle with gastrointestinal stromal cancer. During the production he undergoes surgery, in addition chemotherapy in the hopes of staying alive long enough to finish the film. The plotline in general moves

from present to past, using various clips from other films and filmed personal memories mostly produced by the Cali Group. This pastiche of clips, photographs, and sometimes even written quotes leads to an eclectic, dense, and complex diegesis, making the total duration of the film 3 hours, 27 minutes, and 44 seconds. This kaleidoscopic film is primarily divided into two narrative lines. The first focuses on the life of Luis Ospina in the present time. It follows his battle with cancer and the way that changed the focus of the film to incorporate more of the contemporary period. It includes video footage of him in various stages of health, including his stay at the hospital as he fights to stay alive. Ospina's illness is presented through several archival clips made with a personal camera at the hospital, including his endoscopy, and conversations with various medical personnel. This unique and visual narrative line makes *It all Started at the End* a rare film, because it becomes a documentary about its own creation. The second storyline focuses on the lives of Andrés Caicedo and Carlos Mayolo and it consists of various interviews and casual on-camera conversations. These contribute to the elaboration and completion of the film's discourse space. The connective thread between these two narratives is the sub-narrative of the creation of Caliwood in *Ciudad solar*. This house was the primary location that initially brought the group together. It was a safe haven and an artistic heaven where artists and visionaries of all disciplines congregated. The spirit of collaboration that existed in this community allowed deep bonds to form between the cinephiles who would go on to be known as Caliwood. Indeed, the participation of these community members of the Cali Group in this film brings an additional element of validation to the wide array of stories, events, and lives portrayed. In this way, the feature does not limit itself to the perspective, experience, and interpretation of the director.

As a documentary film, *It all Started at the End* adheres to the fundamental qualities stipulated by critics like John Grierson, Dziga Vertov, and Paul Rotha. In *Representing Realities...*, Bill Nichols outlines the basic qualities of a documentary film:

Documentaries are fictions with plots, characters, situations, and events like any other. They offer introductory lacks, challenges, or dilemmas; they build heightened tensions and dramatically rising conflicts, and they terminate with resolution and closure. They do all this with reference to a ‘reality’ that is a construct, the product of signifying systems, like the documentary film itself. Like the constructed realities of fiction, this reality too, must be scrutinized and debated [...] (107)

Nichols’s words echo a clip shown in *It All Started at the End* wherein Ricardo Duque is explaining some of the trauma that he experienced as a byproduct of the violence he witnessed in Colombia. The graphic images depict massacred bodies, beheaded bodies, bodies that were missing limbs and other horrifying scenes. In this instance, the viewer is being shown photographs which point at a fragment of history. This supports another interesting notion stated by Nichols, “Death may, in fact, be the underlying theme of the great majority of documentaries [...] Documentaries often confront the experience of death itself directly” (111). And indeed, many of the themes in this film revolve around death: the potential death of Ospina due to his health struggles, the suicide of Caicedo and how that experience impacted the Cali Group, the death of Mayolo and Ospina's return to one of Mayolo’s family homes to scatter his ashes.

As noted previously, *It All Started at the End* integrates intermedial resources to elaborate its diegesis, such as the use of photographs and archived film material. In

“Cuestiones metodológicas resultantes del montaje,” Cynthia Tompkins explains the nature of intermediality which results in a process of remediation

La remediación [...] define la representación de un medio en otro (pinturas, fotografías o libros digitalizados, ventanas abiertas simultáneamente con contenidos diversos [...]) que se asemejan al intentar eludir el proceso que ofrece la transparencia. Es decir que el medio posterior efectúa la remediación al (intentar) absorber completamente al anterior a fin de minimizar la discontinuidad. Sin embargo, el mero acto de la remediación asegura que el medio anterior no pueda ser borrado completamente, sino que dependa del original. (200)

In a complex yet delicate fashion Ospina incorporates photographs, clips from other films, archival footage, interviews, and music, into the visual configuration of the film. The photographs, in particular, affect the content of the documentary by providing a sense of veracity, or reality. Likewise, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin remark that the remediation resulting from the use of photographs emphasizes the transparent logic of immediacy, as a group of beliefs communicated to present a certain perspective,

It is important to note that the logic of transparent immediacy does not necessarily commit the viewer to an utterly naive or magical conviction that the representation is the same thing as what it represents. Immediacy is our name for a family of beliefs and practices that express themselves differently at various times among various groups, and our quick survey cannot do justice to this variety. The common feature of all these forms is

the belief in some necessary contact point between the medium and what it represents. (30)

Furthermore, photographs allow the viewer to connect the framework of the film to an actual imagery and subjects, which makes the content of the film more factual.

Furthermore, the film often uses photographic stills (or intermedial tools) as transitions, which intercut with archival footage; thus, evidencing the complex construction of its montage.

The photographs embedded in the film are critical because they serve as paratextual devices that contribute to a deeper understanding of the plot. However, the shot of Andrés Caicedo posing casually with his 1970s attire and long hair emerges as an important symbol that represents some varying facets of the film, specifically that of the time period. As the film delves into the narrative of Caicedo, the viewer is driven to create a conception that integrates the visual reference to the narrative provided in the film. By presenting an extensive list of Caicedo's achievements as a writer and a film enthusiast, as well as several images and video clips, the viewer is led to the conclusion that Caicedo was a talented young man, troubled by depression, who ultimately ended his own life. However, the limited amount of intermedial resources dedicated to Caicedo—which is likely due to his early death—prevents the viewer from acquiring a complete notion of who he really was as a human being and an artist. In contrast, the viewer is presented with a wide array of intermedial resources that portray Carlos Mayolo and his work. In interviews with makeup artists, producers, writers, and others who knew Mayolo intimately, he is consistently described as a great lover, a film pioneer, and a man with a zest for life. These macho qualities shine through in the images and video clips from

throughout his life, and enrich the viewer's sense of Mayolo as a person. Overall, Ospina demonstrates a controlled and well-thought out use of his intermedial network to represent and highlight qualities in both of these iconic individuals within his visual narrative.

Noël Carroll also noted the use of photography in documentaries can be a powerful tool in the construction of a feature. “A documentary film is one in which a preponderance of images function representationally as traces. Moreover, when a documentary film is a narrative in nature, the images support or contribute to the narrative in virtue (preponderantly) of their being photographic in representations (or traces)” (226). In *It All Started at the End*, every clip, photograph, quote, and interview are a trace of Caliwood. Every “trace” found within the film is a depiction of a specific instance, person, place, or thing. Combined, they form a far-reaching representation of an epoch, a political movement, cinema, and the impact of cinema on the lives of the Cali Group. Consequently, this documentary is critical to this dissertation as it offers a unique perspective into the Caliwood of the past, as well as its legacy. It serves as a literal representation of the end, bearing witness to a generation of filmmakers that is merging into history. *It All Started at the End* epitomizes the purpose of Caliwood, and as such this film will continue to be a fundamental piece in the canon of Colombia’s cinematic heritage and an exceptional demonstration of Caliwood’s contribution to Colombia’s national film.

This dissertation demonstrates Caliwood’s commitment to social issues in a country deeply torn by opposing ideological and political stances. Their filmic production offered a critical perspective of the tension between the past and the present. Their films

also reflected inequality, discrimination, nepotism and the cruelty directed towards the underclass. As the group's style and interests progressed, so did their approach to social critique, which is reflected in the creation of metaphorical monsters and forces that oppressed innocent subjects within their fiction films. Documentaries *Oiga vea!* and *Cali de película* in Chapter 2, and *Agarrando pueblo* discussed in Chapter 3, evidence the progression of the plot devices created by the group, which are present in symbolic imagery, like the extreme poverty shown in *Oiga Vea!* or the catholic crosses and devilish characters in *Cali de película*. Chapter 3 describes the emergence of vampirism through the filming of the group's first pseudo-documentary, *Agarrando pueblo*. Together with their Manifesto against *Pornomiseria* films, this work foreshadows their eventual move into fiction films, where both Mayolo and Ospina elaborate on the notion of vampirism as a form of social exploitation. Therefore, the allegory of vampirism became a device used by the directors as a way to subvert governmental forces and present specific social issues, as seen in *Pura Sangre* and *Carne de tu carne* in Chapter 4. Thus, the earlier documentaries analyzed in Chapters 2 & 3 substantiate the transformation of Caliwood's work, as they move from rudimentary documentaries to sophisticated fiction feature films with developed scripts and dark and alluring themes. This cinematic evolution culminated in the creation of a new film genre for Latin America, the tropical gothic. In sum, the films of Caliwood and its members were critical to Colombia's cinematic development, and their contributions should be considered as foundational works to Colombia's national film.

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