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**(RE)CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL MEMORY IN NEOLIBERAL CHILE THROUGH  
PATRICIO GUZMÁN'S *THE CORDILLERA OF DREAMS* (2019)**

**by MICA L. BARRETT**

**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**PROFESSOR CINDY FORSTER**

**PROFESSOR JESSE LERNER**

**April 28, 2023**

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## **Introduction:**

Latin America has hundreds of years of history regarding colonization and imperialism: waves of change have taken over Latin and South America as inhabitants of these regions forced the Western world to alter its relationship with Latin American geography and its peoples. The economic idea of extractivism from the third world is not new, and Chile's recent past can serve as a small-scale study of globalization and neoliberalism; ideologies that brought great consequence to the sovereign nation as a result of its violent change from a citizen-serving to a capitalist state.

Chile, a relatively small country, has a disproportionately large legacy that can be seen in echoes throughout underdeveloped nations globally. The United States' heavy hand in shaping Chile's recent history shows in it the first waves of what was to become known as Reganism and Thatcherism, conservative ideologies to take hold of (inter)national policy in the 1980s. Chile's history is complicated through the first-time introductions of Socialism and neoliberalism to the international stage through two major events; the 1970 democratic election of Salvador Allende marked the first Socialist to be elected President of a sovereign nation and Dictator Augusto Pinochet's support of the Chicago Boys' use of Chile in the inaugural institution of the newly conceptualized neoliberalism.

The existential implications of the Chilean experience - a unique history that coincides the U.S. supported coup d'état and the paramount installation of a neoliberal economic structure - defines the Chilean subject as the first to feel the wave of a soon-global pattern. This experience becomes increasingly common as neoliberalism takes root all over the globe and is therefore even more important to exhume: the bodies of Chilean dissidents are gone and forgotten by the masses, but the experience of continued life under neoliberalism is a poignant

example of the dangers of globalization, an increasing wealth gap, and the systemic disregard of individuals living on the periphery of capitalist societies.

The existential implications of the Chilean experience - a unique history that was made possible by the U.S. supported coup d'état and the installation of a neoliberal economic structure - defines the Chilean subject as the first to feel the impact of a soon-global pattern. This experience becomes increasingly common as neoliberalism takes hold throughout the globe and is therefore even more important to examine: the bodies of Chilean dissidents are gone and forgotten by the masses, but the experience of continued life under neoliberalism is a calamitous example of the dangers of globalization, an increasing wealth gap, and the systemic disregard of most individuals living on the outskirts of capitalist socioeconomic systems.

The 1973 coup in Chile marked the beginning of a seventeen-year authoritarian regime, one in which it is estimated over 300,000 Chileans were tortured and 3,000 killed.<sup>1</sup> Pinochet's bloody assumption of power was a shocking cultural shift for Chileans who had celebrated the election and three-year long presidency of socialist Salvador Allende. During this utopic socialist period, Chile inspired leftists and garnered support internationally. Under Allende, 80% of Chile's natural resources and mining operations were nationalized, university education was popularized and made accessible to non-elites, and funding increased for cultural projects.<sup>2</sup>

The construction of a social welfare state, of which Chile was becoming a leading symbol of in the early 1970s, was dismantled by the military junta.<sup>3</sup> This not only speaks to the shift in governmental power, but the structural changes within the neoliberal system that refocused the Chilean state's priorities toward financial gain and away from the necessary support of its

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<sup>1</sup> Winn, *Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973–2002*. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán's 2019 non-fiction film.

<sup>3</sup> Poblete, "The Memory of the National and the National as Memory." 97.

citizens. The abrupt transition into a neocolonialist and imperialist economic structure had social consequences under authoritarianism, as seen through the dismantling of spaces for social assembly, such as centers for the arts and universities, and freedom of expression.

The impetus for revoking the funding and functionality of these institutions was to destroy spaces where citizens could organize in resistance to the regime. Further policies, specifically those regarding censorship of art, literature, music, and film, were enacted early in Pinochet's regime (through spectacles such as book burnings) and quickly put into law. In the case of censorship, in a troubling pattern seen in the actions of the democratically elected leaders following Pinochet's 1990 loss of presidency, laws restricting the showing of art with socialist themes were maintained in the new democracy. These restrictions to personal expression and the right of Chilean citizens to view uncensored art, altered the social sphere. The junta's book burnings and their open secret of the torture and state killing of socialist-aligned artists, actors, writers, poets, and filmmakers remained in the minds of the people.

The institution of a neoliberal economic structure and its reliance on foreign investors meant that the elites in Chile were often not Chilean. With the nation's financial position reliant on exports of copper through exploitative labor, the elites and government officials' best interests lay in maintaining Chile's economic stability, and growing foreign investment. This was achieved by ensuring the physical and economic suffering of the Chilean workers. The wealth gap in Chile skyrocketed: foreign investors continue to grow richer and reinvest their money into resources and land being sold to them by the Chilean government. Through this privatization, the Chilean peoples no longer have legal authority over the use of over 80% of their nation's land.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Stated by Pablo Salas in Patricio Guzmán's 2019 documentary film, *The Cordillera of Dreams*.

Through the institution and maintenance of neoliberal economic - and necessarily social - structures, Chile cannot simply move on from its bloody past. The violence enacted on Chilean citizens and especially indigenous peoples persists in unfair labor practices and the memory of absence. Pinochet's detrimental socioeconomic legacy is maintained by the democratic leaders of Chile and requires analysis.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of the purge of socialists enacted by Pinochet's junta in 1973, artists, authors, and filmmakers of the time were aware of the potential threat to their lives and the foreboding lack of cultural expression. Many artists, due to their relationship with international institutions such as universities, had access to methods of escape and asylum from Pinochet's regime. For this reason, a significant population of working Chilean artists do not in fact live in Chile; as exemplified in the case of exiled filmmaker Patricio Guzmán and his presentation of expatriated Chilean artists living in Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> During the years of Pinochet's regime, Chilean exiles, particularly filmmakers, continued cultural production outside of their homeland and their work primarily discusses the condition of exile, rather than reflecting the feelings of the people within Chile under authoritarianism. Decades of cultural production were suppressed due to censorship and a culture of fear, in Pinochet's Chile: to explore Chilean cultural production during this period, it is critical to examine Chilean exile cinema. The filmmakers' representations of return to Chile expose points of tension and incongruency that define the Chilean experience, both within and outside of the homeland.

One of the most renowned Chilean exile filmmakers is Patricio Guzmán. Best known for his documentary work regarding the Allende years, Guzmán has continued to make films

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<sup>5</sup> As the central source of this essay is Patricio Guzmán's *The Cordillera of Dreams*, filmed and screened before 2020, the discussions of the recent Chilean government refers to state administration up until 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Palacios, "Chilean Exile Cinema and Its Homecoming Documentaries."

regarding his homeland in the decades following his initial exile. Guzmán's early work was focused on representing then current Chilean history to an international audience. It can be argued that his films still function to educate, but Guzmán's position as auteur of these works and his relationship with Chile becomes increasingly apparent as he returns to his homeland, filming his surroundings and uncovering pieces of history he was not there to experience during Pinochet's regime.

Although media scholars have written on Patricio Guzmán's films since his acclaimed inaugural trilogy *The Battle of Chile*, minimal attention has been paid to the final film in his most recent series, *The Cordillera of Dreams*. The 2019 documentary is the concluding film in a trilogy exploring the natural lands of Chile and their relationship to physical remnants of the human past. The initial and most renowned film in the series, *Nostalgia for the Light*, centers the Atacama Desert and Chileans' relationship to the geography as a gateway to revealing artifacts of Chile's recent history of genocide and its persisting legacy. Similarly, *The Cordillera of Dreams* focuses on artists and historians who look to the Andes mountains as witnesses to the past and reflect on the Andes as representative of the selling of Chilean land and resources to foreign investors.

Guzmán's two precursing films to *The Cordillera of Dreams* (2019), *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010) and *The Pearl Button* (2015), have been explored with regard to their constructions of Chilean memory, reflections on the past, and the use of first-person filmmaking. *Cordillera*, the last film of Guzmán's most recent trilogy follows these same methods and reveal his personal reflections on his condition of exile, most notably defining his position as an outsider in his post-dictatorial homeland.

As this thesis in the field of critical studies represents the academic studies of History and Media, it is important to identify the specified realms of study that contribute to the theoretical bases for the increasingly complex and intersecting explorations of contemporary histories. This paper is heavily inspired by work in media studies that identifies the cultural implications of the process, product, and social function of film; including María José Bello, Hamid Naficy, Alan Norrie, José Miguel Palacios, Zuzana Pick, Steve Stern, and Peter Winn.

Scholarship in the fields of History and Media Studies regarding methods of memory construction and the history of film's role in Chile throughout periods of censorship and exile will be used to explore Patricio Guzmán as a historian of Chile since 1970. This essay will apply Steve Stern's theory regarding memory (re)construction in post-coup Chile and Zuzana Pick's establishment of the auteur's responsibility over their work to understand the function and legacy left by Guzmán's *The Cordillera of Dreams*; in not only his filmmaking career, but in Chilean cinema's evolving forms that express exile subjectivity in their homeland after a seventeen-year long dictatorship.

The importance of reconstructing or redefining historical memories cannot be defined simply through the audience's response to this personal work being done.<sup>7</sup> Guzmán's transformation in his filmmaking career is a demonstration of his ever-evolving reflections on exile from Chile, across the years, and as argued in a later section, it forms an arc that bridges between the initial and continuing reactions to exile. Guzmán's initial films followed the socialist doctrine of making calls to action, but his most recent trypic reflects on the experience of exile as important to being Chilean in itself: the expatriate's nostalgia for the socialist years is incongruent with the sociocultural destruction of their homeland. Guzmán's political stance has

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<sup>7</sup> Poblete, "The Memory of the National and the National as Memory." 153.

left him in a position of exile by choice, one which has pushed his work onto the international stage and (due to extreme and persisting censorship) frequently prevented screening in his homeland.

The first section, **New Latin American Cinema**, explores the determining characteristics of Third Wave Cinema in Latin America and its sociopolitical function, using manifestos of socialist cinema from 1969 and 1970. Third Wave cinema's establishment of the social documentary is its lasting legacy as can be seen in anti-colonial films from this tradition, including Guzmán's inaugural trilogy *The Battle of Chile*.

In **Chile Under Authoritarianism** historical context is established regarding the contrasting ideological positions of socialist Allende's Coalition government and capitalist Pinochet's military state. This section examines economic and censorship policies established by the junta to squash expressions of dissidence in the nation: Pinochet shattered a vibrant Chilean culture of political and personal expression through the violent repression enacted to prioritize the nation's economic stability.

**(Re)constructing Historical Memory** argues that Guzmán's 2019 film *The Cordillera of Dreams* acts to recuperate memory in two-fold fashion: first, in the remembrance of extreme violence used by the military junta throughout the coup's installation and maintenance across 17 years, and in the violence of the repression of memories. The recollection of past realities are narratives hidden and rewritten by past and then-current Chilean governments that attempt to forget and "look to the future," lacking recognition that trauma cannot be healed without a return to the past.

**Chilean Exile Cinema** positions Guzmán's 2019 non-fiction film, *The Cordillera of Dreams*, in the socialist filmmaking tradition. The section asserts Guzmán's work follows ever-

evolving “social documentary” style popular in Latin America and engages this practice thoughtfully to propel the genre of Chilean exile cinema, proving its continued cultural relevance.

**The Cordillera on Film**, explores Guzmán’s position as filmmaker and auteur within his 2019 film. Utilizing all three films in his most recent trilogy, this section argues that Guzmán’s repeated use of Chilean geography as symbols for his lost homeland defines his work as “exile cinema.” Steve Stern’s structures of Chilean memory are used to analyze Guzmán’s visual and auditory techniques and position *The Cordillera of Dreams* as representative of contemporary exile subjectivity.

The final section, **Artifacts of a Regime**, identifies Guzmán’s film as representing post-dictatorial Chilean subjectivity in its reevaluation of the past utilizing contemporary footage. The section examines Guzmán’s interviewees’ presented difficulty in mourning a homeland that has been radically changed, socially, economically, politically, and culturally, through a neoliberal model; a system antithetical to the Chilean cultural consciousness exemplified in the Allende years.

## **New Latin American Cinema: Manifestoes from the Socialist Left**

As a communist revolution swept Cuba in the 1950s and 60s, the Americas and Caribbean felt the growing wave. Many Latin American nations were inspired by the application of Marxist support for the suffering proletariat in Cuba and sought to share in the revolutionary spirit. Although many leftists in the Americas and Caribbean were not interested in such a structural violent upheaval as with the Cuban Revolution, they were inspired by the intensely anti-imperialist spirit the island nation had demonstrated.

Although these leftists followed a more centrist or socialist political idea, they shared in the Cuban experience of subjugation under United States imperialism and a more historical past of European domination. Inspired by the Cubans rejection of the United States economic relationship and political intervention with the island and move towards autonomy, Marxists throughout Latin America identified the Cuban Revolution as being successful through the enthusiastic engagement of Cuban citizens. In this revelation, many leftists saw it to be the job of all peoples to bring class consciousness to their nation's people, in hopes that significant sociocultural change would naturally lead to a change in the political realm of their nation.

As "Toward a Third Cinema" describes, there was a continental movement towards audio visual media as means for effective communication to the masses: film became a technology that was understood as becoming more accessible to use as a medium and share with larger audiences as time progressed. There was a belief that film had the incredible potential to revolutionize common peoples, particularly those who were not literate: this ideology became a significant aspect of leftist revolutionary movements throughout the 1960s and 70s in the Americas. The use of film as a tool not only to capture the story of revolution, but to create relationship and unity

within a peoples of shared struggle became an incredibly effective tool for developing consciousness in one's own nation.

As socialists reacted to persisting socioeconomic structures introduced through colonization in Latin America, they directed the future of cinema in underdeveloped nations to be created by, for, and about the lives of the working peoples. "The social layers which have made the greatest contribution to the building of a national culture (understood as an impulse towards decolonization) have not been precisely the enlightened elites but rather the most exploited and uncivilized sectors."<sup>8</sup> The third cinema movement calls exploited citizens to action against their national systems which suppress their voices. "The cinema of the revolution is at the same time one of destruction and construction: destruction of the image that neocolonialism has created of itself and of us, and construction of a throbbing, living reality which recaptures truth in any of its expressions."<sup>9</sup> "Toward a Third Cinema" argues for the creation of political films that work as a weapon in the war against imperialism; that is to say, to encourage a revolution rather than document it after the cataclysmic actions have occurred.<sup>10</sup>

In the tradition of Marxist theory which claims an inevitability of class warfare, a sentiment of anti-hierarchic, and therefore anti-imperialist, ideologies swept throughout Latin America. Encouraged by the success story of Cuba's communist revolution, Latin American nations viewed the development of anti-imperialist sentiment as central to developing new national consciousnesses, movements formed to exist in the absence of imperialist structures.

In 1970, upon the election of the Popular Unity Party's Socialist candidate, Salvador Allende to presidency in Chile, 'Chile Films' was established. The state-run organization was

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<sup>8</sup> Solanas and Getino, "Toward a Third Cinema." 52.

<sup>9</sup> Solanas and Getino. 54.

<sup>10</sup> Solanas and Getino. 50. Quote from Fanon.

concerned with the development of a “national cinema” that strengthened socialist ideologies within the Chilean populous, thus garnering more support for Chile’s transition to a socialist state. The leaders and filmmakers of Chile Films worked to build this socialist utopia in their film production and distribution: the 1970 “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto” defined the ideological framework for the organization and its members.

The Popular Unity Government’s manifesto assigns a direct relationship between nation’s liberation from capitalism’s ills and the “construction of socialism.”<sup>11</sup> This assertion, as well as the statement to work immersed within the people, draws upon ideologies established in “Toward a Third Cinema” and which are integral to Latin American socialism. Furthermore, Chile Films was established to create a Chilean national cinema, which is stated as the “construction of an authentically national and therefore revolutionary culture.”<sup>12</sup>

As “Toward a Third Cinema” asserts, the idea of cinema as a tool for and the recording of a revolution as it unfolds was taken up and utilized extensively by socialist-aligned filmmakers in Latin America. In Chile, as seen by the filmmaker's socialist manifesto, national cinema was developed with the purpose of establishing a new national cultural identity through evolving political identities.

“Cultural colonization was just as pervasive as colonization of the political and economic varieties, but much more insidious. Therefore, the decolonization of natural national culture, the discovery of authentic rather than falsified national reality, required a rejection of the privileged and a concomitant privileging of the marginalized.”<sup>13</sup> New national cinemas were created not only to develop consciousness for common peoples, but to express the cultural potential of the

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<sup>11</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

<sup>12</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

<sup>13</sup> Burton, *The Social Documentary in Latin America*. 78.

Latin American nations once liberated from imperialism. National cinema was cultivated within leftist movements for sovereignty within Latin American nations: the expression of nation-specific cultural production is built upon sociopolitical investment in sovereignty.

Film production followed suit both in form and function: in form, socialist filmmaking tradition radicalized the originally western tradition of filmmaking. Many film makers in Latin America studied in Western Europe in schools of cinema: with the revelation of the new national in cinema, the question of using the tools of imperialists to tell the subjugated people's story and revolution was questioned.

By radicalizing the use of film, and appropriating tactics taught in Western filmmaking tradition, Latin American filmmakers were able to reestablish themselves as storytellers of their own cultural background, and with the intention aligned with their ideologies, particularly that of a leftist revolution in their own nation. Most notably, the genre of social documentary emerged from Latin American third cinema: the social documentary can be categorized as a genre of non-fiction films that concern themselves with social issues.

"The New Latin American Cinema movement accorded to documentary privileged status. Socially committed filmmakers embraced documentary approaches as their primary tool in the search to discover and define the submerged, denied, devalued realities."<sup>14</sup> In these filmmakers' discovery of authenticity, the use of documentary film practice was critical to capture the realities of the working people.

Social documentary filmmakers "throughout Latin America were using the film medium to expose and combat the culture of invisibility and inaudibility. Style became another arena for the expression of the filmmaker's anti-colonialist stance and imperfect, artisanal, technically

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<sup>14</sup> Burton. 6.

limited cinema defiantly turned scarcity itself into a signifier.”<sup>15</sup> Within leftist filmmaking discourse was the conflict of Western film schooling being drawn upon to represent colonized societies in an authentic manner. “Latin American filmmakers began experimenting with a broad range of strategies designed to eliminate, supplant, or subvert, the standard documentary mode of address” that was created by and for colonialists.<sup>16</sup> Socialist filmmaking was often nonfiction and attempted to tell stories from and for the peoples of a nation.

The anti-imperialist sentiment held by leftist filmmakers rejected hierarchical thinking, exemplified through the questioning of the Western filmmaker’s traditional position in the documentary mode as intellectually superior to the audience. “These social issue filmmakers were determined to challenge what they perceived as the authoritarian characteristics of this particular mode of address, since they equated it with an unjust, hierarchical, closed sociopolitical order which they were equally determined to expose and transform.”<sup>17</sup> To counteract the power imbalance, voiceovers were no longer the “voice of God” style narration popular in the documentary mode; rather the narrator acted as a peer to the audience and was often self-reflexive in order to question the structure created by their position as storyteller.

Latin America filmmakers, in “their mission to capture *la realidad nacional*” attempt to transform the reality of persisting imperialism.<sup>18</sup>

*The most central representational characteristic of the new Latin American cinema is the specific way in which the documentary and fictional modes of filmmaking were combined and transformed as film makers of the 60s and 70s attempted to change the social function of the cinema in Latin America. This re-articulation of the basic*

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<sup>15</sup> Burton. 78.

<sup>16</sup> Burton. 49.

<sup>17</sup> Burton. 49.

<sup>18</sup> Burton. 79.

*representational work of the cinema also took place in Chile, but in a fashion specific to that conjuncture, beginning before the UP victory and continuing after its defeat in the “exile cinemas” produced by Chileans all over the world.*<sup>19</sup>

Non-fiction film reaches toward “the art of *re*-presentation, the act of presenting actual physical reality in a form that strived creatively to record and interpret the world and be faithful to actuality.”<sup>20</sup> The creative storytelling of national realities is central to the social documentary, the genre that defines New Latin American Cinema, is critical to capturing and *re*-presenting nuance that could not otherwise be expressed through Western cinematic traditions

Patricio Guzmán’s inaugural trilogy, *The Battle of Chile*, is considered one of the strongest examples of social documentary and Chilean exile cinema. The Battle of Chile was produced as an “analytical documentary...which could serve an essential testimonial and analytical function for Chile and all of Latin America in the future years.”<sup>21</sup> Guzmán’s “*The Battle of Chile* (1973) is the best example of [socialist, militant] cinema, a work which retraces the different political processes of the period 1970–1973, including the nationalization, the popular effervescence, and the popular management [in Chile].”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Burton. 271.

<sup>20</sup> Ponech, *What Is Non-Fiction Cinema?*

<sup>21</sup> Burton, *The Social Documentary in Latin America*. 274.

<sup>22</sup> Liam Rodrigues, “Event Horizon: On Patricio Guzmán and the Cinema of Absence.”

## **Chile Under Authoritarianism: Persisting Sociocultural Repercussions of Blackout Censorship and Resource Privatization**

The United States and Far-Right in Chile shared the fear of the red leprosy as democratically elected socialist Salvador Allende prepared to take Chilean Presidential office. Rooted in fear of the awakening of class consciousness and motivation to nationalize industry apparent in Allende's political position, the U.S.'s Central Intelligence Agency and Capitalists in Chile began to plot for the reinstatement of a capitalist democratic president for the South American nation.

The United States was involved in coup attempts beginning in 1970 as the CIA's documents report funding and political support for anti-communist groups in Chile who were attempting to keep president-elect Allende from taking office. Declassified documents account three separate options to restrain the "communist control" bound to take over Chile under Allende's coalition government. Ten million dollars (not including inflation) was approved by U.S. President Richard Nixon, "more if necessary," to supply arms and ammunition to anti-communist groups and "to make the [Chilean] economy scream."<sup>23</sup> Orders placed into motion through presidential directives initiated "major covert operations to block Allende's ascension to office, and promote a coup in Chile."<sup>24</sup>

From the CIA's declassified documents, it is explicit the intentions and tactics used in the early 1970's intended to destabilize the economic and political systems in Chile. The financial funding and encouragement of armed resistance groups during the years of 1970 to 1973 functioned to isolate the Popular Unity Party in an increasingly polarized nation: Allende's

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<sup>23</sup> Kissinger, "Notes on Meeting with the President on Chile."

<sup>24</sup> Kornbluh, "Chile and the United States: Declassified Documents Relating to the Military Coup, September 11, 1973."

centrist government was disliked by two radical groups, the first being Marxists seeking more rigorous implementation of reform -- encouraged in part by Fidel Castro's 1971 visit to Chile and televised speech which asks Chile to further radicalize, to further the revolution -- and U.S. supported groups of capitalists who attempted multiple coups, succeeding in September of 1973, to oust Allende and instate a dictatorial regime.

The initiation of Pinochet's seventeen-year rule was a bloody coup d'état in which the Presidential Palace, was attacked with the nation's own military tanks and air force jets: a symbol of Allende's grassroots approach to nationalization, agrarian reform, and democratic socialism was aflame in the Chilean capital.<sup>25</sup> In the evening of September 11, 1973, General Augusto Pinochet and junta leaders spoke on national television in their military uniforms. These US-backed leaders spoke of eliminating the Marxist cancer from Chile; they were determined to lead a counterrevolution reaching beyond the reversal of late President Allende's socialist reforms.<sup>26</sup>

President Allende was found dead by the armed forces who invaded the Presidential Palace and congress buildings during the September 11, 1973 military junta. Members of Allende's administration and cabinet were detained, and many were sent to isolated labor camps for years. "With the president dead the makers of the coup intended to neutralize the leaders of the worker parties in order to demobilize the dangerous classes for a lasting period."<sup>27</sup> Alongside members of Allende's cabinet and known socialist leaders, intellectuals and artists active Santiago's universities were detained and tortured. In the most well-known mass detainment, artists, community leaders, union organizers, and students were escorted by the military to the

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<sup>25</sup> Winn, *Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973–2002*. 15

<sup>26</sup> Winn. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Rouquié, "From the Law-Abiding Military to the Terrorist State." 259.

National Stadium; built mere years prior to accommodate the thousands of spectators, Chilean and international, to watch the World Cup.

The coup d'état was incredibly violent in nature, but was met with little armed resistance from citizens. The regime's initial violence was supported by the U.S. provided weapons and ammunition to the right-wing groups who led the coup. The bloody clash was retroactively justified by "the rebelling generals [who] claimed to believe that the workers were armed and decided to hit them quickly and hard. Against canons, tanks, and planes what worker self-defense would have been able to resist, even if Allende had distributed arms to them?"<sup>28</sup> Allende was staunchly against gaining power by non-democratic means and dissuaded civilians from using armed force against resistors during his presidential campaign. Allende held this position throughout his short term as President, claiming *la vía chilena* as the democratic and non-violent expression of political alliance.

The military state carried out "three thousand to five thousand executions in the first year, according to the estimates, and ninety thousand Chileans (in a population of some nine million inhabitants) were said to have been arrested."<sup>29</sup> Though executions and detainment were not highly public by design, the sheer number of disappearances and accounts of arrest by apolitical individuals created a fearful citizenry: through their violence, the military intended to make "any compromise impossible."<sup>30</sup> This distinctly authoritarian model relies on demonstrations of violence to maintain order of the citizens united under fear: "the violence is undisguised. The

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<sup>28</sup> Rouquié. 258.

<sup>29</sup> Rouquié. 261

<sup>30</sup> Rouquié. 259/60.

military do not engage in tricks.”<sup>31</sup> The culture of fear was pervasive, a “sickness all [Chileans] caught” and restricted citizens’ ability to engage in active resistance to the regime.<sup>32</sup>

The junta’s violent arrests and executions became institutionalized, producing sociopolitical change that was irreversible.<sup>33</sup> “The bloodshed had destroyed the possibility of a restoration of the civilian right” in Chile.<sup>34</sup> Unlike *la vía chilena*, Pinochet’s ideological cornerstones included the disbelief in the potential for Socialism or representational democracy in Chile.

The state military’s job, established in the junta’s first decree, was “to safeguard and defend its physical and moral integrity and its historical and cultural identity.”<sup>35</sup> The use of vague language in this decree allows for the statement’s potential application of suppression against citizens to be used liberally. As the title military state implies, “the army was no longer a branch of the administration; the state was an extension of the army [in Chile].”<sup>36</sup>

Pinochet’s junta attempted to drastically alter changes made through Allende’s socialist agenda in two major sectors: the increasingly nationalized economy and the rise of class consciousness in Chile. The Far-Right, spearheaded by Pinochet’s rhetoric, considered the “Marxist cancer” to be necessarily eradicated for their nation to thrive democratically. Ironically, the Right’s fear of Allende’s Socialist destruction of the sovereignty of the [Chilean] state was counteracted by Pinochet’s own authoritarian regime which aimed to protect the democratic structure the state police destroyed.<sup>37, 38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rouquié. 269.

<sup>32</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. 164.

<sup>33</sup> Rouquié, “From the Law-Abiding Military to the Terrorist State.” 261

<sup>34</sup> Rouquié. 260.

<sup>35</sup> Rouquié. 260.

<sup>36</sup> Rouquié. 260.

<sup>37</sup> Rouquié. 262.

<sup>38</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. 158.

One of Pinochet's predominant focuses to increase the economy's strength in Chile was to re-privatize land and natural resources for foreign mining operations. In order to garner foreign investment after Allende's short presidency, Pinochet looked to systems of restructuring the economy to favor foreign capital: neoliberalism was chosen for its ability to maintain cheap labor practices that would benefit large corporations entering the country. In order to maintain a large margin of profit, workers' rights were sacrificed, and public land was sold cheaply and without regulations regarding its use: neoliberal economics opened the Chilean natural resources and access to cheap labor to a crowd of investors who were seeking a free economy to manipulate in their favor. Furthermore, the lack of taxing foreign exports required the military state to continue selling public land to maintain an income for the state. Largely, neoliberal economics and political measures further marginalized working class Chileans who did not have access to fair labor practices and job security.

Pinochet's subjugation of the Chilean working class under neoliberalism did inflate the nation's economy: Chile's national economy was growing more than 7 percent a year.<sup>39</sup> As the average wage plummeted 30 percent between 1974 and 1980, the economy boomed as well-funded corporations thrived in the competitive environment.<sup>40, 41</sup> As many corporations relied upon foreign investment, their growth during this period of "artificial prosperity" took place without regard for the "structural distortions it was causing."<sup>42</sup>

"This authoritarian state with overtones of an antidemocratic crusade nevertheless lacked the ideological language to develop a consensus or to mobilize the citizens,"<sup>43</sup> fostering a culture

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<sup>39</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 204.

<sup>40</sup> Rouquié, "From the Law-Abiding Military to the Terrorist State." 264.

<sup>41</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. 204.

<sup>42</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 204.

<sup>43</sup> Rouquié. 262.

of fear to maintain order. This method distinguishes Pinochet as an authoritarian ruler rather than a fascist one. As seen in the popular examples of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, these fascist regimes attempted - and succeeded - in garnering authentic participation by citizens for their political party. In contrast, Pinochet's military state encourages through force apoliticality among Chileans, for involvement in politics was publicly punished through the initial coup's violence and detainment of dissidents. Pinochet's regime created a "culture of authoritarianism" in which each citizen would conform to the dictates of those in power."<sup>44</sup>

The mass silencing of political thought within Chile was instigated through raids, detainment, and torturing from the junta: it began before Pinochet's administration introduced alternative political ideologies that would usher ordinary Chileans to become motivated workers and patriots for the regime. For example, funding was pulled from public universities and professors were purged from the institutions of knowledge. There was an "elimination of critical disciplines in the universities" that were replaced with regime-approved curriculums.<sup>45</sup> In short, there was not an initial plan for the replacement of "purged leftist intelligentsia with a new elite of apolitical, professional achievers."<sup>46</sup>

To garner public support, the regime attempted to create an "official" culture; one formulated by the elites for the consumption of the everyday Chileans. Beginning in earnest in 1975, two years after the coup, the Junta's cultural program funded the formulation of, what was named, apolitical media including art, literature, and film. "State publishing houses and cultural institutes produced lavish books on Chilean military history and anti-Allende documentary films."<sup>47</sup> The regime's "mission was to channel official values to ordinary citizens — and

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<sup>44</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. 160.

<sup>45</sup> Rouquié, "From the Law-Abiding Military to the Terrorist State." 262.

<sup>46</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. 160.

<sup>47</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 160.

popular energy into regime projects.”<sup>48</sup> Through cultural production with distinctly anti-socialist narratives and motives, the authoritarian regime actively suppressed movements towards class consciousness by idealizing often-unattainable capitalist values. “Suddenly, society was no longer sneering at businessmen as leeches; instead, it seemed to be looking up to them as glamorous figures.”<sup>49</sup>

As is accessible to dictatorial governments, particularly those which rely on a strong military presence, cultural repression was rampant. In particular, the checks and balances between sectors of the government, an integral aspect of democracy, was nonexistent in Pinochet’s military administration. Institution of decrees that allowed for broad interpretation encouraged censorship: the Chilean military was encouraged to suppress individuals suspected to be “creating alarm or unhappiness” in attempts to maintain “internal order.”<sup>50</sup> The junta’s actions were supported by decrees that allowed suspension of human rights for individuals who were not supporting the national project.<sup>51</sup>

As censorship through media and free speech continued after Pinochet’s rule, generations of Chileans maintained this culture of public-facing agreeance of the government’s actions to avoid harm. The institution of neoliberalism in Chile encouraged an individualist culture through late-stage capitalist values, particularly the movement away from a welfare state to one prioritizing the financial support of foreign investors.<sup>52</sup> This, paired with the repressive military state that removed spaces of public gathering, were two primary factors in Chilean culture shifting from collectivist to individualist. The maintenance of neoliberalism sustains the anti-

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<sup>48</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 160.

<sup>49</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 159.

<sup>50</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 156.

<sup>51</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela. 156.

<sup>52</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela.

collectivist culture, one that keeps Chileans from recuperating from their national traumas. The implication of Chilean livelihoods as reliant upon their ability and willingness to work, to provide value to their country through the economy, encouraged a distinctly individualist and competitive socioeconomic atmosphere that persists decades after the fallen dictatorship.

The intense censorship and cultural repression by the junta restricted authentic Chilean cultural production within the nation during and after Pinochet's regime. However, as a result of the initial coup d'état, many artists associated with universities, embassies, or whose work was funded by the state, were forced to flee to save their lives and work. A significant portion of Chilean cultural production that evaded censorship during and after Pinochet's rule was created by exiles who sought political asylum primarily in Western Europe. The category of Chilean exile cinema in particular is a rich subgenre which is best known for Avant Garde first-person film that reckoned with exile identity and experience in diaspora often disconnected from other Chileans granted asylum.<sup>53</sup>

One of the fleeing artists was filmmaker Patricio Guzmán, whose work is the focus of subsequent sections. Guzmán studied film in Spain from 1966 through 1968, returning to Chile as socialist-inspired cinema flourished in the years leading up to Allende's election. Guzmán was a rising figure in Chilean film as Allende's administration established Chile Films, a state-sponsored organization that published the aforementioned "Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto." Guzmán, as a prominent figure in Chile Films, formulated and subscribed to the position of filmmaker as a leader in the construction of socialism in Chile.

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<sup>53</sup> Pick, *The New Latin American Cinema*.

## **(Re)constructing Historical Memory: The Crisis of Chile**

Walter Benjamin suggests that “history decays into images:” what would Benjamin think about a history erased by national amnesia, one willingly forgotten to ease everyday life? The “cinema of absence” suggests that history is subject to erasure through public memory, the silencing of victims, and removal of physical reminders, but this absence does not stop the radical act of reconstructing histories.<sup>54</sup>

Film as a medium for communication between the auteur and audience can take up the form of reconstructing historical memory; especially in the tradition of the social documentary, popularized in the Global South through third cinema. The social documentary, as explored in the first section titled **New Latin American Cinema**, is a quintessential non-fiction cinema practice popularized in Latin America during the 1960’s and 70’s; hence, the film practice was greatly influenced by Marxist ideologies. A social documentary, as previously defined, is a non-fiction work that concerns itself with social issues.

The New Latin American Cinema, predominantly non-fiction filmmaking, is inherently anti-imperialist, anti-authoritarian, and anti-hierarchical in its form and function. In this politicized practice, “Latin American filmmakers began experimenting with a broad range of strategies designed to eliminate, supplant, or subvert, the standard documentary mode of address: the anonymous, omniscient, ahistorical ‘voice of God.’”<sup>55</sup> Guzmán utilizes voiceover in his tryptic, using first-person language and anecdotes to color the narrative.

The filmmaker’s first-person narration exposes the politics of representation, as well as the practice of creation of media as important in the construction of the “self” identity for the

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<sup>54</sup> “Event Horizon: On Patricio Guzmán and the Cinema of Absence,” Liam Rodrigues

<sup>55</sup> Burton, *The Social Documentary in Latin America*. 49.

auteur.<sup>56</sup> In the act of reconstructing the past, a method of first-person non-fiction film has taken up an exploration of the subjective, of the personal, and in their style of storytelling, “leave the process of constructing these realities transparent,” inviting the audience to critically engage with the presented narrative.<sup>57</sup>

*These films... break the uniform, ordinary and stereotypical to construct stories based on the authenticity of personal memory through biographical and aesthetic reconstruction of experience. They create a story where the notion of “memory” makes sense.*<sup>58</sup>

Guzmán’s first-person non-fiction filmmaking practice is a demonstration of reconciliation with his Chilean-ness, exploring his ever-evolving position in exile, an experience that distorts traditional experiences of time and space.<sup>59</sup> In his films, Guzmán represents Chile to a predominantly Western, non-Chilean audience: in this position, Guzmán’s work is an access point to understanding the complexity of post-dictatorial Chilean identity. Guzmán’s films function as “collectively-oriented presentations of personal politics,” that invite the viewer to engage emotionally and intellectually with the content. The film’s purpose as a reflexive work is, as aforementioned, aligned with the Marxist ideologies held by the socialist left in Chile, particularly in Guzmán’s rejection of the authoritarian ‘voice of God’ in his work.<sup>60</sup>

The self-reflexive “service to personal history, replicates the struggle to communicate the trauma of exile. Therefore, the film's development is not necessarily conditioned by a dramatic chain of events but by meanings produced in the layering of words, gestures, and images.”<sup>61</sup>

Guzmán reflects on his own past, predominantly demonstrated through his reflections on his

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<sup>56</sup> Bello, “Reconstructing Private Memory of Dictatorship in Chilean Contemporary Documentaries.” 123.

<sup>57</sup> Bello. 123.

<sup>58</sup> Bello. 124.

<sup>59</sup> Zuzana M. Pick, “Exile and Displacement.”

<sup>60</sup> Zuzana M. Pick. 162.

<sup>61</sup> Pick, *The New Latin American Cinema*. 164.

childhood and years as a student in Chile. Guzmán's inclusion of "memories of his own childhood and the happiness of a Chile before the dictators" demonstrates that *The Cordillera of Dreams* was a product of mourning his homeland; though his last statement in the film, Guzmán wishes for a brighter future, one in which "Chile recovers its childhood and its joy."<sup>62</sup> Guzmán's documentaries "demonstrate the passage between memory and history."<sup>63</sup> To best understand the complex passage of historical truth and popular memory in Chile, it is vital to turn to scholarship regarding the cultural sphere within the nation.

As a result of the violent 1973 coup d'état and the following institution of neoliberalism; "ordinary people [in Chile] no longer show a commitment to politics that involves any sense of social solidarity," instead turning their focus on work and close family.<sup>64</sup> "There is a shutting down of communication... which comes from an acceptance of the failure properly to mourn: to take on and to enrich through the experience of loss."<sup>65</sup>

Guzmán's recent trilogy aptly portrays Norrie's claim that in contemporary history, Chileans have experienced the destruction of the social state, a nation defined by its people's needs. Now, the institution and maintenance of exploitative strategies of selling labor and natural resources, has created a post-dictatorial, damaged state which lacks a social identity: "that... was Pinochet's continuing influence on the society."<sup>66</sup>

In his films, Guzmán represents Chilean identity as characterized by a search for histories that can never be recovered in full. The physical practice of searching for the past in Chilean

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<sup>62</sup> Alan Norrie, "Identification, Atonement and the Moral Psychology of Violation: On Patricio Guzmán's Nostalgia for the Light." 399.

<sup>63</sup> Brian Winston, *The Documentary Film Book*. 230.

<sup>64</sup> Alan Norrie, "Identification, Atonement and the Moral Psychology of Violation: On Patricio Guzmán's Nostalgia for the Light." 398.

<sup>65</sup> Alan Norrie, "Identification, Atonement and the Moral Psychology of Violation: On Patricio Guzmán's Nostalgia for the Light." 398.

<sup>66</sup> Alan Norrie. 398.

geography seemingly lacking human life symbolizes the discoveries by Chileans about the past of their nation.

Scholar Steve Stern states that memory is more complex than remembrance: memory is “the meaning attached to experience.” As is explored in subsequent sections, Guzmán imbedding Chilean geographies with narrated historical meaning makes the past visual in these artifacts. The narrative use of personal experience, through interviews and voiceover, develop widely applicable political responses to individuals’ nuanced testimonies. The relationship between the personal and political, local, and global, individual and existential, create dense and emotional meaning that defines Guzmán’s latest trilogy in both form and function.

Guzmán’s *Nostalgia for the Light* compares, visually and ideologically, the work of women combing the Atacama Desert for their loved ones’ bones, crushed and scattered by the military, and international astronomers using the locale to view “the history of the cosmos.” This built relationship of the microscopic and macroscopic; comparing hand tools and telescopes, Chile and the vast universe, develops a narrative of Chile as the center of the universe. Guzmán creates existential implications through contrast, thereby presenting each victim as a case study regarding the precarity of the human condition in late capitalism and neoliberalism.

*Calling upon the vast and incomprehensible forces of elemental nature, [Guzmán’s trilogy] fill in the spaces around what is incomplete and entirely missing, invoke cosmic forces and layered figures: skygazers, desert combers, stardust; indigenous genocide and buttons, the disappeared and buttons, water and rails, landscapes and time.*<sup>67</sup>

The symbolism of geography in Guzmán’s latest triptych determines each film’s narrative: the Atacama Desert in *Nostalgia for the Light*, the coastline in *The Pearl Button*, and

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<sup>67</sup> Liam Rodrigues, “Event Horizon: On Patricio Guzmán and the Cinema of Absence.” 12/13.

the Andes in *The Cordillera of Dreams*. "It is re-enactment of place rather than people. It is art at its primal function: to remember in order to move forward, to render in order to negate the absence." <sup>68</sup> In 're-enactment' of place, Guzmán builds visual and ideological connection between the landscape and 'disappeared' histories. In *Nostalgia for the Light*, striking, beautifully composed static landscapes of the Atacama, and the sky above: he transposes images of recovered preserved bodies that were found in mass graves from Pinochet's regime in the desert with images of the cosmos captured from telescopes mere miles away: "If the images are sometimes antithetical, the connections are more profound for their indeterminacy."<sup>69</sup>

Visitors to the Atacama undertake a struggle to piece together the past through physical and celestial bodies. The astronomers and women searching for bone fragments are undertaking parallel struggles – seeking physical evidence for a past that is just out of reach. A visual relationship is created between disparate items; asteroids through a telescope and bone fragments under a microscope are almost indistinguishable in color and texture. By exploring the micro and macro in tandem, Guzmán instigates consideration of the personal, sociopolitical, and existential implications from the experiences of astronomers and amateur archeologists in the Atacama.

Guzmán's work establishes the existential nature of searching for a lost past and the journey for the past - for origins - directly inform the construction of contemporary Chilean identity. *Nostalgia for the Light* not only collects the talking-heads style oral histories that are intensely important in collecting community and individually remembered histories, but the physical reckoning with histories that are kept publicly quiet.

In *The Cordillera of Dreams*, Guzmán presents footage from the years of Pinochet's regime, recorded by his cinematographer friend Pablo Salas who remained in Chile. The use of

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<sup>68</sup> Liam Rodrigues. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Liam Rodrigues. 7.

this footage will be explored in a subsequent section, but the use of non-traditional, non-public artifacts to unveil historical truths continues throughout Guzmán's tryptic.

Guzmán reckons with the micro and macroscopic implications of Chilean history in his most recent trilogy, with *The Cordillera of Dreams* being the third and last film in the series. In *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010) and *The Pearl Button* (2015), Guzmán identifies microscopic or otherwise seemingly insignificant objects and connects them to something cosmic (literally). The relationship drawn between Chilean landscapes and the people who are drawn to these often barren places defines *Nostalgia for the Light* and *The Pearl Button*; *The Cordillera of Dreams* follows this structure. Utilizing the Andes and artists who are inspired by these peaks, Guzmán explores the relationship of memory (re)construction through the meditative physical interactions with the cordillera, which he describes as "witnesses to Chilean history."<sup>70</sup>

The next section, **Chilean Filmmaking in Exile**, will explore Guzmán's 2019 film as an extension of the socialist film genre. **The Cordillera on Film**, will delve into the visual and audio narratives Guzmán builds to explore Chilean history on a national and personal level through the Andes.

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<sup>70</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*.

## **Chilean Filmmaking in Exile: Positioning *The Cordillera of Dreams* in Socialist Tradition**

Manifestoes of a New Latin American Cinema are – as discussed in the first section – an establishment of the ideological foundation for Socialist filmmaking in the 1960s and 70s. Guzmán’s integral social and political position as an emerging filmmaker within Chile Films establishes his early films as aligned in the ideological construction of socialism, even as was done in exile from Guzmán’s once-socialist homeland. However, the more than three decades post-dictatorship in Chile has not fostered a vested interest in the re-construction of Socialism: Guzmán’s contemporary films reckon with the consequences of the junta and the instillation of neoliberalism through exploring the social destruction of Chile. This section seeks to answer how Guzmán’s film builds upon the socialist non-fiction genre, which Guzmán’s 1973 *The Battle of Chile* pioneered.

Guzmán’s *The Cordillera of Dreams* can be analyzed based on the assertions regarding the form and function of film in neocolonial Latin America. Beginning with Guzmán’s position in cinematic practice – born and raised in Santiago, Guzmán left Chile during his university years to study film in Spain. Upon his return in 1967, tensions within the nation rose as discontent with colonial-controlled puppet governments. Leading up to the 1970 presidential election, Guzmán was involved in the Popular Unity party, a coalition of political sectors that shared socialist-inspired ideas of nationalization: Popular Unity due to its internal conflict within the party, held a centrist position, not following the Latin Americanist Marxist ideologies as represented by the Cuban Revolution.

Due to his emerging talent as a filmmaker trained in Western Europe, Guzmán was included in the leadership of Chile Films, a state-sponsored film distribution program. Associated with universities and film institutes in Santiago, Chile Films published and revered

the “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.” Filmmakers who received grants from the institute were expected to adhere to the socialist cinema ideals established by this manifesto. Guzmán did exactly this: his first work *The Battle of Chile* was funded by Chile Films and was heavily influenced by the socialist notion of constructing a national culture.

The 1970 “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto” implores Chilean filmmakers to “undertake, together with our people, the great task of national liberation and the construction of socialism.”<sup>71</sup> To construct socialism, the manifesto emphasizes the importance of engaging with contradictions within cultural and political Chilean identity: by developing an understanding of complex identities, Chilean filmmakers should present vulnerabilities to construct a “lucid and liberating culture.”<sup>72</sup> To formulate a socialist national culture, Chilean filmmakers are asked to uncover the realities of their nation’s history of popular struggles that are rewritten by official history: to develop a national heritage, the reconstruction of these struggles is necessary for “confronting the present and envisaging the future.”<sup>73</sup>

As to be expected due to his position as an active member of the socialist-aligned Chile Films program, Guzmán’s films share in the attempted function to grapple with Chilean realities – past, present, and future – to develop a culture that engages with socialist values. The intention of the Chilean filmmakers’ manifesto to establish expectations for the collective will of leftist filmmakers clearly established the auteur’s position as to be “immersed within the people” to create an “authentic and therefore revolutionary” culture.<sup>74</sup> The collective will is an important statement in this manifesto, as it calls for the unified action to be taken by filmmakers in

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<sup>71</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

<sup>72</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

<sup>73</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

<sup>74</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

representing Chile on a national scale, reaching beyond the traditional positions of academics, including trained artists and storytellers.

Guzmán indicates the socialist style of filmmaking that his team utilized in creating his inaugural ‘social documentary,’ *The Battle of Chile*: “we filmed everything: first the enthusiasm, which carried us far, [my team of filmmakers] and the entire population. Then, the tensions that led to the coup d’etat.”<sup>75</sup> Guzmán’s pride in his socialist position is clear in *The Battle of Chile* and persists in *The Cordillera of Dreams*, particularly in the film’s narration, claiming his youth “was far too busy building a new [socialist] society.”

The Chilean filmmakers’ manifesto insists on the auteur’s position within the working peoples to make an authentic representation of the nation’s experience. Guzmán’s work with *The Battle of Chile* attempted this integration and is deemed successful in presenting a socialist, authentically Chilean representation of the Allende years and tensions leading to the coup.

Guzmán’s fellow filmmakers, particularly those a part of Chile Films, intended to create waves of socialist enthusiasm through their ‘new national cinema’ in the 1960’s and 70’s. However, the coup d’etat’s violent and repressive nature suppressed authentic cultural production in Chile after 1973, particularly for socialist-aligned artists. The filmmaker’s manifesto’s call for the integration of intellectuals and artists into the general populace was not possible under the coup’s repression and suppressed cultural production in post-dictatorial Chile.

In a culture of silence after years of censorship and democratic governments that maintained the neoliberal model, many artists like Guzmán did not return to the homeland. Guzmán is no longer ‘within the people,’ for his fifty years of exile and expatriation has distanced Guzmán from his homeland physically and socially. His films are honest about this

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<sup>75</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*.

distance and accept the lack of longing to move back to Chile, rather Guzmán's narration expresses the distress he feels visiting Santiago: "I don't recognize the city that lies before me. I don't really know where I am." In these moments of reflexive first-person narration, Guzmán reveals his discomfort in return and does not reveal a longing to move back to contemporary Chile.

Even though he does not feel a sense of belonging in Santiago, Guzmán does not abandon his homeland. Rather, he uplifts stories about the past to reevaluating official histories constructed by neoliberalists and recovered pieces of the country he once knew. This intention and dedication to his homeland is for the liberation of the Chilean peoples:

*The intellectual's commitment is measured in terms of risks as well as words and ideas; what he does to further the cause of liberation is what counts... each by his or her action commits us to something much more important than a vague gesture of solidarity.<sup>76</sup>*

This excerpt claims the necessary intent and commitment of the "intellectual," as the expression of beliefs varies based on the actor's position and access: the authors of "Toward a Third Cinema" indicate with this assertion that Guzmán's dedicated filmmaking career that centers a reevaluation of Chilean history is a socialist action that attempts liberation of the repressed Chilean national culture. The identification of Guzmán's filmmaking career dedicated to his homeland follows the ideal of commitment between the intellectual to their work; in Guzmán's case, he has worked for over 50 years and outside of the hemisphere while creating films about Chile. Furthermore, Guzmán's willingness to return to a country which he "does not recognize" to film new works, demonstrates his commitment to exploring contemporary Chile's condition; one that is not affirming of Guzmán's socialist vision of the past.

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<sup>76</sup> Excerpt from Getino and Solanas' *The Hour Of the Furnaces* included in "Toward a Third Cinema"

As explored thusfar, the function of Guzmán's film fits within Latin American third cinema's intention to represent a nation from the perspective of the subjugated. Guzmán focusses the story of *The Cordillera of Dreams* on the artists of Chile: this choice of subject is explored in-depth in the following section, **Chile on Film**. These artists are a group of privileged Chileans who were able to not only survive the coup through international asylum, but targeted because of their sociopolitical power and influence in Chile: in short, these interviewees and critical narrative drivers are not representative of the average Chilean experience during the political turmoil of the late twentieth century.

These interviewees do, however, hold an important perspective regarding cultural suppression and censorship, exile and return, and the experience in watching Chile's soul "rot." These interviewees hold a wealth of socialist-inspired understandings of the histories of Chile, which may not be representative of the populace, but can work in a cinematic context to develop 'consciousness' regarding repression of the Chilean peoples both within and outside of their homeland.

To best understand Guzmán's work as evolving from the Latin American socialist filmmaking tradition, it is critical to explore the techniques Guzmán uses both in the audio and visual narrative of *The Cordillera of Dreams*. In part due to the rise of socialist cinema in Latin America, non-fiction film was popularized to display the national reality. Non-fiction is a mode of cinema that is often included in the documentary genre: these modes of storytelling share much of their form and function, but non-fiction cinema reached beyond the traditional structure and mode of documentary filmmaking. Through this genre, Latin American expressions of truth can be expressed creatively rather than the expectation of objectivity in Western documentary.

“The core of non-fiction consists [of] somebody deliberately and openly indicating something to somebody else... They are cinematic assertions; and naturally meaningful images are among the elements frequently employed by the communicator toward assertive ends.”<sup>77</sup>

Guzmán is clear to state his purpose in the film and uses first-person narration and personal anecdotes to build a credibility for his works’ claims.

The particular choice in highlighting artists’ voices to represent a diverse experience of exile and resistance to dictatorship within the nation, Guzmán’s work reaches to define a critical aspect of ‘exile cinema.’ This genre is led by Chilean filmmakers, as a great number of artists fled their homeland when Allende was violently driven from office: “Chilean exile cinema is the process of forging multiple and complex relations of aesthetic and commercial production that operate on a transnational and translocal scale, simultaneously global and regional.”<sup>78</sup> Guzmán’s choice in interviewees and characters within his film is meant to connect audiences within and outside of their Chilean homeland. By choosing artists who had trained outside of their nation, often in Western Europe or the United States, Guzmán curated a narrative informed by socialist traditions in Chile and abroad.

Documentary film is often associated with what Nichols identifies as informational works, those that traditionally use an omniscient narrator to develop the position of teaching the audience the objective truth. Non-fiction cinema, when used to describe contemporaries of the Latin American ‘social documentary,’ are built upon socialist ideologies which value the individual auteur as a personal and political voice in a film; one that explores experiences and phenomena larger than oneself. These works often lead the audience toward the auteur’s conclusion and encourages discussion of the ideas presented through their work rather than

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<sup>77</sup> Ponech, *What Is Non-Fiction Cinema?*. 8.

<sup>78</sup> Palacios, “Chilean Exile Cinema and Its Homecoming Documentaries.” 148.

concluding in a definitive answer or solution. This emphasis on presentation of complexity is reminiscent of the socialist cinema's ideologies, as identified in the concluding statement of the Chile Films' manifesto: socialist filmmakers should reach "beyond our contradictions; let us develop them and open for ourselves" a path which "leads to the construction of a lucid and liberating culture."<sup>79</sup>

Chilean socialist filmmakers took ideologies promoted by the Popular Unity party, and therefore Chile Films, globally during the 1973 diaspora. In turn, the socialist filmmaking tradition maintained an important sociopolitical popularity within Chilean exile cinema. The term 'exile cinema' can include any film that reckons with the state of exile, usually portrayed as an in-between; the individual as an outsider and with an attached sense of nostalgia for their homeland's utopic potential.

Chilean filmmakers are among the most well-known in the genre of exile cinema because of the films' international release, as no foreign films made by Chileans were shown in the homeland during the dictatorship. Like many Chilean artists, Guzmán found asylum internationally, first in Cuba and then Switzerland, immediately following the coup. His film reels miraculously made it out of Chile and back into Guzmán's hands. In exile, Guzmán edited the film and it was shown internationally before it made its way to the Chilean underground. *The Battle of Chile*, even though it does not explicitly depict exile in the narrative, is considered fundamentally a film of exile because the film circulated "from the homeland to the exterior, where [it was] assembled and given meaning."<sup>80</sup>

*The Cordillera of Dreams* is a film that reckons with exile as a persisting condition: most clearly in Guzmán and the interviewee's shared experiences of being targeted as intellectuals.

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<sup>79</sup> "Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto."

<sup>80</sup> Palacios, "Chilean Exile Cinema and Its Homecoming Documentaries."

Films produced after the dictatorship's downfall, like Guzmán's *The Cordillera of Dreams* (2019) "while shot on Chilean soil, remain fundamentally films of exile because they deal explicitly with the most pressing questions of the lives of an exile... their directors enter the national territory only to shoot and then they leave."<sup>81</sup> Guzmán's clear indication of his lack of return to Chile in the film designates his expatriate status clearly and without longing to return to the dystopian homeland; this indicates clearly Guzmán's chosen position of exile from his homeland. *The Cordillera of Dreams* is a film of exile voices, including Guzmán's own.

Unlike his previous films, Guzmán reveals his experience during the 1973 coup d'état in *Cordillera*: Guzmán's previous films, including *Nostalgia for the Light* and *The Pearl Button* center direct victims of violence and detainment in the junta's seventeen-year rule. Guzmán centers the physically and emotionally taxing acts of mourning taken on by the victims: he uplifts their voices and their stories, or what they are willing to share, regarding their experience both during Pinochet's reign and in the post-dictatorial state. Guzmán takes the final film in this trilogy to explore his own artistic peer's experiences in exile, with return, and longing for the utopic socialist past. In *Cordillera*, after 50 years, Guzmán uses his own story and personal relationship with the Andes Mountain range that defines Santiago's skyline to explore the physical remnants of his childhood and Allende's presidency. Guzmán's position as auteur becomes personal and he uses first-person narration to lead the viewer through a complex and ever-evolving national history, through the eyes of an exile:

*I've never spoken of the loneliness that has stayed with me since that 11th of September 1973. It is like a hidden anxiety, as if, beneath my feet, something had collapsed like during an earthquake. It has been 46 years since I left my country. During that time, I*

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<sup>81</sup> Palacios. 152.

*have made 20 films about Chile. I have lived longer abroad than in my country. I have gotten used to making films from a distance. But I never stopped feeling alone, working in isolation, in the midst of everyday life. In my soul, the smoke never cleared from the ashes of my destroyed home. I would like, if it were possible, to reconstruct it, and begin again.*<sup>82</sup>

In Guzmán's statement wishing to reconstruct his childhood home, there is a greater application regarding the rebuilding of his nation. Guzmán is not wishing for the resources to physically rebuild his childhood home – this is accessible to him. He is welcome to move back to Chile, but has expatriated as he cannot emotionally return to his destroyed homeland. Guzmán implies throughout the film that if Chile is able to return to its idyllic socialist past, he would be delighted to return and rejoice with his fellow Chileans. However, he does not see this happening plausibly, with neoliberalists having destroyed the life and soul of Chile through decades of extractive capitalism at the expense of everyday Chileans. The smoke still has refused to clear “from the ashes” it left Santiago in. Guzmán resents this truth but accepts its position as irrefutable through his exploration of the physical and cultural ruins of his homeland.

Guzmán's position in the film demonstrates the artist developing a narrative informed by his experience, but one that does not center his story. The film is about the personal, national, and existential implications of Chile's history: Guzmán accesses these understandings through the physical remains of the Chile of his youth – through artifacts. The visuals Guzmán chooses to emphasize in the work are used as metaphors, indicating the state of his homeland.

Richard Meran Barsam defined non-fiction as "the art of *re*-presentation, the act of presenting actual physical reality in a form that strived creatively to record and interpret the

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<sup>82</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams.*

world and be faithful to actuality.”<sup>83</sup> The creativity of representation is important particularly in Guzmán’s non-fiction work: he often pairs visuals and narration that are symbolically connected but are not clearly established as metaphor. As is indicated by the English title of his 2019 film, *The Cordillera of Dreams*, Guzmán explores the historic and present symbolism of the Andes Mountains that frame Santiago, Chile.

*The great Chilean documentary filmmaker Patricio Guzmán does not grapple with the idea of eternity in his new picture, “The Cordillera of Dreams.” He sits with it, patiently. He considers it through metaphor, as his camera slowly considers the chain of Andes Mountains that makes up the cordillera of his movie’s title.*<sup>84</sup>

Guzmán’s interest in the relationship between the personal and the national, the microscopic and the macroscopic, in *The Cordillera* instigates existential responses to the contrasting visuals and narration he pairs. Guzmán physically ties the complex nuances of Chilean history into the textured geographies of Chile: his narration of historical realities regarding his culturally destroyed homeland is reflected in the drone footage of mining operations carving into the Andes, irreversibly damaging the physical and social geography of Chile.

The centering of Chile’s physicality with voiceover describing its abstract and complex cultural phenomenon, create associations between dynamic, distressing realities to the static landscapes surrounding Santiago. Guzmán utilizes fading transitions between microscopic and macroscopic landscapes, such as fissures in cracking car paint to the arial footage of Santiago’s roadways sprawling into the mountains. Guzmán’s application of sociopolitical meaning onto the seemingly ordinary maps, car paint, fissures in stone, and abandoned buildings highlight the

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<sup>83</sup> Ponech, *What Is Non-Fiction Cinema?*

<sup>84</sup> Kenny, “‘The Cordillera of Dreams’ Review: From the Heights to the Depths.”

deceiving geography of Chile: in a place where the physical remains of the past are not indicative of the historical traumas, the voice of a mourning exile can influence the audience's reevaluation of the hidden past.

Perhaps in his strongest example, Guzmán enters the abandoned headquarters of Pinochet's military government in downtown Santiago. This high rise does not have indications of its history – there is no name or memorial plaque; left behind are what Guzmán refers to as the “ghosts” of Pinochet's generals and bits of paperwork strewn on the carpeted floor. Guzmán identifies these physical, eerie, but unnamed remains of the neoliberalist project which has overcome the nation. He does not identify explicitly the atrocities committed by Pinochet, but this exploration of the headquarters comes after interviews condemning the disappearance and torture of tens of thousands of Chileans under the junta.<sup>85</sup>

“Guzmán did not return to his homeland for decades, and one of the sites he visits in this film is his childhood home in Santiago, the facade of which seems immaculately preserved -- but the house has no roof.”<sup>86</sup> The use of drone footage to capture the beautiful, but dated, façade of his childhood home and the zoom out and above the structure to reveal the missing roof and ruined interior structure – vegetation and litter decorating and empty space. Guzmán's childhood home is a historical relic that maintains a beautiful exterior but is “rotten” on the inside. The nation has, as with the building, taken over the community-driven history of Chile's mid-century by destroying the citizenry from the inside, destroying the foundation, and overtaking the space with contemporary capitalist systems that suppress attempts at community.

*Guzmán's lens flies the way you would wish your own eye could, unveiling incredible natural beauty and revealing secrets: a labyrinth of gorges [in the Andes, mining*

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<sup>85</sup> Winn, *Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973–2002*. 21.

<sup>86</sup> Kenny, “‘The Cordillera of Dreams’ Review: From the Heights to the Depths.”

operations destroying the landscape] ... *The filmmaker's narration nuzzles up to the metaphysical, and frequently anthropomorphizes the mountains that practically seal off Guzmán's homeland. But given his own story and the story this picture needs to tell, the movie toggles between heights and depths.*<sup>87</sup>

After the destruction of the physical past Guzmán demonstrates in Santiago and the Cordillera – disfigured landscapes of Chile – Guzmán's nostalgic attitude in his concluding narration is confounding. In drawing a congruent relationship between the seen and unseen, the physical and sociocultural destruction of the nation, the “rotten soul” of Chile, Guzmán's final words in the film's voiceover are positive; “my wish is that Chile recovers its childhood and its joy.” Guzmán dreams of a recuperation of Chilean society that seems unattainable in response to the thesis of his non-fiction film. However, as the Popular Unity filmmakers manifesto suggests, “let us not limit ourselves from going beyond our contradictions; let us develop them and open for ourselves the way which leads to the construction of a lucid and liberating culture.”<sup>88</sup> Perhaps this is exactly how Guzmán utilizes socialist ideologies within *The Cordillera of Dreams*, a film made almost fifty years after the filmmakers' manifesto was published in 1970.

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<sup>87</sup> Kenny.

<sup>88</sup> “Filmmakers and the Popular Government Political Manifesto.”

## **The Cordillera on Film: Guzmán's use of Geography and Narration to Rebuild the Past**

Latin America and the Caribbean's consciousness was opened through socialist thinking, particularly in states seeking further autonomy and popular sovereignty. A significant foundation for Socialist nationalism was peoples' ownership over physical and cultural products from their nation: agrarian reform and nationalization of mining operations were two socialist techniques utilized by communist Cuba and socialist Chile to develop national strength economically. The Andes as a symbol for Chile in Guzmán's 2019 film demonstrates the difference in natural resources' treatment a during Popular Unity's socialist presidency and Pinochet's authoritarian dictatorship.

The traditional socialist film, as aforementioned, has a call to action for the viewer: it may be as simple as "join the revolution." Claims do not have to be explicitly stated in the film to instigate a conversation with or within the audience regarding the represented ideologies. Films are meant to intellectually challenge and create cultural progress: non-fiction films that *re-*present history traditionally do so with an assertion or claim regarding why this reinterpretation is necessary.<sup>89</sup>

Documentaries attempt to explore facets of historical narratives that are underrepresented due to their subversive nature or recently found evidence: Guzmán's *The Cordillera of Dreams* does not have provide a thesis regarding Chilean histories, rather begins as Guzmán's first-person exploration of the Chilean Andes as an entryway to his homeland. Guzmán asserts that the Andes are largely ignored by Chilean peoples due to their consistent presence in their lives: Guzmán *re-*presents the Andes as a symbol for the resilience of the Chilean people throughout the last five decades, both during and in the aftermath of neoliberalism and dictatorship.

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<sup>89</sup> Ponech, *What Is Non-Fiction Cinema?*

Guzmán attempts to utilize the Andes' positionality in Chilean history as a method of reinterpretation in *Cordillera*: the focus on the Cordillera in the work is clear in the film's title, narration, and visual emphasis on the mountain range. The Andes' destruction through extractive capitalism headed by foreign investors is emphasized, and further politicizes Guzmán's message: not only is the filmmaker mournful of the violence enacted by Pinochet's junta, Guzmán identifies the legacy of suppression living on through the neoliberalist state.

As demonstrated in the first two films of his most recent triptych, as well as *The Cordillera of Dreams*, Guzmán has an emotional connection with the geographical features that defined the landscape of his childhood. He trusts that their bearing witness to the atrocities would hold onto histories being cast aside in favor of national development. The attachment to the geography Guzmán displays is evident in his recording of the still-standing artifacts from the socialist utopic past: Guzmán claims he cannot connect with the ever-changing sociopolitical atmosphere and uses geographical features as visual reminders of his childhood.

In highlighting artists who are inspired by the Cordillera, Guzmán highlights Chileans who are aligned in Allende-inspired, socialist understandings of sovereignty and nationalism. These artists look to the Cordillera as a symbol of persistent hope, a geography that holds a nostalgic place in their minds and has remained consistent "witnesses" to the history of their nation.<sup>90</sup>

*The Cordillera of Dreams'* narrative is driven by a group of Chilean artists, guided by Guzmán. Some live in exile, have returned, or never left their Chilean homeland. Despite their migratory differences, each artist interviewed was white and at least middle-aged; born early enough to recall Allende's election, the coup d'état, and subsequent years of repressive

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<sup>90</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams.*

dictatorship. These artists form a consistent, and therefore strong, narrative regarding Chile's history: as the interviewees recall their emotional experiences with a changing nation during their youth and young adulthood, Guzmán's voiceover fills in necessary context regarding the political climate of Chile at the time.

To draw out the consistently Socialist-aligned, persuasive narrative presented in *The Cordillera of Dreams*, utopic memories of the Allende years and vivid recollections of repression under Pinochet will be examined through quotes from the film -- both from interviewees and in Guzmán's voiceover.

To further explore the centrist alignment of Guzmán's film as explored in the previous section, **Chilean Filmmaking in Exile**, Guzmán's methods will be examined as established by Chile Films' centrist ideals as led by Allende's Popular Unity government: Guzmán's work miscarries representation of the common person, utilizing points of access to stories of revolution that is inaccessible to the masses. For example, accessing Chilean history, not only as an expatriate, but through artists who were able to evade the junta. This is not to imply Guzmán should not be telling the story of artists who are creators of his homeland's cultural products, but it is important to recognize Guzmán's attempt to tell the stories of the Chilean peoples would be drastically different if he were to reach outside of his peer group who had access to international asylum during the coup d'état.

Though, it cannot be claimed that Guzmán has not previously represented a diverse group of Chileans: in both precursing films to *The Cordillera of Dreams*, Guzmán centers victims of the junta and their family members, particularly those who continue to practice mourning publicly. Furthermore, it cannot be asserted that Guzmán would have been able to access everyday Chileans in his work regardless. Due to a repressive and individualized culture, and the

lack of financial stability within the Chilean working class, Guzmán's artist peers both within and outside of Chile may have been of few comfortable assuming the risk that comes with attaching their name with explicitly anti-Pinochet sentiment on an international platform. For the interviewees, it can be presumed that their livelihood is not at risk for supporting Guzmán's leftist film.

Even with this complicated dynamic, it is important to recognize the limited diversity of voices highlighted in *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Particularly, the claims at representation for a national body made by Guzmán and interviewees is problematic: the use of plural personal pronouns [we, us, our] when speaking from a position of privilege creates generalizations about a nation of predominantly working-class peoples. These groups have a differently nuanced history of their homeland and are suffering more intensely under the sociopolitical repercussions of neoliberalism.

Due to the disparity in experience between the interviewees and majority of Chileans, *Cordillera* is a film best utilized as an expression of Chilean identity in physical exile and/or emotionally distanced from the post-dictatorial state. Thus, *Cordillera's* representation of history comes from individuals who have a yearning for a utopic, socialist democratic state of their youth and, through the mourning of its destruction, view their nation's history through disdain for the villainization of Allende by Pinochet's state.

Although these artists are in a position of privilege within their nation, they are more honest representatives than the government, who the artists condemn for refusing to admit to the wrongdoings of Pinochet, instead calling them "mistakes." These artists are, still socialist in the then-present state of Chile, critical of foreign investors who come to their nation to exploit the natural resources and privatize land for their own use:

[foreigners living in Chile] *own the lakes! ... We can't access them. That's just the way it is. They are still in charge... It's an unbelievable situation. These people use and abuse what Pinochet left behind.*<sup>91</sup>

The interviewees being artists who lived in Chile during the coup is vital to the way in which Guzmán tells the story of the junta. These individuals, because of their artistic drive, sought out situations that were considered dangerous during the coup, particularly for people such as artists and intellectuals who were presumed to be socialist. For example, Pablo Salas, the documentarian whose archival footage is shone throughout the film, sought to record the actions of the junta during the coup d'état. As he is interviewed, Guzmán collages a series of Pablo's film from the day of the coup, where military personnel are seen raiding homes and detaining men in the National Stadium.

Not only are the position of artists important in what artifacts they are invested in maintaining from the past, filmmakers who captured footage against the will of the regime collected visual and auditory demonstrations of what truly happened at these junctures of history. Audio visual media is one of the most effective in demonstrating non-fiction narrative, for the evidence can be accessed by each viewer and interpreted without narration. However, Guzmán's inclusion of voice over throughout the entirety of the film creates cohesion between multiple interviewees and contemporary versus archival footage: Guzmán bridges gaps between evidence and context information when reconstructing these histories.

Pablo, Guzmán's filmmaking peer is clear to establish the small percentage of documentation he was able to capture during the regime:

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<sup>91</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Pablo Salas.

*What I and the others were able to film during the dictatorship, isn't even 5% of the dictatorship's atrocities. The dictatorship tortured, killed, drove people into exile, it used intimidation... None of that was filmed. It wasn't filmed. Witnessing torture, I believe that's something else. That hasn't been filmed. The images we have give us an idea of how awful the dictatorship was. We can imagine the rest.*<sup>92</sup>

Guzmán's narration includes the first on-film reflection of his traumatic detainment during the coup. As Pablo stated, the detainments and torture were not filmed so they must be imagined:

*I was held prisoner for two weeks, without the military finding out where my film reels were. I remember perfectly this view of the score board. After that coup d'état, I never lived in Chile again, although I dedicated my whole career to my country. Afterwards, I left the stadium, then I left Chile to save my film reels.*<sup>93</sup>

Guzmán's voiceover is paired with cinematic shots taken within the National Stadium, panning over the thousands of seats once filled by detained Chileans during the weeks following the coup. Guzmán asks us to imagine the scenes of such violence by describing their visual qualities and using his camera to frame the now-empty setting of the atrocities.

Guzmán continues to utilize visual explorations of his dystopian homeland's geography, pairing narration that asks the viewer to rebuild lost realities. The juxtaposition between Guzmán's reminiscent stories of childhood and the abandoned spaces he films further asserts his view of the Chile he remembers as completely unsalvageable. "Memory is constructed from the present; it is the work of recomposing, through the tools and materials provided in the present,

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<sup>92</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Pablo Salas.

<sup>93</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

what has been lived in the past.”<sup>94</sup> In attempts to connect with an unreachable past, Guzmán utilizes physical reminders of historical realities.

*These paving stones have been here for many years. They are made of rocks from the Cordillera. When I was a child, I loved to step on them. I used to break free from my grandmother’s hand and step on them, one by one. Later on, those paving stones were the first to feel the footsteps of the terror marching through the city. People discovered the sound of the tanks and military trucks. During the night, they heard noises that nobody had ever heard. In the morning, they saw people following other people. When they went outside, they walked in fear.*<sup>95</sup>

Within mere sentences, Guzmán’s narration explores the decades of personal and political history within the physical and emotional experiences of the paving stones that line Santiago’s historic streets. Guzmán’s frames of the stone-paved roads zoom in, focusing on more recent additions to the cobblestone; stones with plaques are interspersed alongside the older stones. The commemorative pieces each have a name of victims of Pinochet’s regime, stating their full name, birth date, and date gone missing. “If the rocks from the Cordillera could speak, they would speak of the blood that ran over them. Here, are engraved the names of some of the victims.”<sup>96</sup>

Guzmán has faith and connection with the geographical features, trusting that their bearing witness to the atrocities would hold onto histories being lost and intentionally forgotten, cast aside. Is this a connection and belief in the geography’s protection over its residents and against human atrocities – Guzmán is attached to the geography because the physicality of these artifacts herald to a utopic past. This need for connection is seen frequently in exile filmmaking

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<sup>94</sup> Bello, “Reconstructing Private Memory of Dictatorship in Chilean Contemporary Documentaries.”

<sup>95</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

<sup>96</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

tradition, where the artist and exile are unable to fully comprehend and connect with the ever-changing political atmosphere, so they look towards visual artifacts of their mythologized, utopic past.

*During the entire dictatorship, the Cordillera remained in its place. Perhaps it watched us without us knowing. I never thought of this before, but I believe the mountain is a witness. It has seen things that people tried to hide from us. If we could translate what the rocks say, we would have the missing answers, today.*<sup>97</sup>

The hopeful attitude Guzmán retains regarding an uncovering of the inconceivable past demonstrates a disbelief in the intense cultural shifts taken place in his homeland. Guzmán expresses this lack of acceptance for the loss he has experienced in his final narrative statement of the film:

*I found small fragments of the universe in the Cordillera. They are preserved in Chilean museums. They are meteorites, stones that fall from the sky. They are small pieces of planets, that come from very far away. My mother taught me that each time a meteorite falls, in the middle of the night, you can make a wish which comes true if you keep it secret. But I want to say it out loud. My wish is that Chile recovers its childhood and its joy.*<sup>98</sup>

His final words are disjointed from the imagery and narrative of wreckage that define Guzmán's work. This final statement functions to express the experience of an exile subject: unable to return to the homeland that existed before they fled, and unable to reconnect with the changed nation. In both scenarios, the exile cannot return home.

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<sup>97</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

<sup>98</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

## **Artifacts of a Regime: Post-dictatorial Subjectivity and Mourning a Neoliberal Legacy**

Throughout Guzmán's first-person narration in *The Cordillera of Dreams*, he admits to never discussing publicly the constant feelings of isolation he is fraught with due to exile, kept emotionally distant from his homeland. Guzmán has not reflections in his two-week long detainment in the National Stadium, with thousands of other artists, scholars, socialists, and otherwise dissidents deemed threatening to the military regime's ideological framework.

*The Cordillera of Dreams* is a collective representation of the evolving condition of Chilean exile, utilizing Guzmán's recollections of the coup d'état and his detainment, and making known the experiences of his artist peers: Guzmán and his peers publicly exhume their personal experiences of expatriation. Some artists, such as Pablo Salas, a filmmaker who worked on Guzmán's *The Battle of Chile*, never left Chile; however, Pablo identifies with the condition of exile due to his emotional separation from the homeland.

Guzmán is abundantly clear regarding his lack of residency in Chile, and how he admires the artists who either returned to Chile or never left, and faced the daily horrors of the neoliberal state. One of these artists is Pablo Salas: he filmed throughout the dictatorship and the following democratic governments throughout the late twentieth and into the present day. Guzmán is sensitive to the difference in filmmaking done between himself and Pablo's: Guzmán openly reveres Pablo for staying in Chile throughout the dictatorship, where he did the important work of building an archive of documentary film with the intention of collecting Chilean historical realities for future generations.

The function of the archive in Guzmán's film indicates the ideological position Guzmán as the auteur holds. Guzmán's dedication to reconstructing Chilean history is done so in an indisputable manner. The film's voiceover describes events that play on screen from Pablo's

first-hand coverage of the events: the pairing of archival film and a voiceover which adds context to these visuals are persuasive, and they serve as irrefutable evidence for deniers of Pinochet's violence.

According to socialist filmmaking ideologies, Guzmán's position as an artist and historian of Chile is to confront the difficult realities ignored by the state: because he does not live in the destroyed homeland this distance allows him to highlight voices from the inside, from fellow artists. Guzmán claims that "an artist is the guardian of his country's beauty"<sup>99</sup>: Guzmán is an established filmmaker and presumably includes himself as an artist and Chile as his country. Guzmán, in reaching the historical memory within the artists and their relationship to the cordillera, reconstructs national trauma through his own art practice.

As with Guzmán's first film of the trilogy, *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010), the subjects of provided testimonies regarding dictatorship while searching for physical remains of the past. Guzmán frames his Chilean subjects as mourning through meditative practices in seeking bone fragments and supernovas from the seemingly barren Atacama desert.

The centrality of artists and filmmakers in Guzmán's *Cordillera* follows this narrative technique: in moving fluidly between talking-heads style interviews and the same artists working in their studios, Guzmán frames his peers' art as products of grappling with their personal traumas for an international audience who experiences their work. Guzmán's interviewed artists make up the emotional core of the film, constructing an explanation of loss and sorrow felt by Chileans, particularly those who experienced exile. Importantly, exile can also occur within one's own country, a divorcing of oneself from the temporal reality that surrounds them.

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<sup>99</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*.

Through interviews, Guzmán pieces together a strong of personal stories regarding the violence of the coup and military state: a narrative that encourages the audience to reflect on the dictatorship’s lasting detriment to the interviewed artists and the larger national culture. From the “process of acceptance and questioning [the past] comes the reformulation of individual and collective subjectivity.”<sup>100</sup> Interviews reveal the traumatic experiences of the regime and make sense of the cultural destruction that ensued: Guzmán argues that not only did the sociopolitical repression drive Chileans inward, away from public life, the institution of economic neoliberalism enforced ideals of individuality and profit over the wellbeing of the peoples. This pairing established seventeen years of cultural repression and reprogramming for Chilean nationals. As discussed in the second section, **Chile Under Authoritarianism**, the replacement of media deemed socialist in favor of capitalist state-run programming attempted to alter the national attitude regarding hierarchical systems of power. Media encouraged working-class Chileans to shift their view of businessmen from “leeches” to “glamorous.”<sup>101</sup> The *re-*presentation of the businessman to minimize resistance by socialist-inspired anti-capitalists.

As cultural producers of younger generations in Chile grew up under neoliberalism, individualism established by the junta is what these artists know to be Chilean. Guzmán’s interviewees mourn the loss of Chilean culture as young people in the nation do not learn about the past. Instead, the expressions of injustice from young people come by way of “today’s actual problems,” as Pablo Salas states.

*Human rights mobilize people less than before. Today, it’s about women’s rights, abortion, education, retirement. Those are today’s actual problems. Problems of repression, torture and disappearances no longer exist. But injustice is still the same.*

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<sup>100</sup> Zuzana M. Pick, “Exile and Displacement.” 159.

<sup>101</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. 205.

*Nothing has changed. Except there are no deaths, no disappeared people. The situation remains the same.*<sup>102</sup>

Pablo cites the pattern of injustice in Chile as why he began filmmaking in a documentary style:

*I got involved with this and I'm stuck in it, by my own choice. All I want is to preserve a trace of what the dictatorship was like, how we live, how we used to live, to show that to the young, so that none of it is forgotten. And you realize that people don't want this.*<sup>103</sup>

Pablo asserts that the recovery of Chilean historical realities is stunted because the Chilean youth does not have the intrinsic drive to combat the state's pressure to forget these histories.

As aforementioned, Guzmán's uplifting of his artistic peers who grapple with their experience of exile both within and outside of their Chilean homeland is important in reconstructing historical memory for those living within Chile. Guzmán's use of Pablo Salas' archival footage roots the filmmaker's exploration of history as part of a larger movement to recover memory of the nation. In part, the use of archival footage from an independent filmmaker enforces the idea that the truth of past realities cannot be accessed through state institutions who author official histories. Paired with the documentary film clips recording the coup, Guzmán and interviewee's voiceovers recalling their personal reflections from the events playing out onscreen add increased testimonial power to the film.

*Pablo's archives are a fragile treasure, but an extraordinary one. They are the witnesses of a page of Chilean history. They maintain intact and visible the thousands of faces of the popular resistance. Thanks to Pablo's work, it is impossible to erase history and claim that the past didn't happen.*<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Pablo Salas.

<sup>103</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Pablo Salas.

<sup>104</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

The use of archival images is imperative in a film constructed of contemporary cinematography: “the black and white sequences are like obstacles thrown in the path of subjectivity and, like shreds of a fragmented past, they establish a point of view through which history can be reimagined.”<sup>105</sup> Non-fiction filmmakers utilize archives to construct a unique and closer view of historical realities from a non-official perspective.<sup>106</sup>

Pablo Salas’ reflections on the experience of documenting Chilean historical realities expresses the importance of filmmaking in his eyes, risking his own life to record the once-in-a-lifetime events shaking his homeland:

*20,000 prisoners in a stadium... We went inside a building and between the 3rd or 4th floor, a window looked onto the stadium. We saw that it was full of people. The stadium walls were high. I pulled myself up as high as I could and began to film. The image isn't very good quality, but you can see the mass of prisoners. It was a concentration camp, the dictatorship being well established. It was astonishing. We filmed and then quickly left.*<sup>107</sup>

Guzmán uses archival footage in *The Cordillera of Dreams* to demonstrate the difference in Chile of the past and in the contemporary. This footage is presented as to be (re)exhumed, something sheltered away in the private office of a filmmaker who dedicated his career to recording public unrest. The never-before-shown footage, tells a story of resistance within Chile through the present day, comparing the cycles of non-violent resistance with armed repression throughout different protests, though they all resist imperialist and neoliberal structures.

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<sup>105</sup> Zuzana M. Pick, “Exile and Displacement.” 164.

<sup>106</sup> Bello, “Reconstructing Private Memory of Dictatorship in Chilean Contemporary Documentaries.” 123.

<sup>107</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Pablo Salas.

Guzmán pairs this footage with interviews, serene cinematography, and first-person narration to (re)construct Chilean history -- both literally through footage and in demonstrations of absence, of what has been taken from the physical landscape, a deterioration of the nation under capitalism.

Chilean exile cinema “was devoted to redirecting the object of mourning through the imaging of its present remains [rather than archival footage]... in order to get to the core of the exile experience, could only mean a turn inwards, a turn towards the exile subject.”<sup>108</sup> The use of contemporary footage of the homeland to demonstrate visual disparity between the current reality and historical experiences drives Guzmán’s narrative. Furthermore, his inaugural personal reflection on his escape from Chile exemplifies the assertion that cinema made outside of the homeland is imbued with the auteur’s condition of exile: Guzmán uses his personal narrative of the coup to demonstrate his position as perpetual outsider in Chile, and the visit back to his homeland was in search of a past reality no longer held by the society.

In the post-social Chile, Guzmán looks for the ‘truth’ of the nation’s past through archival footage, testimony, and contemporary explorations of the geography. The historical reality of Chileans is not acknowledged by the state or the inhabitants, so Guzmán looks to unassuming artifacts to demonstrate the immense sociopolitical and physical destruction enacted by the military state.

Guzmán’s *Cordillera* exposes the dictatorship’s legacy as authored by socialist artists who suffered under the authoritarian regime: Guzmán reveals Chilean geography as a victim to Pinochet through the extractive mining operations that are tucked away in the Andes. Guzmán demonstrates the difficulty to identify private property on maps, and there are no public access

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<sup>108</sup> Palacios, “Resistance vs. Exile: The Political Rhetoric of Chilean Exile Cinema in the 1970s.”

roads to these spaces. Pinochet's legacy exists in the maintained distance, both socially and physically, from the Chilean peoples and reminders of such destructive capitalism: Guzmán's film reveals physical reminders of national trauma tucked away in the Andes.

“A post-social environment is one where objects displace human beings as relationship partners and embedding environments, or where they increasingly mediate human relationships, making the latter dependent upon the former.”<sup>109</sup> Guzmán's film demonstrates his mediation of the past and the Chilean peoples through the geography, as he cannot reach the historical truths due to Pinochet's legacy of cultural repression.

The Andes are an area of focus that allows for the collective imagination to explore, as the post-social Chileans can no longer demonstrate commitment to the sociopolitical. Guzmán's *Cordillera* embodies the claims that in post-social environments, the individuals “no longer seek salvation in society but elsewhere.”<sup>110</sup> Guzmán experiences the dilemma of the post-social in Chile, necessarily finding traumatic meaning in the hauntingly beautiful geographical features of his homeland.

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<sup>109</sup> Cetina, “Postsocial.”

<sup>110</sup> Cetina.

## Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, the nation globalized through neoliberalism is positioned in contrast to the welfare state: in the perspective of global capitalism, the former is considered a developed nation and the latter underdeveloped.<sup>111</sup> Demonstrated clearly in *The Cordillera of Dreams*, the utopic socialist democratic memory of Guzmán's homeland and the dystopic, post-dictatorial nation he no longer recognizes serve to position Chile as a fallen democracy.

The globalized Chile seeks foreign investment and incredible wealth disparity to maintain the foundations for exploitative capitalism: a prioritization of accumulating national capital that destroyed Chilean society. To garner investment on an international level, Chile purged its peoples of class consciousness, particularly due to their ties to Marxist ideological frameworks in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Guzmán positions the contemporary neoliberal state as conflicting with the historical reality of socialist ideologies from his youth in Chile: the post-national is distinctly incongruent with the sovereign state, as seen clearly in “its different forms of organization, socialization, subjectification, and memory.”<sup>112</sup> The distinct change in social organization is examined in *The Cordillera of Dreams*' interviews:

*Chileans like to talk to their neighbors, to form neighborhood groups, or political parties, like before, in the squares, those meeting places... I believe the sadness of this country is due, not to the [individualist] model itself, but to being part of a system that goes against its nature.*<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Poblete, “The Memory of the National and the National as Memory.” 94.

<sup>112</sup> Poblete. 94.

<sup>113</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*.

The interviewee positions neoliberalism as inherently counterintuitive to peoples who enthusiastically followed Allende's *la vía chilena*.

Guzmán's film criticizes Chile's attempt to violently induct an economic system attractive to international capitalists as this eradicated the culture of Chilean peoples. The focus of Guzmán's film in struggling to find his historic homeland in the ruins of neoliberalist society demonstrates Chile's lack of mediation between the local and global. Instead of working with the Chilean culture to foster genuine interest in capitalism to foster national identity, Pinochet's government violently suppressed the voices of unarmed, guiltless citizens to enforce a culture of fear. This culture, or lack thereof, allowed for the relatively smooth introduction of neoliberal economics to Chile: piece by piece destroying the sovereign state by revoking agrarian reforms and selling the nation's precious resources. Through the bloody institution of neoliberalism, the national culture of Chile was dismantled due to its socialist "mediation between the specific and the universal" that was perceived as a threat to the military state.<sup>114</sup>

Even within his work that explores Chile's past with emotional intensity and demonstrates the grand scale of damage done physically, culturally, and politically in the nation, Guzmán primarily reckons with the echoes of history. Guzmán explores the past through physical remains of the neoliberalist project, not necessarily direct acknowledgements of Pinochet's atrocities: "in Chile, what cannot be seen does not exist."<sup>115</sup> By creating meaning through memory using the physical landscape, Guzmán changes the geography of his homeland for himself and the audience informed by his work.

Guzmán's utilization of the Andes as "witnesses" of Chilean history reveals his mediation of the past through the landscape. As discussed in the introduction, Guzmán's

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<sup>114</sup> Poblete, "The Memory of the National and the National as Memory." 93.

<sup>115</sup> *The Cordillera of Dreams*. Patricio Guzmán.

construction of Chilean historical realities function outside of scholar Steve Stern's frameworks regarding historical memory: it is larger than "remembering," memory is "the meaning attached to experience."<sup>116</sup>

Stern identifies "memory knots" or physical and temporally specific recollections of the past as one mode, and the other as an individual's reflection upon realizing their own and other traumas and from them declare personal and cultural meaning.<sup>117</sup> Guzmán's film transgresses Stern's two predominant methods of constructing historical memory: the filmmaker uses the association of past events with their temporal and physical qualities and, emblematic memory, the reflection upon traumatic personal and social experiences, to draw out cultural meaning.

In merging of two styles of memory construction, Guzmán created a film with densely populated with meaningful visual and audio testimonies to the destruction of his homeland. Memory construction, particularly ones that relate to emotional responses to a historical reality, are incredibly personal and often difficult to communicate to an audience that does not share the same experience. It is that much more impressive, then, that Guzmán not only expresses his and his peers' emotional difficulty during the coup but exhumes the condition of the exile and his lack of comfort being back in his homeland. The condemnation for what Chile has become positions Guzmán as a continued socialist dissident in the post dictatorial state: his work about Chile brings awareness to the lives, cultural products, and society that have been purposefully disappeared. Pinochet's legacy lies in the distance created between Chileans and their national memory, between peers, and the nation's geography.

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<sup>116</sup> Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988*. 5.

<sup>117</sup> Stern. 5.

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