Caution and Distortion: Consuming Narratives of Violent Fourth World Space and Inhabitants in Colombian Cultural Products 1990-2005

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Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy (or other degree as appropriate) by Sarah Jane Parry

Dedicated to Beverley Ann Littler-Parry-Halleron

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Introduction

- ¡Qué barbaridad! –
suspiró ilusionada-. Todo
esto ha sido como para
escribir un libro.

Gabriel García Márquez
– Noticia de un
secuestro[1]

This thesis provides an original contribution to explorations of representations of urban violence in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century through the analysis of four Colombian cultural products. Although the study of representations of violence in Colombia is far from new, there is much ground to be covered, due both to the complexities of violence in the nation, and the resulting cultural outputs exploring these complexities. Rather than violence *per se*, I focus on the representation of the violent actor in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and its relationship to the representation of urban spaces within Colombia. I tie this to representations of marginal urban spaces globally, in order to analyse the cultural products as consumer products in a global market. As a result, Colombian urban violence, I argue, is a consumer product, as illustrated in Gabriel García Márquez's quotation cited above, as the speaker asserts that the violent events narrated should be recorded as a book.[2]

I argue that the presentation of violent actors in both media and cultural products must be considered not as realistic representations, but as mythical constructs, formulated and circulated through a combination of representations in popular discourse, mass media and cultural products. In particular, the representation of the *sicario* – the baby-faced assassin – has led to a spatial myth, related to the *barrios marginales* of Medellín.[3] As the thesis progresses, I suggest that the representation of the *sicario* as an inhabitant of this marginal space is aligned to an increasingly homogenised global representation of the marginalised urban inhabitant. This figure inhabits marginal spaces in cities across the globe, and

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[1] Gabriel García Márquez, *Noticia de un secuestro* (Barcelona: Mondadori, 1996), p. 327.
[2] I will return to this epigraph later in the introduction to reveal fully its relevance to this thesis, which does not incorporate García Márquez's work into the main body of analysis.
[3] A *sicario* is the term used to describe young contracted killers, who are almost always male youths and inhabit the marginal spaces of the city.

is increasingly recognisable despite his/her locality. My thesis thus explores and analyses, through a comparison of the paratext and text of four cultural products, the conformity and opposition to this growing homogenisation. Therefore, at stake in this thesis is a tension between local, national and global representations, in particular in relation to the marginal inhabitant, expressed through Manuel Castells's concept of the 'fourth world'. The thesis therefore makes a contribution not only to the study of Colombian cultural production within Colombian Cultural Studies, but also within the Latin American region as a whole, and in its focus on the violent actor situated in the marginal space on the edge of the city, there is also a contribution to be made to analyses of the Other.

Each of the four cultural products under analysis represents a different genre - novel, *testimonio*, fictional feature film, and documentary - and the narrative in each follows the lives of violent actors. I have purposely chosen to analyse cultural products from different genres, as it allows me to highlight the trends common to the representation of violent actors in cultural representation as a whole. The narrative of Laura Restrepo's novLeopardo al sol follows the slow-burning feud between two drug-trafficking families, and records the impact of the introduction of an anonymous *sicario* into the conflict.[4] Alonso Salazar's '*testimonio*' *No nacimos pa'semilla* documents the lives of violent young men and those around them in the late 1980s as a war between drug barons and the state was at its height.[5] Barbet Schroeder's cinematic adaptation of the novel *La virgen de los sicarios* documents the interaction between *sicarios* and a recently-returned Medellín exile,[6] while *La Sierra* documents the lives of paramilitary members in Medellín's peripheral *barrio* of the same name.[7] The cultural products were published between 1990 and 2005, a 15-year period in which urban violence in Colombia continued at very high levels.[8] However, to understand this urban manifestation of violence, it is necessary to understand the complex history of violence within the nation.

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[4] Laura Restrepo, *Leopardo al sol* (Bogotá: Anagrama, 1993).

[5] Alonso Salazar, *No nacimos pa'semila* (Bogotá: Planeta: 1990). Many scholars refer to the text as *testimonio*, for example, see Deborah Martin, *Painting, Literature and Film in Colombian Feminine Culture, 1940-2005: of Border Guards, Nomads and Women* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2012), p. 87; Margarita María Uribe Viveros, 'Los cuerpos del margen como «espectáculo»: A propósito de *Rosario Tijeras*', in *Pasen y vean: estudios culturales*, ed. by Isabel Clúa & Pau Pitarch, pp. 33-39 (p. 34); Margarita Jácome, *La novela sicaresca: testimonio, sensacionalismo y ficción* (Medellín: Fondo Editorial Universidad EAFIT, 2009), pp. 50-1; Hermann Herlinghaus, *Violence Without Guilt: Ethical Narratives from the Global South* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), p. 105. It has also been labelled a 'libro pertubador' by Geoffrey Kantaris, 'El cine urbano y la tercera *Violencia* Colombiana', *Revista iberoamericana*, 74: 223 (2008), 455-70 (p. 462). Although here it is labelled a *testimonio*, I refute this as explained in the chapter.

[6] *La virgen de los sicarios*.Dir. Barbet Schroeder, writ. Fernando Vallejo. Colombia: 1999.

[7] *La Sierra.* Dir. Scott Dalton and Margarita Martinez. Colombia, 2005.

[8] For example, Daniel Pécaut (1999) cites that 'between 1980 and 1995 the estimated number of murder victims rose to more than 300,000', p. 141. The Inter-American Development Bank cites that in 1991, Medellín was the 'murder capital of the world', in which there was a homicide rate of 381 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

In this introduction, I explore the national, global and local contexts, but begin with the national context of Colombian violence, in order to provide a background for the reader unfamiliar with the complexities of the domestic situation. I halt this discussion at the point at which the war between drug cartels and the state broke out in the late 1980s because a further exploration of that period will form the final stages of the introduction. This will allow a discussion of the local specificities of the city of Medellín, which is necessary in order to understand the context in which three of the the four cultural products were constructed. In the interim, I explain the methodology of the thesis, which incorporates both paratextual and textual analysis to illustrate myths in circulation about violent figures. I also explore filmmaker/author interaction with audience/ideal reader where possible, and use the theory of Murray Smith to develop a model to do so. In order to explore further the local dimension of the representation of the Colombian violent actors, the theoretical discussion focuses upon Manuel Castells's concept of the fourth world, and Johann Galtung and Slavoj Žižek's theories of structural violence. I exemplify this discussion with examinations of the representation of fourth world spaces in France and the US to explore the global dimension of Castells's theory. I then consider the consumption of the fourth world space and its inhabitants, through a discussion of slum tourism, which illustrates an extreme form of commodity fetishism in the Latin American context of Brazil's *favelas*. This brings the discussion back to the Latin American region, the point at which I introduce the city of Medellín, where most of these cultural products are set.[9] I explore the history of the city and its links to the commodification of death and violence, due to the high-profile war between the country's most notorious drug barons, the Medellín cartel, and the state, which was a regular feature in global newspapers. In this discussion I also consider the linguistic articulation of a divided city, in which the central city inhabitants align themselves to other first world inhabitants across the globe, as opposed to those geographically proximate. I introduce the violent figures associated with urban violence in the city, and in particular focus upon the concept of the *desechable* as another extreme form of commodification of human beings, before moving on to discuss the four cultural products under analysis in the thesis.

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[9] Restrepo's novel – the focus of Chapter One- is set in the Northern region of La Guajira, which is a traditional space of smuggling. I include the novel in this thesis because it illustrates the transition from representations of the charismatic drug baron to the anonymous *sicario,* despite its setting outside of the city of Medellín. It therefore introduces the *sicario* as a separate violent actor, and explores the emergence of this figure in the public imagination through innovative narrative voices. The analysis emphasises the differences between the drug baron and *sicario*, and points out that in general, there is much less knowledge about individual *sicarios* than the charismatic drug barons.

Context: Violence in Colombia

Violence in Colombia has been described as 'a tangled knot with no discernible beginning or end' due to its complexity, multiplicity of causes, actors and locations.[10] This complexity means it can be framed in many different ways, however, it cannot be simplified, therefore the following discussion will reflect this.[11] Academic studies abound in relation to violence in Colombia, and have looked to explain its different manifestations.[12] Mary Roldán best encapsulates the complexities of conflict and its various actors, when she proclaims in the introduction to the book *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953*, that the country produces 'the bulk of coca pressed into cocaine and shipped to the world's largest consumer of drugs', suffers from crime and corruption related to that trade, is home to oldest guerrilla insurgency in the Western Hemisphere, has a history for substantial numbers of kidnappings, and an active presence of brutal paramilitary groups.[13] Not only does this extensive list point to the existence of multiple forms of and perpetrators of violence, it also highlights that to write about current manifestations of violence in the country provides one with a dilemma, namely where to trace the origins of the various conflicts back to.

Violence has been present in Colombia since the founding of the nation.[14] The colonial viceroyalty of New Granada - the country now known as Colombia - was liberated from Spanish rule as part of Simon Bolívar's campaign during the independence period in the early nineteenth century. However, the early years of the nation were tainted by disputes between President Bolívar and his deputy Santander,

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[10] Jenny Pearce, *Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1990) (p. 3). Pearce also describes the nation's history as 'the most complex in Latin America' (p. 4).
[11] Although the history of violence in Colombia cannot be simplified, many scholars have attempted to do so; some with success. However, because each of these scholars frames their discussion in a different way, it is not particularly helpful to articulate each in turn. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, but because of the complexity of the conflict, any simplification by its very nature has gaps in analysis. For example, Jenny Pearce explores twentieth-century violence in Colombia. She articulates a divide between representations of violence, and characterises the conflict at the end of the century as two interlinking wars. The first and most visible was the 'commercial war,' undertaken by powerful figures to protect their business interests. The second she characterises as the 'dirty war', which has a 'far more numerous set of victims, in this case mostly from the lower echelons of society' (p. 1). This differentiation is important, as it makes a clear distinction between the more visible violence – the 'commercial' war- and that which is largely invisible yet had wider effects. As I will discuss further below, the rural conflict during *La Violencia* is the 'dirty war' to which Pearce refers, and one which still has yet to end. It is perpetrated against ordinary people, whereas the commercial war was perpetrated by high profile drug figures, most visibly drug barons, against the state.
[12] For example, Daniel Pécaut has analysed the origins of *La Violencia*, while others, such as Juan Carlos Vélez Rendón, have focused on more recent conflicts linked to the drug trade. See, for example, Daniel Pécaut, *Orden y violencia en Colombia 1930-1953* (Bogotá: Siglo XXI, 1987) & Juan Carlos Vélez Rendón, 'Conflicto y guerra: la lucha por el orden en Medellín', *Estudios políticos*, 18 (2001) <http://quimbaya.udea.edu.co/estudiospoliticos/> [Accessed 23 August 2010].
[13] Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 1.
[14] For example, Paul Oquist, writing in 1980 in an influential and well respected monograph, *Violence, Conflicts & politics in Colombia*, cites thirteen 'important periods of violent political conflict in Colombia during the first century of Independence' (p. 43).

who was exiled for following a supposed assassination plot against the former.[15] After Bolívar's death, the provinces of Boyacá, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Magdalena and Panamá united to form the 'Republic of New Granada' in 1831, the boundaries of which replicated the old colonial viceroyalty.[16] The following year a new Constitution was adopted, new laws were put into place to support the nation, and Santander appointed the new President. In a comprehensive volume entitled *Pasado y presente de la violencia en Colombia*, Gonzalo Sánchez describes Colombia in the nineteenth century as 'un país de guerra endémica, permanente',[17] a sentiment later endorsed by Jenny Pearce, who asserted that the nation 'fell into the hands of warring landowners and merchants unable to build a coherent state, although they remained committed to constitutions, laws, and even elections'.[18] Disputes were largely at a local level, and ranged in duration from very short uprisings to those which were more long-term.[19] Indeed, the transition into the new century was overshadowed by the 'War of a Thousand Days' (1899-1902), in which it is estimated that around 100,000 people were killed.[20]

Although not discussed explicitly in this thesis, the context of violence in nineteenth-century Colombia is of great significance. Not only does it foreground a history of violence in the nation, in which regionalism prevailed and violent conflicts existed within the confines of the laws of the nation, but it also provides the context in which the two main political factions in Colombia were established: the *Conservadores* and the *Liberales*. There is much disagreement as to the distinct identities associated with the two groups, as exists in relation to the exact dates around which the two parties were established, however their existence is important in understanding the development of violence through the twentieth century and up to the context explored in this thesis.[21] It explains a clear split between elites, who were already divided along geographical boundaries. Before continuing to discuss the major developments of the twentieth century, I will consider further the regionalism that pervaded Colombia as a nation and the role that this has played in prolonged violence.

The regionalism of the nation is a subject of much discussion, with scholars such as Salazar and Jaramillo stating that there are different personality traits

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[15] Geoff Simons, *Colombia: A Brutal History* (London: Saqi, 2004), p. 24.
[16] Simons, p. 24.
[17] Gonzalo Sánchez G. 'Los estudios sobre la Violencia: Balance y perspectivas', in *Pasado y presente de la Violencia en Colombia*, ed. by Gonzalo Sánchez y Ricardo Peñaranda, (Bogotá: CEREC, 1986), pp. 11-30 (p.11).
[18] Jenny Pearce, p. 16.
[19] See David Bushnell, 'Politics and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Colombia', in *Violence in Colombia*, pp. 11-30.
[20] Bushnell, p. 14.
[21] Jenny Pearce suggests that the two parties date officially from the 1840s (p. 17), while Sánchez is more cautious, suggesting the parties have been in existence since the first half of the nineteenth century (p. 18).

associated with the various regions.[22] Although these claims need more substantial analysis, what is widely recognised is that the geographical divisions within Colombia have contributed to that sense of regionalism. Scholars such as Marcos Palacios note the difficulties caused by the varied terrain that would later assist the illegal activities that led to high levels of violence. Palacios states that 'Colombia's geography was a formidable obstacle to prosperity and democracy […] High transportation costs gave day-to-day viability to sleepy regions and enclaves, which remained as self-sufficient and disconnected from one another as they were before independence'.[23] He adds that '[t]he social and regional fragmentation of the country and the corrosive effects of partisan conflict have combined to produce a weak state'.[24] As Palacios notes, we can observe here that the geographical topography of the nation had, and continues to have, a real impact upon the political, social and economic activities of the nation. Indeed, this 'weak state' proved crucial in the twentieth century in which violent conflicts were created, merged and proliferated across much of the national territory.[25]

As the twentieth century dawned, Colombia was in the midst of 'the greatest of Latin America's nineteenth-century civil wars'.[26] The war was provoked by a sharp decline in world coffee prices, a period during which Liberals revolted, and the conflict, like the major one to come, descended into guerrilla warfare.[27] The end of the conflict was quickly followed by the separation of Panama with the support of the US in 1903.[28] The period that followed saw a rise in peasant organisation in rural areas, with various uprisings. The banana massacre in December 1928 made famous by Gabriel García Márquez in *Cien años de soledad*[29] was one of many signs of the discontent and violence yet to come.[30] The massacre was the result of army interventions at the United Fruit Company, where workers had gone on strike in protest at pay and conditions.[31] The strike which preceded the massacre however, was one that is generally cited to highlight the level of unrest experienced throughout the nation in this period, and marks the point at which Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a key

[22] Alonso Salazar and Ana María Jaramillo, *Medellín: Las subculturas del narcotráfico* (Bogotá: CINEP, 1992), pp. 111-116.

[23] Marcos Palacios, *Between Legitimacy & Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. *xi-xii*.

[24] Palacios, p. *xiii*.

[25] For more on the weakness of the Colombian state and its role in *La Violencia*, see Paul Oquist, 1980.

[26] Charles Bergquist, 'Chronology', in *Violence in Colombia*, pp. *ix-xiv* (p. *x*).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Gabriel García Márquez*, Cien años de soledad* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1967).

[30] For an in-depth discussion of its inclusion in the novel and how García Márquez's fictionalised representation came to be the accepted version of history, see Eduardo Posada-Carbó, 'Fiction as History: The *bananeras* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred years of Solitude*', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30 (1998), 395-414.

[31] For more analysis and a detailed account of the strike and the massacre itself, see Roberto Herrera Soto & Rafael Romero Castañeda, *La zona bananera del Magdalena: historia y léxico* (Yerbabuena: Imprenta Patriótica del Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1979).

figure in Colombian history, emerged as a champion of the working classes on behalf of the *Liberales*.[32]

The unrest in rural areas signified by the strike that preceded the massacre continued to develop in the background to political life in the capital, until its eruption into widespread violence in the 1940s. In some areas of the country it has ceased to end up to the present day.[33] The outbreak and prolonged period of fighting is known as *La Violencia*, which in addition to a major urban uprising in the capital Bogotá, saw widespread localised violence throughout the nation amongst the rural population. Violence was prolonged, and at a national level continued throughout the twentieth century to the present day, although mutating to incorporate new actors and changes that the progression of time brought. Mass violence in Bogotá was sparked by the assassination of the aforementioned Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who was by then the popular presidential candidate for the *Liberales*, on 9 April 1948, sparking 'the largest urban riots in twentieth century Colombian history', known as the *Bogotazo*.[34] Violence spread quickly to the provinces, where Conservative forces had been 'deploying death squads to crush any hint of opposition'.[35] Power was quickly re-established in the nation's capital in the days following the *Bogotazo* and those in power focused on avoiding any further outbreaks of violence in a similar way.[36] However, in rural areas it persisted, continuing to grow and to mutate. The way in which the urban and the rural experience contrast, and the means used to achieve the return to peace in the city, was to have great implications for the prolonged presence of violence across the nation until the present day. It also revealed the extent to which the state had little power over a country formed of disparate and difficult to reach regions.

La Violencia is a much-studied era of Colombian history. It is often characterised as a feud between political factions: the *Conservadores* and *Liberales,* who fought, displaced and killed one another.[37] The assassination of Gaitán, a popular candidate with real potential to bring about much desired land reforms in the

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[32] The *Conservadores* were in power at this time, and had dominated since 1886. As Posada-Carbó highlights, the events in December 1928 'came to weigh heavily on the country's perception of the army of the role of foreign capital' (p. 400).
[33] In the 1930s, 70% of the population lived in a rural setting (Palacios, p. 105), meaning unrest was hugely significant for the nation as a whole.
[34] Forrest Hylton, *Evil Hour in Colombia* (London: Verso, 2006), p 40. See Hylton's full chapter, entitled '*La Violencia*, 1946-57', for socioeconomic explanations for *La Violencia* & the *Bogotazo*, pp. 39-49. The event also marks the first of a number of political assassinations discussed in this thesis. I will return to this topic later in this introduction, to focus upon assassinations of political and other figures by young mercenaries in the final two decades of the twentieth century.
[35] Simons, p. 40.
[36] See Palacios, pp. 142-157 for an in-depth discussion of the aftermath of the *Bogotazo* from a national political perspective.
37 For a detailed account and thorough analysis of the period known as *La Violencia*, see Orlando Fals Borda, Germán Guzmán, and Eduardo Umaña Luna, *La Violencia en Colombia* (Bogotá: Punta de Lanza, 1977), and Oquist, 1980.

country is also cited as a key factor in determining the outbreak of prolonged violence. However, as Roldán indicates, as the period has been studied in more depth, there is less cohesion in the descriptions and analyses of activities and motivations of its participants. Violence had many manifestations, meanings, and its nature was largely determined by local conditions.[38] As Rory O'Bryen asserts, '[w]hat is so daunting […] for anyone seeking to understand these conflicts is the sense that the singular "thing" called *La Violencia* is in fact a composite of multiple "violences", each of which is inscribed in its own temporality of uncertain ruptures and broad continuities'.[39] Indeed, Oquist describes:

> some of the most important of the myriad types of conflicts: partisan-guerrilla civil wars; traditional rivalries between villages with vendetta mentalities over the entire gambit of conflicts endemic to agrarian societies; conflicts over the control of local power structures; land tenure conflicts; the coerced abandonment or sale of agricultural parcels; conflicts over the appropriation of coffee crops and other forms of banditry; and revenge violence stemming from all of the foregoing.[40]

In an attempt to describe *La Violencia*, Palacios notes that 'one or another armed group, legal or illegal, would take over a territory and impose its control on the population. Deaths were caused less by acts of war, however unconventional, than by atrocities and vengeances'.[41] In this way, it is clear to see how opaque the events, causes and effects of *La Violencia* continue to be, over half a century since its outbreak.

In addition to the lack of coherence in differentiating and categorising the various forms of violence, there is also discord as to the temporal boundaries surrounding *La Violencia.* Generally, the violence is cited as starting between 1946 and 1948, and ending in 1966, however, there are a number of scholars who argue otherwise. Like many others before me, I introduced the period with the example of the *Bogotazo*, yet then cautioned against using the event as a temporal marker for the 'beginning' of *La Violencia*. There is no traceable start to the period, and nor is there a satisfactory answer to the date for its conclusion; it has simply continued in different forms throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Gonzalo Sánchez suggests that there have been three clearly distinguishable phases to violence in the country, of which the period under discussion lies in the middle, beginning as a peasant conflict over land rights and developing into a class war. He suggests the events of the *Bogotazo* have 'two faces': one of social protest, an uprising against hunger and the cost of living, the other of political uprising, in which

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[38] Roldán, p. 27.
[39] Rory O'Bryen, *Literature, Testimony and Cinema in Contemporary Colombian Culture: Spectres of* La Violencia (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2008), (p. 5).
[40] Oquist, p. 17.
[41] Palacios, p. 137.

political symbols and buildings were attacked.[42] The effects spread throughout different regions of the nation, where local people took power from state forces through force. Sánchez notes, however, that the power gained was not in any way coordinated, and as such, it could only last at local level for a few days or weeks.[43] According to Simons, the violence spread quickly to the provinces, where Conservative forces had been 'deploying death squads to crush any hint of opposition'.[44] Power was quickly re-established in the nation's capital in the days following the *Bogotazo* and those in power focused on avoiding any further outbreaks of violence in a similar way. The way in which this was achieved was to have great implications for the prolonged presence of violence across the nation until the present day. It also revealed the extent to which the state had little control over a country formed of disparate and inaccessible regions.

What is clear about the prolonged state of disorder known as *La Violencia* is that the violence was often indescribably barbaric, amounting to massacres, and the widespread practice of mutilation of corpses.[45] Women and children were killed in addition to men, and in particular pregnant women were targeted in order to eliminate the 'seed'.[46] Entire villages were eradicated through a combination of massacres and forced displacement. During the twenty-year period between 1946 and 1966, 200,000 Colombians are estimated to have died as a result of violence, and two million others were forcibly displaced from their homes and towns.[47] This forced migration has been a major effect of prolonged violence, and has contributed to the massive migration of rural populations to the cities. As I will go on to discuss later in this contextualisation, migrants to urban areas have been characterised as responsible for an increase in the presence of violence in these urban centres.

While it is not possible to examine the vast amount of research undertaken on this topic, I will focus on particular aspects which are relevant to the analysis carried out in this thesis. As discussed above, violence was confined to rural areas, took different forms, and was carried out by diverse actors. At the same time, the urban centres, and in particular Bogotá continued to practice party politics at a national level. After a military dictatorship, and in the midst of the Cold War that led to the growth in power of the Communist party, the two traditional parties signed an accord,

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[42] Gonzalo Sánchez, 'The Violence: An Interpretive Synthesis', in *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda & Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992), pp. 75-124.
[43] Sánchez, p. 83.
[44] Simons, p. 40.
[45] The most frequently cited type of mutilation is the *corte corbata*, which 'left the tongue hanging from the neck' (Pearce, p. 51). For more information on the practices common in *La Violencia,* see Palacios, pp. 135-9.
[46] Pearce, p. 51.
[47] Roldán, p. 5. Palacios later records that around 300,000 were killed during *La Violencia*, but he does not give a defined time period. He adds that 80% of the corpses were male, including those of children and babies (p. 137).

the so-called National Front, which transformed politics in Colombia. Known as the 'bi-partisan coalition', the agreement saw each party alternate in power every four years, effectively locking out any alternative political views.[48] The accord was signed in 1958, and although first agreed to be in force for a period of 16 years, it continued until the late 1980s.[49] Described by Forrest Hylton as 'a semi-authoritarian parliamentary dictatorship', the National Front meant there was little room for social protest, and in particular any form thought to be left-wing. The option that remained was insurgency, and it was during this period that guerrilla insurgencies developed along clear political lines.[50]

In addition to this, the geography of Colombia meant governance was difficult, as discussed earlier in this Introduction. As Jennifer Holmes et al. assert, the land 'fosters fragmentation' and 'creates challenges for state building and nurtures guerrilla conflict'.[51] While governance at a national level was difficult during *La Violencia*, it also led to the practice of the employment of private armies by rural landowners. Leal Buitrago indicates that the military's role in society was not defined in the National Front agreement, and so the high command improvised according to the current concerns, which mainly centred on counter-insurgency in the Cold War context.[52] Mary Roldán asserts in relation to *La Violencia* in Antioquia that regional officers endorsed the creation of local paramilitary forces, largely to combat guerrilla insurgencies.[53] Leal Buitrago suggests that a National Defence Statute, passed in 1965, is key to the current situation of violence in Colombia today. He asserts that 'by granting to civil defence organisations the same permission to bear arms for private use as the state, a way was opened to a problem that has grown since the 1980s with the proliferation of paramilitary organisations and self-defence groups under the control of narco-traffickers'.[54] The right to bear arms for protection was a legacy of the period of *La Violencia*, in which private groups were employed to protect landowners' families and properties from invasion. The practice was extended as guerrilla groups proliferated throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This added to a practice that began during the early stages of *La Violencia*, in which smaller

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[48] There were of course many problems with such a 'democratic' system.
[49] Hylton, p. 52.
[50] For more on the different guerrilla groups in Colombia, see the Glossary. For further detailed analysis of individual groups and their motivations for violent action, see Eduardo Pizarro, 'La guerrilla revolucionaria en Colombia', in *Pasado y presente de la violencia en Colombia,* ed. by Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez & Ricardo Peñaranda (Bogotá: Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1986), p. 399. For a differentiation between paramilitaries and Guerrillas, see Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, 'Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War', *Politics & Society*, 36:1 (2008), 3-34.
[51] Jennifer Holmes, Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres and Kevin Curtin, *Guns, Drugs and Development in Colombia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 8.
[52] Francisco Leal Buitrago, 'Armed Actors in the Colombian Conflict', in *Armed Actors: Organised Violence & State Failure in Latin America,* ed. by Kees Koonings & Dirk Kruijt (London: Zed Books, 2004), pp. 87-105 (p. 87).
[53] Roldán, *Blood & Fire,* p. 293.
[54] Leal Buitrago, pp. 88-89.

operations were carried out by gunmen known as *pájaros*. They undertook the carefully planned assassinations of local individuals, and were afforded great power as they could count on impunity due to the complicity of federal judges and politicians.[55] This propensity to contract private violent actors is a feature of the period under discussion in this thesis, in which drug barons rose to prominence due to the actions undertaken by their mercenaries – the young *sicarios*.[56]

Representations of Violence

Violence in Colombia, as demonstrated above, is a complex yet endemic presence in the history of the nation. It is therefore no surprise that it is a key theme in the nation's cultural production. The reality of life in which authors and filmmakers were raised has impacted upon the cultural products that they have produced.[57] *La Violencia* has been widely explored particularly in literary texts, and scholarly texts abound to analyse this period.[58] Jonathan Tittler's volume *Violencia y literatura en Colombia* attempts to deal with the abundance of literary texts which have, throughout the country's history, dealt in some way or another with different forms of violence,[59] while Arturo Escobar has claimed that *La Violencia* allowed Colombia to form its own literary genre which could not be replicated in any other nation.[60] This historical focus on violence has continued through to the present day, incorporating its different contexts and locations.

Indeed, recent scholarship within the field of Colombian Cultural Studies illustrates the diversity of cultural production relating to violence. A trend has emerged in the past decade in which monographs have analysed multiple formats. Deborah Martin, in *Painting, Literature and Film in Colombian Feminine Culture, 1940-2005: of Border Guards, Nomads and Women* analyses representations of twentieth-century violence in literature, documentary film and paintings, while Gabriela Polit Dueñas, in *Narrating Narcos: Culiacán and Medellín* focuses upon representations of the narcotics industry in film, literature and photography.[61] Rory

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[55] Sánchez, pp. 89-90.
[56] For more on this theory, see Gabriela Polit Dueñas, *Narrating Narcos: Culiacán and Medellín* (Pittsburgh: Universtiy of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), pp. 36-7.
[57] Polit Dueñas (2013) asserts '[a]uthors from […] Medellín […] write about violence […] because these phenomena have defined life in their hometowns over the past decades.' (p. 3).
[58] Examples of literary texts include Evelio Rosero's *Los ejércitos* (Barcelona: Fábula Tusquets Editores, 2007) and Albalucía Angel's *Estaba la pájara pinta sentada en el verde limón* (Bogotá: Insituto Colmbiano de Cultura, 1975). Examples of testimonies include those of Afredo Molano. HIs text *Los años del tropel: crónicas de la Violencia* (Bogotá: Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1985) is perhaps one of the most prominent examples of *testimonio* dealing with the events of *La Violencia.*
[59] Jonathan Tittler, *Violencia y literatura en Colombia* (Madrid: Editorial Origenes, 1989).
[60] Arturo Escobar, 'La violencia ¿Generadora de una tradición literaria?', *Novela Colombiana*, <http://www.javeriana.edu.co/narrativa_colombiana/contenido/bibliograf/violencia.htm> [Accessed 13 March 2010].
[61] Martin (2012); Gabriela Polit Dueñas (2013).

O'Bryen also explores violence in the monograph *Literature, Testimony and Cinema in Contemporary Colombian Culture*, while Margarita Jácome published the monograph *La novela sicaresca: testimonio, sensacionalismo y ficción* which focuses upon cinematic as well as written representations of *sicarios*.[62] Collectively, these monographs illustrate the wide variety of ways in which to explore and to represent violence. This thesis is an attempt to add to this already well-developed body of work by bringing a new perspective to these analyses and linking representations of Colombian violent figures to global representations of violent actors and the spaces that they inhabit. To recap, in this thesis I analyse representations of Colombian violent actors in the context of a globalised world, in which representations are visible to an increasingly diverse and global audience. Central to this thesis is the notion, however, that the models constructed and circulated are not reflections of realities. Unlike other analyses, such as those of Polit Dueñas and Jácome, the study is not confined to 'narco culture', but explores the representation of urban violence from a wider global perspective; situating it within the more global representation of the increasingly homogenised fourth world space.[63] That said, what I argue, through my analysis, is for a move back to the local specificities, rather than a link to more global representations. The fourth world space is not homogenous, and neither are its inhabitants. Although each of the cultural products analysed in this thesis have been distributed globally, they reference very specific local circumstances and communities, which, I argue, are often lost because of this growing homogenisation in the representation of the fourth world space and its inhabitants.

This thesis, although it does not focus upon the work of Colombia's most well-known author, Gabriel García Márquez, begins with an excerpt from the work of the recently-deceased writer. The epigraph, taken from the closing sentence of his non-fiction work, *Noticia de un secuestro*, evidences the central foci of this thesis within the representation of violence in Colombia. I argued in the opening section that García Márquez's words illustrate that the representation of Colombian violence is a consumer product, because of his assertion that the events that had occurred should be recorded to produce a cultural product. However, this quote, and the text to which it pertains, illustrate much more about the context of representing urban violence in the Colombia of the late twentieth century, as I now go on to discuss.

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[62] O'Bryen (2008); Jácome (2009).
[63] It would be highly reductive to assert that the context to which these cultural products refer is simply 'narco culture', and also undermine the very point which this thesis seeks to highlight: that violence in Colombia is highly complex, and that too much attention is focused upon spectacular acts of violence in the urban context.

Noticia de un secuestro marked a deviation in the renowned author's literary trajectory as he returned to the journalism with which he had begun his career.[64] The journalistic style with which the author constructed the text reflects the degree to which violent conflict was visible in the global media at the time of publication. In particular, the high-profile war between the country's most notorious drug barons, the Medellín cartel, and the state, to which this kidnapping was linked, was a regular feature in global newspapers. Indeed, Robert L. Sims asserts that García Márquez, in writing *Noticia de un secuestro*, had to imbue the narrative with a literary feel, because the events narrated had already received extensive media coverage.[65] In this way, the text also emphasises relations between fact and fiction in literary production both within the nation and in the wider Latin American region. As I discuss in all four analyses, the line between fact and fiction, in particular in relation to the representation of violence and violent actors in Colombia, is often blurred. The wording of the epigraph highlights this blurring of the distinctions between fiction and non-fiction, as reality has allowed the construction of a narrative as innovative and original as fiction.

Narratives of Violence: *Noticia de un secuestro*

While García Márquez's publication of this text denotes a return to non-fiction writing, it also records a temporary break in his trajectory as an author associated with magical realism. The latter category is widely recognised as a marketing invention linked to a growing global market for literature, labelling a form of writing which was promoted as quintessentially Latin American.[66] The popularity of the literary mode facilitated the Latin American Boom in the mid twentieth century, and its popularity ensured that magical realism today continues to be a globally recognisable label, associated with a postcolonial context, and functioning as 'a positive marker of essentialised difference'.[67] In the era with which García Márquez was associated the

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[64] For more on García Márquez's non-fictional production, see Robert L. Sims, 'García Márquez's non-fiction works', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gabriel García Márquez*, ed. by Philip Swanson, pp. 144-59.

[65] Sims, 'García Márquez's non-fiction works', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gabriel García Márquez*, ed. by Philip Swanson, pp. 144-59, (p. 152).

[66] For example, Jean Franco suggests that in the US magical realism 'stands for a common Latin American style', and makes a link between the earlier term 'exotic', and 'magical realism', both of which, she argues, signify the third world. Jean Franco, *The Decline & Fall of the Lettered City* (Cambridge [Mass]: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 160. Similarly, Gabriela Polit Dueñas (2013) argues that 'the strategies of global marketing have transformed Latin American art into a label', p. 3.

[67] Rory O'Bryen, 'McOndo, Magical Neoliberalism and Latin American Identity' *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 30 (2011), 158-174 (p. 158). He argues that resulting literature which cannot be identified as magical realism is comparatively negatively defined. I do not wish to enter into such debates, but the point illustrates the importance of magical realism to Latin American literary production, and the context in which post-Boom literature is received.

popularity of magical realism reflected a celebration of the exotic culture of faraway lands by Western consumers. In this period, the term also denoted that the literature was written by Latin Americans. *Noticia de un secuestro* marks a deviation from García Márquez's use of magical realism, but also signifies a more general move within Colombian cultural production from the positive exoticism of magical realism to a more negative focus upon violence. Indeed, this trend was one attributed to the entire Latin American region, where in the final decades of the twentieth century the magical realist mode was replaced by different themes and forms of textual production in which realism triumphed over the exotic magical elements.[68]

The closing phrase of *Noticia de un secuestro* also illustrates the reflective nature of many narratives which represent acts of violence. García Márquez, in including this statement, passes comment on the market for violence within Colombia. The market demand for representations of violence is an issue explored throughout this thesis, through an analysis of the textual and paratextual strategies employed to engage the reader/audience. Within scholarship, this market for representations of violence is noted by Alejandro Herrero Olaizola, who constructed the striking title 'se vende Colombia – un país de delirio' for an article exploring the theme of violence in the market for Latin American, and in particular, Colombian narratives.[69] While the title is indeed arresting, the article traces the contemporary market for literature in Latin America, which he argues is linked to the commercialisation of marginality. Those Colombian narratives that enjoyed commercial success, such as Jorge Franco's *Rosario Tijeras*, a novel exploring the life of a female *sicario,* are those whose narratives are directly linked to violence.[70] The story recounted is extraordinary in its details, yet typical in its theme. The decision to end García Márquez's text with the recognition that actions of a violent nature naturally lead to the publication of a cultural product is indicative of a trend within Colombia, and the wider Latin American region. Violence, as Herrero Olaizola demonstrates, sells, and is a clear theme in the cultural production of both Colombia and the Latin American region as a whole in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Indeed, in addition to analysing the wider context of Latin American narrative, Herrero Olaizola discusses not only the market but the consumption of texts through an exploration of the audiences for such cultural products. These audiences, he

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[68] In addition to different themes, for example, the effects of the Cold War on military regimes, other forms of texts emerged, such as *testimonio*, a mode which John Beverley proclaimed to be 'Against Literature'.
[69] Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola, '"Se vende Colombia: un país de delirio": el Mercado literario global y la narrativa colombiana reciente', *Symposium*, 61: 1 (2007), 43-56.
[70] Herrero-Olaizola, pp. 43-4. He uses 'realismo sucio' as an example of 'la comercialización de la marginalidad'.

suggests, have a voyeuristic urge for 'lo sucio', and wish to have their expectations of 'precarias condiciones' affirmed by such narratives.[71] His recognition of audience demand for narratives of violence is reflected in *Noticia de un secuestro*'s final phrase, as it highlights the conscious recognition by authors of the demand for narratives of violence. It is, indeed, this demand for narratives of violence, and the ways in which these narratives are constructed, that forms the central focus of this thesis. It analyses the textual strategies undertaken by the author/director to engage their audience in order to provoke a questioning of such demand. It also highlights how the cultural product's marketing paratext, which often reproduces the stereotypes the texts seek to undermine, interacts with these attempts made by the author/directors. Rather than limiting the focus to literary narratives, however, this thesis explores four cultural products, each of which belongs to a distinct genre: literature, fictional film, documentary film and purported written testimony. The specific subject of the analysis is violent actors rather than violence per se, with a focus on the projected relationship of perpetrators of violence to the space which they inhabit. I argue that the centrality of violent actors in Colombian cultural production is tied to a wider focus on marginality, as Herrero Olaizola begins to explore in his article.

Before moving on to explore the theoretical and methodological aspects of this thesis, I extend this discussion from the national context to that of the wider regional Latin American context. I explore one further essential aspect of the epigraph by García Márquez which illustrates an important feature of the following analysis of Colombian cultural production - the invocation of the term 'bárbaridad'. Although the term is not used in its most literal sense here but instead as an idiom, the etymology of the word is significant to this discussion because of its history in the Latin America region. The civilisation and barbarism dichotomy has dominated debates about Latin American identity since colonial times. It frequently appears in cultural products to differentiate between opposing models of identity, which I suggest in this thesis is replicated in the division between the fourth world space and its violent actors, on the one hand, and first world society within the same nation, on the other. The civilisation and barbarism debate is, of course, a myth, rather than a representation of reality. I will now go on to discuss the first theoretical paradigm central to this thesis – that of myth - where I also explore further the civilisation and barbarism dichotomy in the context of this discussion.

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[71] Ibid.

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Myth

Myth is one of the central theoretical pillars of this thesis. As expressed by Roland Barthes in his work *Mythologies*, a myth is an artificial concept, which as a result of repetition, is perceived to be natural.[72] As I argue throughout my analyses in this thesis, myth, in this sense, is a construct that promotes generalisations about people or objects that are ideologically motivated. Although the generalisations created by myth appear to illustrate 'natural' divisions, when unpicked they in fact reveal ideologies in which difference is constructed to appear natural.[73] Barthes famously stated that 'myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the "nature" of things'.[74] In this way, he argues that myths are constructed by those who have the power to create these generalisations, and in my thesis, those under scrutiny for creating and perpetuating such myths are the media, in its different formats.

The cultural products under analysis in this thesis are representations of Colombia, and therefore, necessarily, the myths under scrutiny relate to this nation. In particular, I focus on the processes by which violence in Colombia is associated with specific spaces and individuals. The press is one such mechanism that I analyse in its role in constructing the image of Colombia as a nation of violent actors. Catalina González Quintero, for example, highlights that in the Spanish newspaper *El País* in 1988-99, representations of Colombia focused overwhelmingly on violence.[75] González Quintero's research here illustrates that this practice was not confined to Colombia, but widespread in the international context. Indeed, as she explains, these myths increased as the high-profile 'narcoterrorism' took hold in the late 1980s. It is in this way that myths surrounding the Colombian nation as a place of violence were constructed and made 'natural' in the public imagination. Violence, in the media, in cultural products, and in sociological studies, was represented as a natural occurrence in a barbaric nation.[76] There is undoubtedly a history of violence in Colombia; however, it is not due to a 'natural' condition, but due to a combination of long-term political and social problems, which are difficult to resolve as outlined

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[72] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (London: Vintage Books, 1993 [first published in French in 1957]).

[73] Barthes' notion has continued to re-surface in many contemporary theories; see, for instance, Žižek's notion of 'lying in the guise of truth', which shares many similarities with that of Barthes. Slavoj Žižek, *Violence* (London: Profile Books, 2009).

[74] Barthes, p. 110.

[75] Catalina González Quiniero, 'Periodismo y moral: una aproximación al discurso de prensa sobre el narcotráfico en Colombia', *Revista Latina de comunicación social*, 1996 (6).

[76] This is best expressed through the term 'culture of violence' which has been applied to the country by a number of scholars, of many different disciplines and political persuasions. For one particularly problematic exploration of the term, see Peter Waldman, 'Is There a Culture of Violence in Colombia?', *Terrorism and Political Violence,* 19:4 (2007), 593-609.

previously. As I highlighted earlier, violence has also been a theme in Colombian cultural production, particularly literature, for many years. The period and myths which I interrogate here relate to urban manifestations of violence in the late twentieth century. The myths under analysis link violence first to charismatic drug barons, and subsequently to young men living in the nation's peripheral spaces.

The same notion of violence in Colombia, as illustrated by the cultural products analysed in this thesis, is linked to the peripheral spaces of Medellín and the young men inhabiting these spaces. Here, I argue, it is through the repetition outlined by Barthes that the very real link between specific young men, *sicarios* - hired as assassins by various wealthy citizens - and violence has come to see young men in the city's periphery generalised as practitioners of violence. As many of the texts analysed in this thesis illustrate, this has been achieved by an overwhelming focus on violent practitioners, to the detriment of other inhabitants of these marginal spaces, who are overwhelmingly underrepresented. This, I contend, is precisely what Barthes meant by his assertion that '[a] *complete* image would exclude myth', which in this context highlights that the representation of the *barrios marginales* as the home of the violent actor is not a complete image.[77] Instead, it perpetuates a myth that sees this fourth world space linked to destructive behaviours only, with the omission of other positive representations of the space. The lack of representation of different inhabitants of Medellín's peripheral spaces has led to the production of myths, a situation that can be understood through Barthes's argument that 'in general myth prefers to work with poor, incomplete images, where the meaning is already relieved of its fat'.[78] Due to overwhelming focus on violent practitioners, the peripheral space is associated only with violence. This thesis questions the focus upon violent practitioners in Medellín in particular, and makes links to contexts further afield which illustrate similar narrow representations. Each of the texts analysed attempt to counter these incomplete images, yet as I go on to explore, their marketing paratexts often reproduce those same myths, therefore undermining the objectives of the texts themselves. I argue that there exists in these cultural products, a tension between criticisms and reproductions of myths regarding violence, its practitioners, and its origins.

The myths surrounding the peripheral spaces of Medellín and its inhabitants are recent incarnations of a much more long-standing myth in Latin America: the civilisation and barbarism binary. Barbarism has existed as a representation of the

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[77] Barthes, p. 127
[78] Ibid.

Latin American region since the time of the conquests, and the establishment of the 'New World',[79] as part of the dichotomy between the 'civilised' European/first world inhabitant, and the 'barbaric' Amerindian/Latin American/third world inhabitant.[80] This opposition characterised first the indigenous inhabitants of the new continent as barbarians, in opposition to the civilised Europeans. This binary has taken on many different incarnations throughout Latin American history, but in each case, it is, of course, a construct. However, through its repetition and perpetuation, both within the Latin American region and in Europe where it was first conceived, the opposition is often still seen to be a natural conceptualisation of relations between the first and third world. In this thesis, barbarism, as it has been for centuries, is linked to both marginalised groups and the spaces which they inhabit – barbarism is represented as a characteristic of space as well as of individuals. In particular, in this thesis I focus upon the relationship between space and myth, arguing that increasingly violence is linked to peripheral spaces and the actors who inhabit those spaces in Colombia. However, again, the association of peripheral spaces with violence is another example of myth.

The myth of barbarism is often implicit rather than explicit in the cultural products analysed. However, returning to García Márquez's reference to 'bárbaridad', the spectre of barbarism hides behind myths of a predisposition to violence through its repeated association with specific spaces and their inhabitants. One way of understanding how Barthes's conception of myth and the civilization/barbarism dichotomy can be fruitfully brought together is, I would argue, by engagement with Graham Huggan's notion of the postcolonial exotic. He describes the practice of exoticism as succinctly similar to processes of myth-making:

> The exotic is not, as is often supposed, an inherent quality to be found 'in' certain people, distinctive objects, or specific places: exoticism describes, rather, a particular mode of aesthetic perception – one which renders people, objects, and places strange [...] and which effectively manufactures Otherness.[81]

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[79] See, for a discussion of Las Casas's use of the term in c.1552, see Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 17-21.

[80] There is not space here to consider the intricacies of the civilisation/barbarism debate. For an overview, see Claire Taylor, 'Latin America', in *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. by John McLeod (London: Routledge, 2007) pp. 120-128. For a detailed discussion of the binary, its origins, and its usage in Latin American literature, see Philip Swanson, 'Civilisation and Barbarism', in *The Companion to Latin American Studies*, ed. by Philip Swanson (London: Arnold, 2003), pp. 69-85.There have been many texts which have reconfigured the meanings of civilisation and barbarism in relation to the Latin American region, however, the recurring theme has been that a form of culture based on the values of the European concept of 'Enlightenment' represents civilisation, and those elements of Latin American culture which do not are, in consequence, barbaric. See, for example, Domingo F Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (Madrid: Alianza, 1970 [First published 148]); José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1948 [First published 1900]); Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Calibán: Apuntes sobre la cultura en nuestra América* (Mexico: Diógenes, 1971).

[81] Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 13.

Sharing some concerns with Barthes's notion of myth, Huggan's concept of the exotic here is crucial in that it reveals a particular take that shows how specific myths 'manufacture' Otherness. Throughout this thesis, the construction of difference is central to the analyses of each of the cultural products, and is often a focus of the texts. Because this thesis has a clear focus upon representations of violent actors and the spaces which they inhabit, Huggan's notion of the exotic is useful, as it describes the way in which people, and the places with which they are associated, are rendered strange. It also, like barbarism, creates a binary opposition. In this context of an established myth of a violent nation, exoticism takes on negative connotations, in its association of people and spaces with violence.[82] In the context of violence in Colombia of the late twentieth century, barbarism renders people and places strange, although in this case frightening and threatening, because of the perceived level of violence practiced by many.[83]

With this in mind, I now return to the arguments put forward by Herrero Olaizola and Polit Dueñas, but I argue for a more nuanced approach in which cultural products featuring violence are marketed by publishing houses according to their inclusion in the category of 'exotic barbarism'. This term, I argue, describes the representation of a specific cultural product which reinforces myths surrounding violent actors and the spaces which they inhabit. The 'rendering strange' identified by Huggan functions as a form of differentiation, which aligns the audience/reader with a consuming first world public, which contrasts with that depicted in the cultural product itself. This differentiation, as I illustrate in this thesis, can be projected within the text itself, or through its marketing paratexts. The barbarism which has been inherent in representations of Latin America for centuries continues to relate both to spaces and marginalised individuals or groups. Exotic barbarism is a myth, as it is a construct which has been naturalised through repetition. Those inhabiting marginal spaces are linked to violence; this link is repeated and, as represented by the marketing paratexts I analyse, has come to be a 'natural' association. I illustrate that despite the attempts made by authors and filmmakers, it is difficult to dispel the perception of an association between specific groups of men and violent actions. Each of the analyses in this thesis highlight that these men are unable to escape their 'natural'

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[82] Indeed, both exoticism and barbarism may be found in representations of the Latin American region. The literary Boom period saw the rise of magical realism as a defining characteristic of the region. Magical realism became a marketing tool, which falls under the category defined by Huggan as the postcolonial exotic. It promoted the Latin American region as one which was fundamentally different to the Western world. However, today, there is an emerging trend which has seen violence in certain parts of Latin America, in this case Colombia, marketed through its literary and cinematic texts.

[83] Susana Rotker's edited collection - *Citizens of Fear: Urban Violence in Latin America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002) – explores the fear of violence amongst Latin America's inhabitants.

identities as violent actors, whether through paratextual representations or inadvertently by the cultural product's creator.

Methodology: paratextual analysis

Methodologically, this thesis differs from other recent scholarly analyses of Colombian cultural products. Rather than analysing the text alone, in each chapter I examine both the marketing paratext and the text itself to illustrate continuities and discontinuities in the representation of violent figures and the fourth world space. An image of each of the marketing paratexts can be found in Appendix 2 at the end of this thesis. By the term marketing paratext, I refer to those elements which are designed to accompany the text in order to attract potential readers and audience members. Therefore, because this thesis analyses both textual and cinematic cultural products, the paratexts that I analyse are the book sleeve and the DVD sleeve.[84] There are of course many other forms of paratexts attached to each of the cultural products analysed, including reviews, websites and prefaces, however, there is not space to analyse every type of paratext in a doctoral thesis.[85] Instead, I focus on marketing paratexts because they reveal the intentions of the publishing houses/distributors in attracting their ideal reader/spectator, rather than the intention of the author/filmmaker in subverting existing myths. Each of these paratextual formats makes use of a combination of printed text and visual imagery, and so this methodology includes analysis of the semantics and visual encoding of each.

This inclusive approach, which encompasses paratextual elements, allows an analysis of the cultural product as a whole. Indeed, the word 'product' is essential to this methodology, as it acknowledges that each is made for consumption by consumers, who in many cases inhabit the first world. Paratexts have been only sporadically analysed, although in those cases where they are given attention, scholars in both literary and cinematic studies note their importance. For example, Jonathan Gray asserts that film studies should focus 'on paratexts' constitutive role in creating textuality', as opposed to a more narrow focus upon their marketing function, an approach which he suggests leads to paratexts being deemed to be of importance

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[84] In the case of both of the films analysed in this thesis, the image used as the DVD cover was also used as the movie poster upon the film's first release. In this way, it represents consistently the manner in which the fiction film and documentary in question were promoted to potential audience members.
[85] Gerard Genette, in the key text *Paratexts*, differentiates between peritext and epitext, placing as much focus upon the latter as the former. Genette focused on physical books, and therefore the peritext referred to all paratexts which were a part of the physical book, and the epitext to those elements outside of the physical texts, such as review articles.

only in promotional and monetary terms.[86] However, he argues, '[p]romotion […] suggests not only the commercial act of selling, but also of advancing and developing a text'.[87] This idea of advancement and development of a text is central to the methodology employed in this thesis, as it recognises the active role played by the paratext in the cultural product as a whole.

Like Genette's concept of textual paratexts as thresholds, Gray labels cinematic paratexts 'filters'. This term is particularly useful, because it expresses the active role played by paratexts in creating a cultural product, rather than simply representing a text as a standalone product. It is a gateway into the main text, but forms part of the cultural product as a whole. In this thesis I liken the role of the marketing paratext to the beginning of a conversation. Depending on the opening words of the conversation, the dialogue may continue as a discussion when the potential spectator/reader decides to consume the full text, or, in the case of rejected, the conversation is abruptly ended. For the majority of potential readers/spectators, engagement with the cultural product will end with the marketing paratext. Pamela Pears relays this idea in relation to books; she states that the book sleeve 'is always the first part of the book to be recognised. If the cover does its job effectively, the potential reader will pick up the book and either look through the first few pages or turn the book over in order to glance at the back cover'.[88] The function of the book sleeve, as a marketing paratext is to attract potential readers to read the text within by giving information about it,[89] because, as both Matthews and Gray remark, in spite of the popular idiom, consumers do 'judge a book by its cover.'[90] In order to market a text, these paratexts draw on existing codes to draw potential readers to the text by conveying information about it within a small space. Because of limited amount of space available, myths are often drawn upon in order to convey this information with ease.[91] Paratexts have a proven role in criticising or reproducing existing myths about marginalised groups. For example, Pears, analysing the paratextual images of

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[86] Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), p. 7.

[87] Gray, p. 5.

[88] Pamela Pears, 'Images, Messages & the Paratext in Algerian Women's Writing' in *Judging A Book by its Cover: Fans, Publishers, Designers & the Marketing of Fiction*, ed. by Nicole Matthews & Nickianne Moody (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 161-170 (p. 163).

[89] Nicole Matthews asserts that book jackets 'have helped to ensure that books reach their ultimate destination with interested readers'. Nicole Matthews, 'Introduction', in *Judging a Book by its Cover*, ed. by Nicole Matthews and Nickianne Moody (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), pp. xi-xxi (p. xi).

[90] Nicole Matthews, 'Introduction', in *Judging a Book*, pp. xi-xxi (p. xi); Gray, p. 2. Gray in fact states that the modern day equivalent of the phrase is not 'don't believe the hype', as his text focuses upon all forms of hype and synergies surrounding media text.

[91] The use of marketing paratext for cinematic texts is similar. Indeed, Gray subtitles his section on movie posters: 'The Poster and its Prey', thus emphasising that the purpose of the poster is to *capture* an audience, through, he states its communication of a familiar genre, star intertexts and 'the type of world a would-be audience member is entering' (p. 52). Film posters use information which we have previously encountered to attract us to the cinematic text in question.

Algerian women's writing, notes that in order to sell the text to the consumer, media representations of constructed groups can either criticise or replicate simplistic stereotypes and myths.[92] The cultural products from Colombia which I analyse in this thesis illustrate the former, whilst the texts to which they act as filters both criticise and reproduce those myths. The methodology which I use aims to analyse the disjunctures between marketing paratext and text through the lens of myth, to reveal the myths in existence regarding marginal spaces and individuals.

One of the foci of the analysis in each of the chapters concerns the encoding purveyed by the marketing paratexts. They can affect the audience attracted to a particular cultural product because 'paratexts tells us what to expect, and in doing so, they shape the reading strategies that will take us "into" the text, and they provide the all-important early frames through which we will examine, react to, and evaluate textual consumption'.[93] As a result of our engagement with paratexts, 'by the time we actually encounter "the show itself," we have already begun to decode it and to preview its meaning and effects'.[94] This means that the encoding in the paratext is crucial, as it attracts an audience looking for a particular type of film/text. Other potential audience members may be put off by the paratext because it fails to adequately capture the content of the film/text. Paratexts, and in particular marketing paratexts, are able to have this impact upon a text because they are most often the first engagement the audience/reader has with a cultural product. Where the paratext has made reference to existing myths about marginalised spaces and groups, this thesis raises the question of how the subsequent text that follows subverts or reinforces those myths.

I analyse in which instances the beginning of the conversation relies on myths constructed about the cultural Other – the fourth world inhabitant. In these cases I explore whether the continuation of that conversation between the reader/spectator and the text itself contradicts the myth on display in the paratext, or reinforces it. Because the function of the marketing paratext is to attract a particular audience to a text, any contradictions between the marketing paratext and the text itself could reflect a skewed decoding of the cultural product as a whole. Indeed, the marketing paratext may draw in a very different audience than that intended by the filmmaker/author. That is not to say, however, that the spectator/reader is a passive receptor for the encoding of the paratext and text. Rather, I am arguing that those who may engage more critically with the text may not be attracted to watch or read it

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[92] Pears, p. 162.
[93] Gray, p. 26.
[94] Gray, p. 3.

based on the myths portrayed by the marketing paratext. However, when the cultural product is consumed, the end result of a disjuncture between paratext and text is a contradictory representation of these myths. Although it could be argued that it is therefore more difficult to undermine such destructive myths, the result of a mixed representation within a cultural product can be positive, however. Rather than simply reflecting the themes of the film or text in question, I argue that paratexts can, in a reflexive manner, raise questions about the very genre which they purport to be representing.

The aim of this methodology is to determine how, and indeed if, the cultural products in question reconcile their different engagements with myth. Paratexts are often produced by the distributor/publisher rather than the filmmaker/author, and so this consideration not of texts but of cultural products reveals the publishers' and/or distributors' understanding of the book/film as a product for market. This is particularly important when considering myths, as it reveals not only the texts' role in constructing and perpetuating existing myths, but also the role of the cultural industry in its different guises – embracing both producers of cultural comment and of material cultural products.

The methodology of this thesis also incorporates audience engagement with both fictional and real individuals within the narrative. In this way, the final aspect of the methodological discussion in this introduction is that of audience engagement. Each of the chapters discusses the relationship established between the filmmakers/author and the audience/reader in relation to the representation of the violent actors. Murray Smith describes a theory of audience engagement which is useful to this discussion because it allows for the audience to feel sympathy for, or be attached to a character with whom they do not particularly 'identify'. Indeed, Smith rejects the standard concept and suggests a revision of audience 'identification', and instead splits it into two distinct but linked processes: alignment and allegiance.[95] These constitute 'levels of engagement',[96] and allow for more complex reactions to characters than 'a crude, dualistic model of response, in which we either identify, or we don't'.[97] An audience can be aligned to a character without feeling allegiance to him or her, in contrast to the simple category of identification in which the audience is aligned with and has allegiance to the character. The theory was developed for cinematic, fictional cultural products, and has been utilised by some scholars in this

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[95] Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).
[96] Smith, p. 5.
[97] Smith, p. 3.

context.[98] In this thesis I argue that the theory can be applied to non-fictional and non-cinematic genres, as long as there is a clear focus upon characterisation. Here I explain the underlying concepts of alignment and allegiance using Smith's cinematic terminology before explaining the aspects of the theory which are important to the analyses of the cultural products in this thesis.

Smith focuses on two concepts that allow for a more complex audience engagement with characters: alignment and allegiance. Alignment 'concerns the way a film gives us access to the actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters', and therefore the character lens through which the narrative is recounted is essential to establishing alignment.[99] It is dependent upon the 'spatio-temporal and subjective' access given to any number of characters, meaning that audiences can be aligned to more than one character in one narrative, depending on how much access is granted to each.[100] This is important in this thesis, as in some cultural products, the audience is aligned to one character, such as to the editor/author in *No nacimos pa'semilla*. In others, the reader/audience is aligned with a number of 'characters', such as the two drug barons in Laura Restrepo's *Leopardo al sol*, whilst that same sense of alignment is not fostered with Fernely, the *sicario* and fourth world inhabitant. Alignment explains how audiences are directed by filmmakers and writers to particular individuals within a narrative, and as I go on to explore in the following chapters, this ability is exploited by the cultural producers to provoke reflection on the part of the first world audience members about their consumption of fourth world actors. In order to do this, however, the filmmakers and authors vary the level of allegiance to the individuals with whom the audience are aligned.

Allegiance to a character or individual within a narrative is not guaranteed; that is, alignment does not necessarily result in allegiance. Rather, it is dependent upon the moral evaluation of the character by the spectator. It 'concerns the way a film attempts to marshal our sympathies for or against the various characters' and as such can mean that the audience rejects rather than feels sympathy for a given character.[101] In the chapters that follow, I illustrate that the filmmakers and authors play with our access to characters to advance or to deny a sense of allegiance to the characters with which the audience is aligned. For example, in *La virgen de los sicarios,* the audience is aligned with Fernando, a first world intellectual, yet his

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[98] See, for example, Marco Paoli, who uses Smith's theory to explore the emotional and intellectual strategies utilised by the director of the Italian post-war fictional film *Il gobbo* to elicit empathy from the audience towards certain characters. Also, Deborah J. Thomas explores affect in Wes Anderson's *Rushmore* using Smith's theory of audience engagement.
[99] Smith, p. 7.
[100] Smith, p. 83.
[101] Smith, p. 6.

rhetoric towards the fourth world inhabitant is so abhorrent that allegiance is not achieved, and this technique is thus deliberately utilised by the director Schroeder to provoke the audience to think about their consumptive practices relating to the fourth world inhabitant. In order to feel a sense of allegiance, Smith argues that the spectator must 'understand the narrative situation, including the interests, traits and stages of the characters'.[102] This is another aspect which the authors and directors of cultural products examined in this thesis manipulate. They subvert the normal practices associated with the representation of the fourth world inhabitant to offer an alternative engagement. This is particularly evident in *La Sierra*, where the filmmakers contrast the customary representation of an unknown dead body with the exploration of the life of a fourth world inhabitant – the protagonist Edison - and his hopes for a better life, before showing his body in death, moments after his murder. The violent actor is not rejected, but instead the audience is made to feel allegiance with this protagonist who is also a violent actor because they are given access to his life story and his dreams of an alternative, non-violent life. Smith asserts that the spectator must be able to have some basis for evaluation and be confident of the traits possessed by the character in order to form allegiance.[103] This is particularly clear in the juxtaposition outlined above in *La Sierra*.

Theoretical Discussion

Moving on from the methodological approach outlined above, this section now discusses the principal theoretical issues underpinning this thesis. The central theory supporting the analysis of cultural products in this thesis is the notion of the existence of a space named the 'fourth world'. The term was coined by the sociologist Manuel Castells in his trilogy *The Information Age*.[104] Underpinning the concept is the wider theory of the 'network society', which describes the society in which we live, where access to 'flows' of information is at the heart of economic prosperity. Transactions, whether social, economic or otherwise, travel almost instantaneously across significant geographical distance, creating and maintaining a network of global hubs of information.[105] This, he argues, is at the heart of the current manifestation of globalisation, and has changed the way in which society operates at both a local and

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[102] Smith, p. 85.
[103] Smith, p. 85.
[104] *The Information Age Trilogy* consists of the volumes: *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); and *End of Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).
[105] Navigating these flows successfully is the key to success in the network society. Individual wealth has increased significantly since the late twentieth century.

global level. The key tenet of this theory with relevance to this thesis is that the network society theory explains the increasing disparity of wealth within nations and cities belonging to the 'first world'. As a result of the network society, Castells argues, 'black holes' have opened in society, into which men, women and children who are unable to take advantage of these fast-moving flows of information are subsumed. These black holes are collectively labelled the 'fourth world', and it is the representation of this sector by the network society and its inhabitants that is at the centre of this thesis.[106]

The fourth world is a term used to give a standard label to those spaces that are excluded from these crucial flows of information and therefore are excluded from mainstream society. The label is therefore useful because it permits spaces traditionally known as 'third world' to belong to the same category as those spaces with similar socioeconomic problems that exist in first world nations:

> The Fourth World comprises large areas of the globe, such as much of Sub-Saharan Africa, and impoverished rural areas of Latin America and Asia. But it is also present in literally every country, and every city, in this new geography of social exclusion. It is formed of American inner city ghettos, Spanish enclaves of mass youth unemployment, French banlieues warehousing North Africans, Japanese Yoseba quarters, and Asian mega-cities' shanty towns.[107]

Castells is careful to label disparate examples of the fourth world in a variety of geographical locations, in regions and nations with varying degrees of economic power. The spaces are also labelled differently in relation to their national contexts: the 'ghettos' of the US, *banlieues* in France, 'shanty towns' in Asia, and others which he does not include, such as South Africa's 'townships', Brazil's *favelas*, and India's 'slums'.[108] His emphasis is clear: that the fourth world exists at a global level, and is an effect of information capitalism. The reference to Latin American rural areas is interesting, as it encapsulates the poverty of peasants living across the region with little or no access to resources. However, the focus of this thesis is the spaces to which these peasants have migrated located in urban centres, more specifically the peripheral *barrios marginales* of Medellín. These settlements, like most fourth world spaces, are precariously built and provide very little access to the services provided to those with access to the network society. In effect, those who flee the poverty of the countryside in the Latin American region are likely to find the same conditions in urban spaces because of this lack of access to the network society.

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[106] Castells (1998), pp. 164-5.
[107] Ibid.
[108] For more on the terminology applied to these spaces in the context of poverty tourism, see Manfred Rolfes, 'Poverty Tourism: Theoretical Reflections and Empirical Findings Regarding an Extraordinary Form of Tourism', *GeoJournal, 75* (2010), 421-42; and Julia Meschkank, 'Investigations into Slum tourism in Mumbai: Poverty Tourism and the Tensions Between Different Constructions of Reality', *GeoJournal*, 76 (2011), 47-62.

Castells also describes the inhabitants of fourth world spaces, incorporating those alternatively labelled the 'socially excluded':[109]

> it is populated by millions of homeless, incarcerated, prostituted, criminalized, brutalized, stigmatized, sick, and illiterate persons. They are the majority in some areas, the minority in others, and a tiny minority in a few privileged contexts. But, everywhere, they are growing in number, and *increasing in visibility*, as the selective triage of informational capitalism, and the political breakdown of the welfare state, intensify social exclusion.[110]

It is the increasing visibility which is of most interest to me in this thesis. Castells, when using this phrase, refers to the growing numbers of fourth world inhabitants due to the effects of information capitalism, which has seen wealth gaps increase significantly.[111] My focus is more nuanced, and is on the more literal form of increasing visibility of the fourth world inhabitants, due to the growing focus on representations of the spaces and their inhabitants. I argue that this increasing visibility is not, however, positive, and is a form of structural violence committed against fourth world inhabitants. Below I summarise scholarship on the representation of fourth world spaces in two prominent first world nations – France and the US – to illustrate that in the representation of the fourth world at a global level, there is a focus on a particular model of the fourth world inhabitant, based upon destructive behaviours. After this summary, I then move on to the Latin American context, exploring representations of the Brazilian *favela*, and the *barrios marginales* of Medellín, and how representations of the fourth world space and its inhabitants have become consumer products. However, first I interrogate further the concept of structural violence and its relationship to the category of the fourth world.

The fourth world represents those who are excluded from the network society and are therefore unable to reach their full potential. I argue in this thesis that the existence of the fourth world is in itself a form of structural violence, based on Johan Galtung's and Slavoj Žižek's definitions of the term. Both theorists differentiate structural violence from subjective violence where the latter is the form conventionally conceived of as violence – an act perpetrated by a clearly identified agent.[112] Galtung, positioning the term in peace studies, defines structural violence as referring to the deprivation of opportunities for an individual to reach his or her full human potential.[113] In this way, the term is useful because it labels the lack of opportunities faced by

[109] For scholars who use the term 'socially excluded', see, for example, John Urry, *Global Complexity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003).
[110] Castells (1998), pp. 164-5, my emphasis.
[111] Castells (1998) warns 'In the current historical context, the rise of the Fourth World is inseparable from the rise of informational, global capitalism' (pp. 164-5).
[112] Žižek, p. 1.
[113] Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research'. *Journal of Peace Research,* 6:3 (1969), 167-191.

individuals and groups within society as violence, and it is therefore recognised to be as harmful as a physical act of subjective violence.

Since Galtung first published his thoughts on structural violence as a tenet of peace studies, various scholars have raised questions about the term. The main strand of arguments concerns the apparent simplicity of the concept, and the difficulty in the measurement of 'human potential'.[114] I argue, however, that the concept of an invisible form of violence which has no easily identifiable subject aptly describes the fourth world. Slavoj Žižek has since developed analyses of types of violence, and significantly furthered the discussion regarding structural violence. Žižek divides violence into two forms – subjective and objective – and further divides the latter again into symbolic and systemic forms. This distinction is useful because it labels the differentiation between the construction of divisive language that leads to discrimination and exclusion (symbolic), as well as the systems that create exclusion (structural). In this thesis I argue that symbolic violence is perpetrated against the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* through the clear focus upon violence and violent actors in this space, rather than a more balanced representation that would highlight different aspects of life in this space.

Žižek's notion is also useful because it provides a framework through which to analyse media representations of violence, which he refers to as 'lying in the guise of truth'.[115] He explains how the media constructs and perpetuates symbolic and systemic violence by reporting truths in a manner which is discriminatory: 'even if what I am saying is factually true, the motives that make me say it are false'.[116] The term can be applied to the construction of myths of alterity between inhabitants of the network society and the fourth world. Although reports about high levels of drug use in the US inner cities, or of above-average murder figures in Medellín's *barrios marginales* may be true, it is not true that this is the only news to emerge from these spaces, as such an exclusive focus suggests. The effect of such reporting is a distorted representation of the fourth world space.

Galtung's description of this privative form of violence as being invisible to the naked eye, unlike subjective violence, also contributes to this sense.[117] This media

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[114] See, for example, Andrew Dilts, 'Revisiting Johan Galtung's Concept of Structural Violence', *New Political Violence,* 34: 2 (2012), 191-94; Joan Cocks, 'The Violence of Structures and the Violence of Findings', *New Political Science,* 34: 2 (2012), 221-7; and Yves Winter, 'Violence and Visibility', *New Political Science,* 34: 2 (2012), 195-202.
[115] Using the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans as an example, he cites the hearsay spread by official media reports, backed up by the accounts of policemen, that rapes and murders were taking place in the city. This was completely untrue – no rapes nor murders had been reported, yet it delayed the entry of vital services and personnel into the city to assist with the rescue and clean-up operation. The media were able to construct and promote such myths due to pre-existing racist assumptions about the inhabitants of the city. Similarly, vital services were allowed to be delayed before the undertaking of investigation into these claims because of these racist assumptions (p. 85).
[116] Ibid.
[117] Galtung, p. 173.

focus on negative and destructive behaviours renders invisible the structural causes of the behaviours. The invisibility of structural violence is a theme that runs throughout this thesis. In my analysis I make visible the structural violence perpetrated by cultural products and their audiences in the production and consumption of representations of subjective violence in the *barrios marginales* of Medellín. In their production, these cultural products often commit acts of structural violence by hiding the structural causes of violence, and instead draw attention to the violent actors and their actions as spectacles.Indeed, Žižek calls for us to

> learn to step back, to disentangle ourselves from the fascinating lure of [...] directly visible 'subjective' violence, violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent. We need to perceive the contours of the background which generates such outbursts. A step back enables us to identify a violence that sustains our very efforts to fight violence and to promote tolerance.[118]

This thesis is an effort to do just that. In each chapter I analyse representations of violent figures and the spaces which they inhabit. I argue that the fetishisation of subjective violence carried out by young men in Medellín's marginal spaces, whether the iconic *sicario* or a member of a paramilitary or guerrilla group, is an act of structural violence, because the attention paid to these acts masks the social inequality within their lives. Their acts of subjective violence are often a means to an end – to gain money – as they are denied the opportunity to reach their full human potential.[119] I take that 'step back' and interrogate the cultural product as a whole, in its paratext and text in order to point out the instances of structural and symbolic forms of violence. Structural violence is perpetrated in directing attention away from the exclusion of these inhabitants of the fourth world from global flows of information, whereas symbolic violence lies in the guise of myth.

Communication is a key part of the theory of the network society because of the near instantaneous exchanges of information flows. For the fourth world, however, this causes further problems, because those with access to the network society are able to communicate freely with others across the globe quickly, as long as they are connected to the network. Conversely, the inhabitants of the fourth world are not. Because of this, those with access to these networks in the conventional 'first world' are less likely to communicate with fourth world inhabitants who spatially are

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[118] Žižek, p. 1.
[119] This is a key discussion in Chapter Four in relation to *La Sierra*, as the protagonist Edison speaks of his ideal life as a civil engineer, as opposed to the leader of a paramilitary sect. In the next scene he is shown dead, shot by the police. My discussion in Chapter Four focuses upon the value placed upon lives and deaths. The visibility of Edison's dead body, after the filmmakers have documented his everyday life for almost a year leading up to his death, is the most striking, and therefore memorable, aspect of the film. I compare the presentation of this dead body to the audience to that of another at the beginning of the documentary – another young male inhabitant in the same *barrio*. In contrast to Edison, we do not get to know his family or hear his story. In this way, I argue that the documentary begins the process of making Žižek's call for action a reality, as it provokes the audience to engage with the different presentations of dead bodies and their reactions to these.

more proximate, than with those more geographically distant but with access to networks.[120] This will be a central point of analysis in the thesis, as I explore the disconnect between different sectors of the Colombian nation.[121] Indeed, Benedict Anderson's assertion that the nation is a construct, an 'imagined community', is evidenced by my analysis. [122] It illustrates the divide caused by the gap between first and fourth world which means that first world inhabitants are more distant from fourth world inhabitants in the same nation, than those belonging to the first world in other nations.

Global Fourth World Spaces

As noted above, the fourth world is, as Castells asserts, increasingly visible across the globe. The plurality of locations, in addition to the growing number of people who can be described as inhabiting this space, are clear concerns for Castells. This plurality is important, as it highlights that social exclusion is widespread across the globe - the result of growing inequality and lack of access to resources due to the growth of informational capitalism. As his examples illustrate, the fourth world as a space exists in almost all corners of the globe, and for this reason, its inhabitants are growing in visibility. I argue, concurrently, that there is a clear interest in the fourth world as an Other space, and in its inhabitants as exotic Others. As I go on to describe, however, these representations are largely negative, and have a clear focus on the destructive, often violent behaviours of youths.

The particular focus of this section is the global aligning of moral panic about youth and violence. The act of structural violence lies within the network society, as the negative representations noted above are able to circulate the globe, yet the very protagonists upon which the narratives are based have little control nor agency in terms of their representation.[123] I argue that in a somewhat contradictory manner, despite being excluded from the network society, there are in existence flows of

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[120] Ronaldo Munck comments upon this phenomenon without referencing the term 'fourth world'. He states: 'it is easy to see how upwardly mobile people in Sao Paulo or Johannesburg have more in common with their global city. counterparts than they do with the poor, marginalized and socially excluded inhabitants of their own country' (p. 64). Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization & Social Exclusion: A Transformationalist Perspective* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2005).

[121] I argue that this disconnect allows the easy differentiation between contrasting sectors of the nation. This causes problems for the inhabitants of the fourth world, because whilst they are unable to obtain the advantages attached to access to global flows, information about them flows freely between first world spaces, both in the media and in cultural production. As I will go on to illustrate, scholars have noted a divide within the Colombian city of Medellín between first and fourth world spaces, and I argue throughout the thesis that this disconnect has led to Othering which has allowed myths to proliferate about the Other Colombian space.

[122] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

[123] Again in this regard, the distinction between paratext and text is important because paratexts are designed to project a simplified representation of the actual text, which can therefore undermine the subtle criticisms of structural violence within the text.

information about the fourth world. This information is traded as a commodity, as the cultural products analysed in this thesis evidence. As I illustrate in the discussion of representations of different fourth world spaces below, representations of marginalised groups of people tend to focus on negative manifestations of behaviour. I argue that such homogenisation in the representations of disparate fourth world spaces detracts from local specificities. Although I recognise that the fourth/first world dichotomy exists in various areas, the theory is flexible enough to allow for local specificities to be taken into account. The fourth world exists because of a lack of access to a global system, into which the first world is increasingly drawn, yet there are also local specificities to be taken into account for the formation of fourth world spaces in different areas, as my discussion of the historical context of violence in Colombia illustrates. Instead, I argue, this homogenisation is for the benefit of the first world audience, who are more able to easily consume such myths of violent spaces and actors which appear to be consistent behaviours globally. As I go on to discuss in this thesis, each of the cultural products under analysis was produced by first world inhabitants primarily for a first world audience, both local and global.

Each of the geographical locations discussed highlights a preoccupation with young people, and in particular, young men as threatening Others, as illustrated in my subsequent exploration of existing scholarship regarding media representations of French *banlieues* and North American inner city spaces. The discussion moves on to cultural expressions emanating from fourth world spaces, exemplified by hip-hop culture in North American ghettos, before moving on to the commodification of poverty in slum tourism in the *favelas* of Brazil.

In my exploration of these urban spaces and the fourth world, I focus in particular on issues of representation. As stated above, although the fourth world exists as a result of its exclusion from accessing flows of information, concurrently, flows of information exist *about* the fourth world space and its inhabitants. This information is disseminated to those outside of the fourth world space through media reports and cultural production, and subsequently consumed. One of the overarching discussion points in this thesis is thus to explore the increasing homogenisation of representations of the fourth world. The fourth world exists in disparate nations, yet, as the following discussion will illustrate, its representation is growing increasingly standardised. I now explore three different contexts in which the fourth world exists, to illustrate trends in representations of the fourth world in media reports, in cultural representation, and finally in consumption patterns. This discussion will highlight different extremes of consumption of the fourth world, from cultural production to real-life spaces. The bulk of the analysis in this thesis illustrates the different ways in

which the fourth world space and its inhabitants can be consumed, from narratives of exotic spaces to the visual presentation of dead individuals. This exploration of different forms of consumption of the fourth world in different national contexts is necessary to illustrate the increasing homogenisation of representations of that space globally. In this section I begin with the French *banlieue* and French cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu's account of its representation in journalistic reports. I subsequently move on to consider the US inner city, as while the United States as a whole is conceived as an information hub within the network society, and a centre of production of information, it is also home to the 'ghetto', one of the most prominent representations of the fourth world, as I discuss.[124]

Fourth world spaces exist across the globe in affluent and poverty-stricken nations. However, despite the heterogeneity of nations in which these spaces exist, their representation is increasingly homogenised: focus is intensified upon negative behaviours displayed by the inhabitants of these spaces, yet little attention, if any, is paid to socioeconomic conditions, or non-destructive behaviours. For example, the *banlieue* in France - a space inhabited first by the working classes and later increasingly by migrants and their children - is noted by multiple scholars as a focal point for 'moral panic'.[125] In particular, Bourdieu, in his critique of media discourse, criticises the portrayal of the *banlieue* as a dangerous Other space.[126] In France, Bourdieu laments an unnecessary emphasis on destructive events and behaviours, which, he argues, combined with a lack of in-depth analysis, do not address any possible solutions to such problems.[127] His discussion is useful to this thesis because it engages with the manner in which myths are constructed and reinforced through insufficient media representations,[128] and because his discussion of the French *banlieue* has resonance with the depiction of violence in Colombia. Bourdieu points out that the extraordinariness of an event or image, in comparison with the everyday

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[124] In addition to hosting media institutions which supply information to hubs across the globe, the US is also of importance in terms of the production and dissemination of cultural products, and therefore its representations of the fourth world are indicative of global trends.

[125] This moral panic was the result of increasing media focus on visible juvenile delinquency and immigration, according to Loic Wacqant. See Loic Wacqant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), pp. 137-8. Kiran Grewal also surveys the association of the *banlieue* with violence and crime. In particular, she highlights Laurent Bonelli'sidentification of the extraordinary phenomenon by which 'petty crime and delinquency have been presented within public discourses as the first step towards organised crime and terrorism, suggesting that even relatively minor acts of vandalism hold the potential for far greater negative impact on French societal structures and society'. See Kiran Grewal, '"The Threat from Within" Representations of the Banlieue in French Popular Discourse', *Europe: New Voices, New Perspectives*, Proceedings from the Contemporary Europe Research Centre Postgraduate Conference (2005/2006) (pp. 44-5).

[126] Bourdieu, Pierre, *On Television & Journalism,* trans. by Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson (London: Pluto Press, 1998).

[127] He blames this on television's need to dramatise events. This portrayal is noted too by Wacqant, who argues that such representations result in a binary division between the two groups: the general population and the Other inhabitants of the Other space. Those who live in the *banlieue* are conceived of as those who resort to violent confrontation in order to force through their wishes.

[128] He states simply that 'television, which claims to record reality, creates it instead', p. 22.

life of general society, allows its projection in the mass media.[129] As I go on to discuss later, violent events in Colombia filled news screens and newspapers across the globe in the period in which drug barons and *sicarios* carried out extraordinary acts of violence.[130]

Scholars in the US have noted a similar pattern in the representation of the nation's inner cities, as the mass media project negative images of the space and its inhabitants.[131] The general population, who had migrated *en masse* to the suburbs, leaving the inner cities without access to flows of information, increasingly saw the inner city inhabitants associated with negative and destructive behaviours in their newspaper and television reports.[132] Coverage lacked analysis of the underlying causes of such behaviours, and as such the inner city became a foil to suburbia – the general population grew to fear the inner city as a space and its inhabitants.[133] Because of this lack of explanation, myths regarding its inhabitants developed and proliferated. The destructive behaviours were perceived to be natural, because, following Barthes logic, we can see how its presentation was poor, incomplete, and relieved of 'fat'.

These representations of fourth world spaces in the media are significant because of their role in constructing and perpetuating myths about the spaces and their inhabitants. Bourdieu notes that much of what appears in the media as 'news' is treated as banal. Extraordinary events, such as riots, become banal in that they are reported regularly with little explanation of their underlying causes. His warning that 'the journalistic field represents the world in terms of a philosophy that sees history as an absurd series of disasters which can neither be understood nor influenced' aligns with Barthes's description of myth as masking ideologies created by those in power.[134] The outbreaks of violence in such marginal spaces are thus attributed not to

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[129] Bourdieu, p. 20.

[130] Currently, violence in Colombia is less reported due to a perceived lack of charismatic figures, however, in the late 1980s and throughout the following decade, the decadent, alluring figure Pablo Escobar was an enigmatic presence within global media. Current fascination with drug-related violence can, however, be seen in Mexico, with the almost daily reporting of shoot-outs between rival gangs in tourist areas, or the discovery of mass assassinations and graves, particularly in the areas surrounding the Mexico-US border.

[131] Steve Macek notes that the depiction of 'urban reality' in the 1980s and 90s was 'bleak'. He points out that little attention was paid to life in the inner city, and in those cases where these areas were portrayed, their inhabitants were shown 'violating social and moral norms, [represented] as pathological criminal, savage and strange. As a result, the news media's representations of the American metropolis and its problems tend to focus overwhelmingly on violence or underclass deviance' (p. 144). For more on media representation of the inner city in the US, see Cameron McCarthy et al., 'Danger in the Safety Zone: Notes on Race, Resentment, and the Discourse of Crime, Violence and Suburban Security', *Cultural Studies,* 11:2 (1997), 274-95'.

[132] For example, Macek remarks upon a tendency to focus on drug use in the inner city, where instead of analysis of the root causes of drug addiction, the reports use sensationalist bellicose vocabulary to amplify the effects of drug use on the community. For more on fearing the inner city, see Macek, *Urban Nightmares: The Media, the Right, and the Moral Panic over the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).p. viii.

[133] Macek suggests that the treatment of the inner city in this way is utilised as a foil to sanctify the suburbs and their inhabitants; the inner city's representation constructs an Other to the self. Those in the suburbs come to resent those in the inner city due to their projected predisposition to violent activity.

[134] Ibid, p. 8. Here he is lamenting the lack of class consciousness in late twentieth century society, which he in part blames on the media's style of fast reporting, which leaves no time for real analysis.

structural causes of inequality, but to a predisposition to violence on the part of its inhabitants. This is significant to this thesis as a whole, as it illustrates the tendency to overlook the structural causes of such events, which ultimately leads to a lack of understanding by those reading/watching without further investigation. This is as true for the motivations of Colombian hired assassins who lack many viable employment opportunities, as it is for young people rioting in the *banlieue* of France due to a lack of opportunities. As I have discussed, repeated images of violence in Colombia without adequate explanation can lead to the perception that there is a natural inclination towards violence in the forth world space. The construction and perpetuation of myths through the media is the focus of my analysis of *Leopardo al sol*. As the thesis progresses, however, I move on to consider how these myths at a local level are communicated at the global level. As I now go on to discuss, there is an increasingly homogenised representation of fourth world spaces across the globe, as marginalised, violent, Other spaces. In this thesis I explore how the local representation of myth combines with this tendency for homogenisation at a global level, with particular attention to how this has changed over time, from 1990 to 2005.

The previous two examples of the fourth world discussed were the French *banlieue* and the US inner city. Loic Wacqant, a renowned professor in the study of marginality and social exclusion, notes an increasing tendency to homogenise representations of the fourth world spaces of the *banlieue* and the US inner city, despite their many differences.[135] The fourth world location is presented as a common denominator, creating a sense of 'Othering' within the same nation as the reports are to be consumed. However, these representations are not exhaustive ones, but rather reproductions of myths that fail to tell the full story. In this way, it is not the fourth world space that is growing increasingly homogenised, but its representation. Castells, in his positing of the term, emphasises the heterogeneity of spaces, and so in this thesis one of the points of analysis is the increasing homogenisation of representations of the fourth world. Media representation is a small element of this, but because this thesis analyses cultural products it is those representations that are of most interest. Cultural products are consumed by consumers – individuals who are willing to spend money to gain this 'information'. I now explore examples of the

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[135] Wacqant, pp. 140-3. He makes a convincing argument that rather than a transatlantic convergence, we see two different phenomena in France and America. The two key differences between the spaces are related to ethnicity and state presence. In the ghetto, he argues, marginality occurs because of the lack of state penetration, and he notes the homogeneity of its ethnicity; many of the ghetto's problems, he notes, are related to the history of segregation of black citizens. The *banlieue*, on the other hand, is characterised by a strong state presence which mitigates its isolation, and by a heterogenous population of immigrants from across the globe. He concludes that rather than the spread of a global phenomenon, in France 'a new regime of urban poverty' is emerging instead (pp. 5-6). Later in this introduction I explore media representations of Brazilian and Colombian marginal spaces, which too illustrate this trend.

consumption of the fourth world space, beginning with the example of the US inner city because of its role in the increasing homogenisation in global representations.

The US inner city, or 'ghetto', is an important example of the fourth world because of its visibility. It is a space represented globally, not only in the media, but also due to the popularity of the cultural movement of hip-hop, which originated in New York's inner city spaces in the mid twentieth-century. As a result, the inner city 'ghetto' is now home to one of the most recognisable cultural movements from the fourth world space. This movement has slowly transformed from its origins as a cultural expression of political protest, heavily associated with African-American identity, which was largely unknown to mainstream society, to a signifier of marginality through its increasing visibility across the globe.[136] Its adoption by the mass media as a signifier of marginality, however, has seen these popular expressions divested of their political impetus. Hip-hop culture comprises of four main elements: rap music, graffiti, DJing and dance, yet its most popular representations portray each of these genres as evidence of destructive behaviours such as misogyny and violence within the inner city space.[137] This tendency itself is another form of myth formation and perpetuation, because the representations remove the political roots of the movement, which provide the explanation for some destructive behaviours.[138] The Colombian cultural products explored in this thesis portray evidence of hip-hop culture as an attempt to engage with an increasingly homogenised representation of the fourth world space and its inhabitants.[139] In particular, the analysis of *La virgen de los sicarios* will involve the use of costume to engage with the visibility of hip-hop culture across the globe and its use as a tool to provoke the audience to reflect upon their consumption of the actions of fourth world inhabitants.

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[136] Tricia Rose 'Never Trust a Big Butt and a Smile', in *That's the Joint! The Hip-Hop Studies Reader,* ed. by Mark Anthony Neal & Murray Forman (New York: Routledge: 2004), pp. 335-352.

[137] In particular, bell hooks, the prolific public commentator and intellectual, has written extensively on the topic of the representation of the inner city in US media. She laments in particular the demonization of black youth, which she links to the growing popularity of hip-hop music in mainstream culture. Youths, she asserts, are represented as inhabitants of the inner city, and spearhead a subculture of violence and misogyny. See for example, bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006), For more on hip-hop culture and its expressions, see, for example, Simon Black, '"Street Music", Urban Ethnography and Ghettoized Communities', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 38:2 (2014), 700-5; RDG Kelley, 'Lookin' for the "Real" Nigga: Social Scientists Construct the Ghetto', in *That's the Joint! the Hip-Hop Studies Reader,* ed. by M. Forman & M. A. Neal (New York: Routledge, 2012). To learn more about cinematic representations of the inner city in the 1990s and the subsequent parody of mythical presentations of the space, see S. Craig Watkins, 'Ghetto Reelness: Hollywood Film Production, Black Popular Culture & Ghetto Action Film Cycle', in *Genre & Contemporary Hollywood,* ed. by Steve Neale (London: BFI, 2002), pp. 236-250.

[138] bell hooks notes a particular incident in which, having interviewed the popular rapper Ice Cube for *Spin* magazine, the published version of the interview omitted all references to his deeper political beliefs regarding the representation of women. She concludes from this incident and other conversations with young black rappers that 'some of the more misogynistic stuff in black music was there to stir up controversy, to appeal to audiences.' (2006), p. 136. For the full interview with Ice Cube see*,* bell hooks 'Ice Cube Culture: A Shared Passion for Speaking Truth. bell hooks and Ice Cube in Dialogue', in *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, pp. 145-68.

[139] Simon Black asserts that today 'hip-hop culture […] has become a signifier of the modern urban experience' (p. 700).

Hip-hop culture is an example of a cultural representation originating within the fourth world which has been transformed by its mass consumption outside of the fourth world space. Although this has affected how the movement is conceived by wider society, removing it from its roots, the product at the centre of consumption is cultural expression emanating from the fourth world. In contrast, I now move on to discuss a form of consumption of the fourth world in which the product at the centre is the fourth world space itself: slum tourism. Slum tourism exists as a practice in disparate spaces across the globe, all of which belong to the fourth world – South African townships, Indian slums and Brazilian *favelas* – and it is this final example which will be the focus of my analysis.[140]

The purpose of this discussion is to emphasise the practices behind the consumption of cultural products that explore violent marginal figures in Colombia. The consumptive practice revealed by slum tourism is not of material products but of a particular place and its inhabitants. It is therefore viewed as an extreme form of consumption, distinct from watching or reading those cultural products which purport to represent the very same spaces. Ko Koens, Fabian Frenzel and Maite Steinbrink point out that '[t]he critical view that slum tourists are voyeurs gawking at the people is greatly pronounced, while such criticism is not usually levelled at people reading literature that displays the poor or who watch a film about poverty.'[141] I argue that all three are different forms of the same phenomenon – the commodification of Otherness. Each represents a form of consuming myths of alterity, in which inhabitants of the fourth world, and the space itself, are perceived as exotic. I argue that the exoticism that Huggan speaks of in the earlier quotation regarding exoticism applies equally to the reading of literature and the viewing of films set in fourth world spaces, as well as to the touristic gaze in that same space. The cultural products which I explore in this thesis raise questions about these consumptive practices, which are very similar to those asked by scholars of slum tourism.

The motivations for undertaking a tour of a slum have been widely explored for the Brazilian context, with the general conclusion that the tours represent an opportunity to see the reality behind the cultural and media representations of the *favela*.[142] It is a highly mythologised space, and the tours allow tourists to test these

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[140] Slum tourism is a new and growing area of scholarship. For an account of the different directions taken within the emerging field, see Fabian Frenzel, Ko Koens, and Malte Steinbrink (eds), *Slum tourism: power, poverty and ethics* (London: Routledge, 2012). It contains a wide variety of information both about the practice of 'slumming' and of the growth of the field, and includes articles which support the practice, as well as those which do not. Overall, it is an intriguing introduction to the field.
[141] Ko Koens, Fabian Frenzel and Maite Steinbrink, 'Keep on Slumming?', pp. 232-240 (p. 235).
[142] Bianca Freire-Medeiros suggests a combination of three factors which incline tourists to take these tours. The first is the idea of taking a risk by entering into spaces perceived as 'dangerous', with the relative safety assured by the organised trip. For some, it is the opportunity to demonstrate concern in relation to poverty, while for others it is simply the opportunity to access otherwise unapproachable viewpoints from which to gaze upon the city. Bianca

myths.[143] The ethics of such an activity have been a focus of debate in wider slum tourism scholarship, as well as in relation to Brazil.[144] For example, Fabio Frenzel suggests that slum tourism represents a form of poverty tourism,[145] whilst Kanika Basu argues that the practice can be a useful generator of income for the area.[146] A key question in slum tourism scholarship is the degree to which local people are given control over the tours, and the extent to which they can benefit economically. In Rio de Janeiro, according to Bianca Freire-Medeiros, local people generally have no input into these tours, and professional tour companies are usually the only parties to collect a profit.[147] In this case, ethical questions must be asked of such a practice, in the same way that they are in relation to the consumption of material cultural products.

The Brazilian *favela* is a good example of the growing visibility of the fourth world. Its representation is more mixed than those explored previously in this introduction in the US and in France.[148] However the account of slum tourism in *favelas* illustrated by Freire-Medeiros is indicative of the concern of this thesis – that representations of the fourth world and its inhabitants are not controlled by fourth world inhabitants. This, I argue, reflects the relationship between the fourth world inhabitant and the cultural products analysed in this thesis which purport to represent their lives and the space that they inhabit. With this in mind, I move on to the specific city of Medellín, surveying its specific history of urban violence before exploring the presentation of the fourth world space within the city, to which violence is most often attributed.

Bringing this analysis to urban manifestations of violence which continue to be visible in Colombia today, it is useful to consider the description forwarded by Geoffrey Kantaris, who while commenting upon cinematic production, articulates a tripartite division of the country's twentieth century violence.[149] The first segment of violence includes *La Violencia* up to its most popularly articulated temporal boundary

Freire-Medeiros, '"I Went to the City of God": Gringos, Guns and the Touristic Favela', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 20:1 (2011), 21-34 (p. 22).

[143] For more on the content of the tours, see Claire Williams, 'Ghettourism and Voyeurism, or Challenging Stereotypes and Raising Consciousness? Literary & Non-Literary Forays into the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro', *Bulletin of Latin American Research,* 27:4 (2008), 483-500.

[144] In Brazil, the practice originated from the 1992 Earth Summit, when delegates were taken to Rio de Janeiro's largest *favela*, Rocinha, in order to observe the extent of poverty in these fourth world spaces, and after the summit the tours continued for interested tourists. Fabian Frenzel, 'Beyond "Othering": the political roots of slum tourism', in *Slum Tourism*, pp. 49-65.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Kanika Basu, 'Slum tourism: for the poor, by the poor', in *Slum Tourism: Poverty, power and Ethics,* ed. By Frenzel, Koens & Steinbrink (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 66-81.

[147] Bianca Freire-Medeiros, 'Favela tourism: Listening to Local Voices', in Fabian Frenzel, Ko Koens, and Malte Steinbrink (eds), *Slum tourism: power, poverty and ethics* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 175-192 (p. 175).

[148] For example, Claire Williams asserts that these iconic spaces have a split representation: as tropically exotic while simultaneously the home of poverty, crime and violence.

[149] Kantaris (2008).

of the 1960s; the second includes the development of guerrilla violence split between guerrilla groups and paramilitaries which caused the mass migrations of the rural population to urban centres; the 'third' category of violence 'denomina la violencia urbana ocasionada por el desempleo y pobreza de estas poblaciones marginales en las grandes ciudades, vinculada al auge, desde mitades de los ochenta, de las mafias de la droga'.[150] His description of this third stage not only provides a detailed context of the development of violence, but also articulates the reasons behind it to situate urban violence in Colombia as a consequence of the existence of the fourth world space. The transition between these two periods included the mass migration to the city of millions of displaced peoples, and saw the antecedents to the explosion in drug related crime develop. As Kantaris explains, the two overlap, and the growing trade in narcotics found in the many unemployed young people in the periphery of the nation's urban centres a resource for carrying out their illicit activities. I now go on to explore this further in the context of the city of Medellín.

Medellín: A History of Violence

The development of urban, drug-related violence saw the emergence of important new dynamics. While previous violence was largely confined to rural areas, apart from exceptional cases such as the *Bogotazo*, the distinguishing factor in the violence of the late twentieth century was its urban location. Throughout the period of *La Violencia,* politics in major cities had continued as normal; however in the late twentieth century the emergence of powerful drug barons with much economic capital saw conflict descend onto the city itself, and its political institutions and actors attacked. The city of Medellín in particular became synonymous with violence in the late twentieth century due to the rapid growth of the Medellín cartel and its notorious leader Pablo Escobar. Exercising a sustained campaign of terror against the state, the cartel and its actions brought global attention to the city, which in March 1988 was named 'most violent city in the world' by *Time* magazine.[151] In order to contextualise this period, three separate historical trajectories must be explored to explain the violence which erupted in the city in the final decades of the twentieth century: the history of the city and its surrounding areas which led to the rapid rise of trade in narcotics, the specific story of the city of Medellín and its articulated division, and the experiences of the marginalised young people within the city's fourth world spaces.

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[150] Kantaris (2008), pp. 455-6.
[151] John Borrell, 'Colombia: the Most Dangerous City: Welcome to Medellín, Coke Capital of the World', *Time*, 131: 12 (1988), 45.

It is helpful to explore the history of Medellín in order to understand why violence was prevalent to such a high degree in that particular city. Drug trafficking in Colombia was enabled by the lack of opportunities for producers in other nations to traffic their product. As military dictatorships came into force across many Latin American nations and blocked traditional hubs for exporting illicit substances, particularly those with strategic coastlines, traffickers had to find alternative routes. Colombia, because of its geographical terrain and existing networks of smugglers, became the best option through which narcotics could be transported north.[152] Since colonial times, the city of Medellín and the province of Antioquia in which it is situated have been associated with contraband trade.[153] The routes and practices established over that period led to the development of the trade in drug trafficking in the area.

Smuggling, like violence, is a national rather than regional problem.[154] As with violence, Colombia's geography was instrumental in its development, and in Antioquia in particular, aided the efforts of its practitioners. The networks built by smugglers for counterfeit goods were utilised by drug traffickers as the trade developed in the global context. La Guajira, the setting of Laura Restrepo's fictional novLeopardo al sol, is an example of how small operations in the mid twentieth century were transformed by the demand for narcotics from the North, and contributed to the characteristics of the period under analysis in this thesis. Clan-based in structure, the trade is believed to have involved, in 1980, around 80,000 families.[155] The area saw a boom in the smuggling of marijuana throughout the 1960s and 70s, which was 'an excellent example of the naturalization of smuggling', according to Polit Dueñas. She notes that some of the families involved in smuggling successfully exported marijuana became very rich through the trade, but most importantly, they 'set an example during the years that preceded the rise of cocaine'.[156] Smuggling in this way facilitated a progression to the contraband of more lucrative products such as cocaine, which enabled the rise of the drug baron and the resultant violence. A new class of *nouveau riche* emerged, as more individuals took advantage of the growing demand for drugs from abroad. Individual drug barons

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[152] For more on the development of the drug trade in Latin America and how it serviced the demands of North Americans in the second half of the twentieth century, see Paul Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009) pp. 306-12.

[153] Salazar & Jaramillo, p. 113.

[154] There are many accounts dedicated to the practice of smuggling, specifically in the Colombian regions of Antioquia and La Guajira during diverse historical periods. For example, see Muriel Laurent, *Contrabando en Colombia en el siglo XIX: prácticas y discursos de resistencia y reproducción*, (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2008). For accounts of pre-Independence smuggling, see Lance Raymond Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling: Regional Informal Economies in Early Bourbon New Granada* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997). Furthermore, the continued relevance of the topic in contemporary society is reflected in the existence of a page dedicated to contraband on the website of national newspaper *El Tiempo*, which lists numerous news stories related to the topic <http://www.eltiempo.com/noticias/contrabando>

[155] Salazar & Jaramillo, p. 28.

[156] Sarmiento & Krauthausen, p. 43, cited in Polit Dueñas, p. 38.

gained notoriety, and due to their phenomenal wealth, gained incredible power. These smugglers became drug traffickers, and because of the economic advantages afforded to them from the financial gains made in this trade, they were able to unleash war against the state.

The drug barons, whose businesses had burgeoned in the late 1960s and early 70s, had seen their power erupt in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Their engagement with terrorist tactics against the State, known as 'narco-terrorism', was a response to the State's decision to extradite captured drugs traffickers to the US for prosecution, rather than dealing with the crimes internally.[157] In addition to bombing strategic targets, the cartel also resorted to kidnappings and assassinations of politicians and their family members. The actions linked to the development of the trade saw the city's death rates soar, and visible violence rocket. The death rate reached such heights that the city came to be known as one of the most violent in the world in the final decades of the twentieth century.[158]

The majority of deaths were largely of the general population, however, what distinguished this period of urban violence within the city of Medellín from others was the number of high-profile acts of violence carried out against the state and its actors. It is generally acknowledged that the worst period of violence took place between 1984 and 1993, years in which key assassinations took place.[159] In April 1984, the Minister for Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated, bringing an intense spotlight upon the city. Lara Bonilla had been compiling information against various drug barons who had attempted to enter the political arena, but was subsequently eliminated by members of the Medellín cartel in retaliation.[160] Numerous assassinations followed; the editor of national newspaper *El Espectador*, Guillermo Cano, who had called for drug barons to be captured and prosecuted, was murdered in 1986, and in 1989 - the year preceding the publication of the first text under analysis in this thesis - Luis Carlos Galán, a presidential candidate, was assassinated during a televised address to supporters in the town of Soacha.[161] The clear message from the drug barons at this point was 'that their power was so great, they could decide who might or might not be a presidential candidate'.[162]

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[157] Pearce, p. 193.
[158] Ramiro Ceballos Melguizo, 'The Evolution of Armed Conflict in Medellín: An Analysis of the Major Actors', trans. Francine Cronshaw, *Latin American Perspectives*, 28:1 (2001), 110–131 (p. 115).
[159] Polit Dueñas (2013), p. 34.
[160] For example, Escobar had in 1982 stood for congress (see Pearce, p. 193). Although Lara Bonilla kept his distance from the narcotics groups, many key figures amongst Colombia's elite, and in particular the political elites, had profited from the laundering of narcotics money up this period (see Pearce, pp. 192-9). Escobar and other members of the cartel saw the efforts to dispel them from the political arena as double standards and sought to eliminate those behind these efforts (see Polit Dueñas (2013), p. 41).
[161] Soacha is not in Medellín, but illustrates the reach of the war against the state, which stretched across the country.
[162] Pearce, p. 265.

These actions were enabled by the normalisation of the employment of private actors in violent conflict that had begun during *La Violencia*.[163] As Leal Buitrago asserted, key legislation was put in place to allow private armies to function legitimately in the same way as the national army. A confederation of drug barons had previously, in 1981, set up the first of a series of urban paramilitaries, with the aim of attacking guerrilla members involved in extortion through kidnapping.[164] In order to build an army, the drug barons called upon the unemployed youth of the urban centres, trained them to carry out assassinations, and set up a network in which they would be paid for each killing. By the mid-1980s, when the Medellín cartel decided to enact revenge upon Lara Bonilla and other critical figures, an army of highly trained young men were freely available. After the Justice Minister's murder, the Colombian government angered these powerful figures by agreeing to extradite to the US any drug baron found guilty of trafficking drugs.[165] Their campaign of terror known as narco-terrorism, which occurred most significantly in the city of Medellín, was a direct response to that ruling.[166]

Articulating a divided city: Medellín

The historical developments which led to such violence in Medellín highlight the extent to which the nation was unable to deal with the exponential growth in power afforded to the drug barons. Drug barons and the narcotics trade have been given extensive focus in both scholarship and cultural production, however this thesis is focused upon the more anonymous violent actors who represent the marginalised of the city. In order to understand the extent to which Medellín's inhabitants are divided between first and fourth world, I now explore the history of the city in socio-economic terms.

Medellín is a historically divided city. Mary Roldán asserts that an economic split in the city was first in evidence from 1950, and since then, a sense of division has pervaded in Medellín. Citing a study from the National Planning Department in 1991, Roldán demonstrates that 'by the 1960s "two cities" had emerged, and that Medellín as a whole was characterized by a high level of "social, spatial and

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[163] For more, see Polit Dueñas, p. 41.

[164] The group, named MAS (Muerte a Secuestadores) was established after the guerrilla group M-19 kidnapped the sister of the Ochoa Brothers (prominent members of the Medellín cartel), Martha Nieves Ochoa. The group operated around the Magdalena Medio region, and targeted guerrilla groups and activists. Although at first they gained support and sympathy from the national population in their response to kidnapping to extort money, their actions caused concern after a short period. The group underwent many changes, and when, in 1993, the Medellín cartel was destroyed by the death of Escobar and the imprisonment of many of its members, former members of MAS went on to form the AUC, a collective group for right-wing paramilitary brigades.

[165] Grace Livingstone, *Inside Colombia: Drugs, Democracy & War* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2003) pp. 82-83.

[166] See Livingstone, pp. 83-84 for more details.

economic inequalities among its residents'".[167] The latter half of the twentieth century saw periods of intense economic growth, but also of decline, in addition to periods of mass migration caused by violence in the surrounding rural areas.[168] Migration to the city from the countryside, an experience occurring across the Latin American region, was augmented in the department of Antioquia by high levels of violence in the countryside. In Medellín migrants created settlements on the edge of the city, on the hillsides which surrounded the Aburrá valley. The settlements lacked basic infrastructure and services, and as such 'became vast territories of informality both economically and socially'.[169] It was in these hillside settlements, which throughout this thesis I refer to as the *barrios marginales*, where young men, organised into criminal gangs, were to be exploited for the drug barons' 'commercial war'. According to Roldán, the areas which were recognised as spatially and economically disadvantaged were also characterised as morally neglected in the press, where it was implied that there were clear differences between those who inhabited more wealthy areas of the city and those on its periphery. As Ana Jaramillo and Salazar, in a later study of drugs and violence in the city assert, 'los pobladores de [la comuna nororiental de Medellín] han sido estigmatizados como delincuentes, lo que ha mermado sus posibilidades de conseguir trabajo', highlighting the detrimental effects of this articulated divide.[170]

As illustrated by many of Medellín's cultural products, the divide between the two parts of the city was also articulated linguistically through the development of the dialect of *parlache*,[171] in which the peripheral areas of the city were dubbed 'Medallo'.[172] Thanks to its frequent use not only in everyday speech on the streets, but also in many cultural products created in late twentieth century Medellín, the term is widely cited and understood. Indeed, perhaps its most recognised use is within Fernando Vallejo's novel *La virgen de los sicarios*: the narrator, the lettered Fernando, asserts that Medellín is 'la ciudad de abajo', and Medallo 'la de arriba'.[173] Medallo is therefore conceptualised spatially as being comprised of the *barrios*

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[167] Departamento de Planeación Nacional Colombia, *Medellín: Reencuentro con el futuro,* (Bogotá: Presidencia de la Republica, 1991), p. 8, cited in Mary Roldán, 'Wounded Medellín: Narcotics Traffic against a Background of Industrial Decline', in *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 129-48 (p. 136).

[168] Roldán, (p. 136).

[169] John J. Betancur, 'Urban Challenges in Latin American Cities: Medellín and the Limits of Governance', in *Governing Cities in a Global Era: Urban Innovation, Competition, and Democratic Reform*, ed. by Robin Hambleton & Jill Simone Gross, pp. 125-37 (p. 132).

[170] Jaramillo & Salazar, p. 33.

[171] *Parlache* is a dialect used by many young people in Medellín, particularly in the *barrios marginales*. I will discuss this further later in the introduction.

[172] Vallejo, pp. 88-9. The term is also referenced by many scholars working within Colombian cultural studies such as Jauregui & Suárez, Kantaris and Lander.

[173] Vallejo, pp. 88-9. Interestingly, as is discussed in another chapter of this thesis, in the cinematic adaptation of *La virgin de los sicarios*, it is Alexis, inhabitant of Medallo, who explains the term to the lettered narrator, which is perceived as a less problematic way of articulating a perceived difference than that used in the novel.

marginales, which were constructed as a result of mass migration to the city. The inhabitants are Others from outside the city and it is the home of young assassins portrayed regularly by the media. This perceived divide within the city which Roldán asserts, began in relation to an economic split in the 1950s, could thus be identified visually and economically, and articulated linguistically, by the 1980s. The linguistic label is of vital importance, as it was developed by the very people whom it purports to represent. The young men of the *barrios marginales* recognised difference in their relation to other citizens of Medellín, and found a way to express this divide. This differentiation between Medellín and Medallo is explored in this thesis in a number of ways. Firstly, Medallo represents the fourth world space, as it describes the 'black holes' of informational capitalism. In this way, the divide functions as a marker between the audience and the subject of the cultural product. In this thesis I illustrate that although the young men of the *barrios marginales*, through the language of *parlache*, recognised and articulated the spatial, economic and social differences which separate them from Medellín's inhabitants, the concept is communicated through cultural products over which they have no ownership. Secondly, the divide is explored as an example of myth. It is a linguistic concept, and exists as a myth because of its association with the city's history of violence. In order to understand this, it is necessary to turn to the final section of this introduction: an analysis of the *sicario* as mythical violent actor.

Sicarios

The *sicario* came to prominence as a prominent actor in the representation of the war against the state of the late 1980s. For the wealthy drug barons, the precariously built settlements on the edge of the city of Medellín provided a network of young men to join the ranks of their private armies because of their lack of employment opportunities. Indeed, in some areas, gangs of young men had already formed since the 1960s, although these were not violent in nature.[174] Known as *galladas*, these groups were originally formed by youths opposed to the lack of prospects for social mobility, and an obsession with consumer culture. However, the arrival of the drug trade in the city changed their dynamic, as these groups 'turned into small armies at the service of the drug dealers and breeding grounds for hit men or less professional criminal consortia'.[175] While the activities of many of the *galladas* were directly

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[174] Ceballos Melguizo.
[175] Ibid, p. 117.

influenced by the lure of capital accumulation from the drug trade, other gangs were formed because of members' dependency on drugs. In this way, in addition to carrying out violent acts in the form of assassinations, young men in the *barrios marginales* began campaigns of terror within their own neighbourhoods. Known as *chichipato* groups, they 'turned many barrios into real battlegrounds with their territorial conflicts and confrontations'.[176] Their activities included, but were not limited to, muggings, beatings, and armed raids on local businesses. In response, some barrios formed *milicias*, alternative gangs which sought to rid areas of drug addicts and troublemakers. Although the groups were linked, some ideologically, others formally, to leftist guerrilla groups (in particular the M-19), the *milicias* are often represented as vigilante groups, showing little political ideology and championing their function as 'social-cleansers'.

This thesis is focused upon the violent actor as a mythical construction, rather than as a reflection of reality, therefore whilst the contextual discussion is important, of most interest is the representation of this figure. I argue that the *sicario* is a myth in Barthes's sense of the word, constructed both by public discourse and through the media and cultural production. The iconic drug baron provides an interesting foil to the *sicario*, because of the notoriety attributed to clearly identifiable individuals, whereas the *sicario* is an anonymous figure. As Pearce asserts, there has been a tendency to focus upon drug barons as those responsible for the breakdown in order in the nation.[177] The war between the drug traffickers and the State was very high profile, and as a result of the attention they received, drug barons became 'construcciones míticas de superhombres poderosos, valientes y violentos'.[178] My focus instead is on this anonymous *sicario*, who rose to prominence as a mercenary of the drug barons.

Young men who otherwise may not have had employment opportunities were trained in a profession, and by the mid-1980s the *sicario* had emerged as a new major violent actor. The crimes with which the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* were associated were increasingly more spectacular, leading to heightened attention from the press, and as I will discuss below, the assassination of Lara Bonilla marked a watershed moment in the representation of young men from Medellín's *barrios marginales*. With the growing acknowledgement of the *sicario* as the face of the 'Other' side of Medellín, which was marked by violence, the divide that Roldán defines as originally spatial and economic was now articulated ideologically. She

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[176] Ibid, p. 118.
[177] Pearce, p. 3.
[178] Ovalle and Giacomello, 'La mujer en el "narcomundo": Construcciones tradicionales y alternativas del sujeto femenino'. *La ventana,* 24 (2006), 297-319, (p. 298).

affirms that some sectors of the city were perceived as morally degraded, a discourse she states was endorsed and promoted by the traditional lettered class.

Although carrying out orders rather than masterminding the crimes for which they became known, *sicarios* were thrust into the limelight by the assassination of Lara Bonilla, the Minister for Justice in 1984. Labelled the 'marking event of a generational change' by Pilar Riaño Alcalá, this act, carried out by two *sicarios*, is seen as the beginning of the period known as the war against the state, or the 'commercial war'.[179] Two young men from the *barrios marginales,* home to migrants to the city largely displaced by rural violence, were paraded in the media. The assassin, Iván Darío Guizado Alvarez was killed, and the driver, Byron de Jesús, was captured by police.[180] The perception of youth in the city was altered as '[t]he image of the boyish assassin, a resident of one of the poorest *barrios* of Medellín, crossed the entire country'.[181] Whilst what was most significant about this event was that it gave a clear sign that drug barons had too much power, it was 'the emergence of public and media representations of youth as social threat and social *Other* that was instead recorded'.[182] Jesús Martín Barbero, the renowned Colombian cultural theorist, also attributes much importance to the assassination of Lara Bonilla, as it was at this point, he asserts, that the young person emerged as a new social actor. Like Pilar-Alcalá he notes that young peripheral men were suddenly the focus of media attention, whether in the news or on television programmes,[183] and he laments the missed opportunity by researchers to take an objective approach to studying the lives of these young men. In contrast, he argues, these studies were often affected by established preoccupations regarding youths in the *barrios marginales*, suggesting that 'el estigma del inicio ha estado marcando fuertemente la preocupación y la mirada de los investigadores sociales'.[184] This stigma related to their status as inhabitants of Medallo – the fourth world space – and so myths about the young men developed because they were unable to reply.

Because of the spectacular nature of their crimes, they quickly rose to prominence, and as Polit Dueñas asserts, 'in the media, the face of this new wave of urban violence unleashed by narco traffickers was that of their hitmen who worked

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[179] Pilar Riaño Alcalá, *Dwellers of Memory: Youth and Violence in Medellín, Colombia* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006), p. 1.
[180] Polit Dueñas (2013), p. 112.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid
[183] Salazar & Jaramillo also note the importance of the assassination of Lara Bonilla when, '[c]on el aleve ataque la figura del sicario emergió en el primer plano de la vida nacional' (p. 70).
[184] Jesus Martin Bárbero, 'Jóvenes: des-orden cultural y palimpsestos de identidad', in *"Viviendo a toda": Jovenes, territorios culturales y nuevas sensibilidades*, ed. by Humberto J. Cubides et al. (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 1998), pp. 22-37 (p. 22).

for the narcos: the *sicarios*'.[185] Reflecting on the myths surrounding these innocent-looking young men, Mario Vargas Llosa comments:

> los *sicarios* constituyen [...] una mitología fraguada por la literatura, el cine, la música, el periodismo y la fantasía popular, de modo que, cuando se habla de ellos conviene advertir que se pisa ese delicioso y resbaladizo territorio, el preferido de las novelistas, donde se confunden ficción y realidad.[186]

He goes on to describe in great detail the excesses of the *sicario*, before revealing that these are a replication of rumours rather than a reflection of reality: '¿Cuánto de esto es cierto y cuánto imaginación? No lo sé. Resume lo que oí y leí en un viaje reciente por Colombia'.[187] In this way, the myth of the *sicario* developed into the twenty-first century, after the death of Pablo Escobar.

Stepping back temporarily from this local focus, I explore the significance of the representation of the *sicario* in the more global context. He is a violent actor, and these actors are, it has been noted, increasingly fetishised in cultural production. For example, using the example of the highly successful Brazilian film *Cidade de Deus*, Geoffrey Kantaris argues that Latin American films are de-fetishising violence, in contrast to Hollywood blockbusters, because the act of violence is not itself shown on screen. He uses a scene from the Brazilian film in which a young child is forced to choose and shoot one of his friends. Rather than focus on the child being shot, Kantaris argues, the camera cuts to an 'Other scene', so that the act of violence is not visible. Instead the camera focuses upon the instigator of this attack. I suggest, in this way, that this practice has further significance in terms of the representation of the violent actor, because the camera focuses upon the instigator of the attack instead of the act itself. Therefore, this indicates a trend in which the violent actor is fetishised rather than violence per se. I suggest, in keeping with the argument of this thesis, that this is due to his fourth world status. A practice has developed in Latin America whereby fictional cinematic texts set in the fourth world feature 'non-professional' actors playing the roles of the majority of fourth world characters.[188] Although this is beneficial to the community by providing employment opportunities for the local population, I argue that the effect upon the consuming audience is also fetishising, as it appears that first world actors are unable to portray fourth world characters, because they are so different, and this enhances the sense that

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[185] Polit Dueñas (2013), pp. 41-2.
[186] Mario Vargas Llosa, 'Los *sicarios*', *El País*, 4 October 1999, <http://elpais.com/diario/1999/10/04/opinion/938988004_850215.html> [Accessed 13 Oct 2012].
[187] Ibid.
[188] *La vendedora de rosas, La virgen de los sicarios,* and *Cidade de Deus* are just some examples of fictional films in which this practice has been used.

inhabitants of the fourth world are Others.[189] The representation of the *sicario* is part of this wider practice of fetishising the fourth world inhabitant.

Returning then to the local context. The *sicario* has become a major figurehead for cultural production in late twentieth and early twenty-first century Colombian cultural production. He is the subject of numerous fictional literary and cinematic texts, as well as non-fictional explorations. However, the *sicario*, like the drug baron, I argue, has become an emblematic, mythical construction. Unlike the individual drug barons, whose mythical status is tied to their factual identities, the *sicario* is mythical in his ephemeral and anonymous identity. Because of this anonymity, the *sicario*, originally a young assassin, is identified through a number of common descriptive categories; an ethnic identity identified as belonging to fourth world inhabitants, an occupation in death, his love of commodities and in particular clothing, and most importantly, his status as an inhabitant of the fourth world space – the peripheral *barrios marginales* - surrounding the city.

The *sicarios'* identification with the fourth world space in the city is a key part of this thesis. An overarching argument is that of the *sicario* as an anonymous figure who is easily replaced, as evidenced in each of the cultural products analysed. It is this anonymity, I argue, which has allowed the myth of the *sicario* to develop to such an extent that the figure now represents the fourth world space in Medellín. The *sicario's* easy replacement has been a theme in contemporary scholarship, through the concept of the *desechable,* which I now explore.

The use of the word *desechable* is well known in relation to the young men who are often portrayed in Colombian cultural products, as well as their counterparts throughout the Latin American region. Its literal meaning is that of a disposable object, which can easily be replaced. The *desechable* is found on the edges of society, often symbolically, and predominantly geographically. This location, on the periphery, is part of his/her identity, as Jauregui and Suárez assert: 'Los "desechables" son identificados por el ciudadano pleno con los residuos, y consecuentemente ubicados más allá de la mirada, en los confines o "tugurios" de la representación y el reconocimiento social'.[190] In this way, much representation of the *desechable* can be linked to the periphery, and in Colombia in particular, to violence and both its protagonists and victims. The place of the young man on the periphery establishes him as a *desechable*.

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[189] For more on the use of non-professional actors, see Lucía Nagib, 'Talking Bullets', *Third Text*, 18: 3 (2004), 239-50; and Else R. P. Vieira, *City of God in Several Voice: Brazilian Social Cinema as Action* (Nottingham: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2005).
[190] Ibid, p. 368.

In the Colombian context, the term is used to refer to human lives; those of the young people inhabiting the fourth world spaces of Medellín. It can be applied both to systematic targeting by the state of undesirables, such as street children and prostitutes, who are killed by security forces, or simply to those who have been forgotten by the system, and as such are neglected. Jauregui and Suárez link this practice to the growth of capitalism, stating:

> Entre los discursos cotidianos sobre la marginalidad y la criminalidad urbana emergió con renovadas fuerzas una imagen: la de la ciudad como un lugar contaminado no por los ruido y la polución industrial de la modernización periférica, ni por los residuos petroquímicos de los motores que la cruzan, sino por una "polución humana".[191]

This connection with the growth of capitalism also links the term to the fourth world. The term is, as described, politically loaded, as are the circumstances surrounding its practice. Men and women, children and the elderly, are killed or pushed to the periphery in order to allow the growth of capitalism at all costs. Within cultural production, the young person is portrayed literally as a *desechable*, because his life and death is consumed as a product for entertainment. Although this sense is heightened when the cultural product belongs to the non-fiction genre, increasingly this is of less consequence because of the growing use of 'non-professional actors', who increase the authenticity of the text. In my analysis of the documentary *La Sierra*, I explore how this is illustrated in the disturbing presentation of a violent actor who is killed part way through the film. The consumption of narratives of death in cultural products aligns the growth of advanced capitalism to the consumption, literally, of bodies.

Representations of Fourth World Violent Actors: The Organisation of this Thesis

In this thesis, I analyse four texts and their attached paratexts; each a specific example of a different form of cultural product. Although I do not claim that these case studies are representative of each of the cultural forms in question, what I do achieve through this exploration is a broad overview of representation of the marginal space and its inhabitants in cultural production in Colombia, and in particular Medellín. Although this introduction has referenced the *sicario*, it is not the *sicario per se* that is under analysis, but the fourth world inhabitant. The *sicario*, I argue, has come to be a representative of the fourth world space in Medellín, and this, I argue, is a problem. Although there are clear local conditions in which the myth of the

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[191] Jauregui & Suárez, 'Profilaxis, traducción y ética: la humanidad "desechable" en *Rodrigo D: no futuro, La vendedora de rosas y La virgen de los sicarios*', *Revista Iberoamericana*, 68: 199 (2002), 367-92 (pp. 367-8).

sicario developed, I argue that as the twentieth century closed, leading into the twenty-first, in the global context of increasing homogenisation, the established specific mythical figure of the *sicario* is combined with others to merge into the increasinglty homogenised global representative of the fourth world: the violent male adolescent. In this representational shift, the Colombian context aligns with a global trend with regard to the representation of the inhabitants of marginal spaces. This is an argument which I pursue as the thesis progresses through the analysis of the various cultural products, in both their paratexts and texts. I am interested in how the producers of cultural products, including authors and film directors, have self-consciously responded to the growing fascination with these figures in Colombia throughout the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

The first cultural product analysed is Laura Restrepo's novLeopardo al sol. The narrative within the novel focuses upon the lives of drug barons, however, it also contextualises the introduction of the anonymous and mysterious *sicario* into the global imagination. The chapter illustrates the differences between two key myths: that of the drug baron and that of the *sicario*. The novel is set in an unknown location, and the fourth world space is absent. Two drug barons dominate the story, which is recounted by three distinct narrative voices. These voices are aligned closely to the drug baron, yet have very little knowledge of the *sicario* who causes chaos in the conflict between the opposing drug barons and their families. This novel is important for the analysis because its contrasts with the subsequent three cultural products. My analysis explains why the myth of the drug baron is less enduring than that of the anonymous *sicario*, and presents a clear reason for exploring the representation of the fourth world inhabitant rather than the drug baron who has received much attention previously. It also provides a context for the way in which violence in Colombia has been presented by the media, which informs the analysis of the subsequent three cultural products. This first chapter is also an original contribution to surrounding the novel, as it suggests a new reading of *Leopardo al sol*, which previously has been identified as carrying only two, rather than three narrative voices.

The author's use of narrative voices – one quasi-omniscient narrator and a second collective voice – has previously been claimed to distinguish the novel as one which is innovative in a number of ways, and is instrumental in illustrating the myth-making process which has seen the 'iconic' violent figures of the drug baron and *sicario* come to prominence in the Colombian imagination.[192] The first narrator

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[192] For a discussion of narrative voices in the text between Restrepo and interviewer Daniela Melis, see Daniela Melis, 'Una entrevista con Laura Restrepo', *Chasqui,* 34:1 (2005), 114-130.

recounts the different events which form the primary plot within the novel, however, the knowledge which a more conventional omniscient narrator would have is somewhat lacking; many of the voids are filled by the collective voice. This second narrative voice is composed of the many different voices of tertiary characters, all of whom live in the *barrio* in which the novel is set, La Esquina de la Candela. They converse with one another, in addition to their interaction with the omniscient narrator. The collective voice provides a more personal insight into the lives of the protagonists, which the quasi-omniscient narrator is unable to give. The key advantage to these different narrative voices is that the reader is privileged not only to understand the thoughts and feelings of the many characters within this text, but also the way in which these characters are perceived by those outside of their close circle, represented by anonymous voices which combine to construct this collective voice. Added to this is a final intervening influence, which I suggest forms a third voice in the text – that of the mass media. As I will illustrate in this chapter, the voice of the mass media, although not heard frequently in this text, is very influential not only to the plot, but also to illustrate the role of the media in myth-making processes. In effect, the numerous conversations which take place in the text, *between* different characters and narrative voices, in addition to those *within* narrative voices, illustrate contrasting myth-making processes in relation to the drug baron and the *sicario*. The latter myth is proven to be more enduring; his myth is strengthened by his anonymity. In contrast, the drug baron's notoriety is linked to his individual traits, and his high-profile vendettas. This is reflected, I argue, in the cultural product's paratexts, which vary significantly between editions and do not provide an individual focal point, unlike the paratexts of the remaining three cultural products analysed in this thesis, whose narratives focus upon the *sicario* rather than the drug baron. I thus argue that the anonymity of the *sicario* allowed his myth to develop and be linked to the more global representation of the fourth world inhabitant.

No nacimos pa'semilla is the next cultural product under analysis, and an important example in Colombian cultural production of the attempt to give 'full access' to those who are under-represented – the fourth world inhabitants. However, it is my contention that the prominence of the author's voice undermines the effectiveness of this access, because the reader is guided by Salazar's own prejudices and concerns in the introductory paragraphs that he provides for many of the testimonies. It is in this way that the text links clearly to all three other cultural products in illustrating a link between the attempt to give more access to the underrepresented and the negative effects of the manner in which this information is presented. There are of course close ties to the issues of the subaltern in this regard,

however, this thesis introduces a different perspective, using the terminology of Castells's fourth world to develop a point of comparison.

I posit a new reading of the text as an example of travel writing because of the predominance of the author's voice throughout the collection of testimonies from those who inhabit Medellín's fourth world spaces. In contrast to previous analyses of this text, I focus almost exclusively upon the author's voice to illustrate the role that it plays in manipulating the testimonies on offer within the text. Salazar's introductions to the testimonies do not function as paratexts, but as part of the main text body to create difference between Medellín and Medallo. In particular, I argue that his use of the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope is evidence that *No nacimos pa'semilla* is not a *testimonio*, but travel writing. The different marketing paratexts of the two editions contribute to this sense, illustrating the central focus of fear at the respective time of publication.

My third chapter focuses on the problematic representation of the fourth world actors of Medellín in Barbet Schroeder's cinematic adaptation *La virgen de los sicarios.* The film is an adaptation of the Colombian novel by Fernando Vallejo, in which the presentation of 'fascist' rhetoric by the first world protagonist Fernando has been a key site of scholarly analyses. This rhetoric is presented again in the cinematic adaptation, however, its meaning can be analysed more clearly than in the novel by focusing on the attempts at audience engagement through visual encoding throughout the film. I explore the filmmaker's use of reflective surfaces and argue that this illustrates a visual encoding of caution that invites the audience to engage with the problematic representation of Medellín's violence. I argue that this illustrates that the presentation of the fourth world inhabitant, as represented by Fernando's rhetoric, is distorted and that consumers of this should exercise caution in their engagement with it because it masks the structural violence behind such acts of violence. This is supplemented by the paratextual analysis which emphasises the *sicario* as a both an agent of violence and a highly attractive young man who is ready to be consumed. This sense too is explored in the film text itself, as the first world inhabitant Fernando sexually consumes the bodies of two violent actors. In this way, Fernando's rhetoric is read as a criticism of first world engagement with representations of Medellín's fourth world perpetrators of violence.

The final chapter analyses the most recently released cultural product of the four – the documentary *La Sierra* - which follows the lives of three protagonists who inhabit the fourth world space of Medellín. The narrative follows the lives of two members of paramilitary groups and the widowed girlfriend of a deceased member,

and in particular focuses upon the paramilitary leader Edison, who is killed part way through filming. Through an analysis of the cinematographic framing of both spaces and individuals, I argue that this documentary is both highly critical of representations of violent actors in the fourth world space, and actively pursues an engagement with its audience to convey this criticism. However, its marketing paratext, I argue, undermines much of this criticism in its referencing of easy myths about the violent figure who inhabits the fourth world space. This documentary, released in 2005, does not use the term *sicario*, however, the structural violence perpetrated against the fourth world inhabitant based upon the myth of the *sicario* is clearly visible and an object of criticism. It is in relation to this cultural product and Schroeder's film that I explore most extensively the link between the local representation of the fourth world violent actor of Medallo and the representation of the global equivalent.

My approach also permits an analysis of a broad time frame, from 1990 to 2005. As discussed in the contextual exploration of violence in this introduction, the time period under analysis saw much change, from a focus on the threat of the *sicario* during the period of narco terrorism, to attrition-like warfare in the *barrios marginales* between guerrilla and paramilitary factions. The *sicario* was clearly a cause of concern at the beginning of this period, but by 2005 although the *sicario* still existed, his high-profile crimes were not carried out in the same proportion as in previous eras. Instead, the violent actors within the *barrios marginales* participated in gang warfare, which took place principally outside of the central city – the site in which the consumers of these cultural products reside. I now proceed, in Chapter One, to explore the manifestation of this *sicario* myth in comparison with that of the drug baron in the first of my chosen cultural products.

Chapter One: Myths of Colombian Violence: From the Drug Baron to the *Sicario* in *Leopardo al sol*

This chapter serves as an introduction to the consumptive practices of the first world in relation to the fourth world inhabitant in the Colombian context through an analysis of Laura Restrepo's novLeopardo al sol. It illustrates the shift between the myth of the drug baron and that of the fourth world actor in the guise of the *sicario* as the twentieth century came to a close. The significant role of the narcotics industry as a theme in the development of the pre-existing genre of violence in Colombian cultural production has been widely recorded by scholars, as discussed in the Introduction. This chapter provides the contextual analysis that gives the impetus to explore in more depth the myth of the fourth world inhabitant as violent actor and its links to a wider homogenisation of the global representation of that fourth world inhabitant. It is my contention that Restrepo's novel illustrates that the myth of the Colombian drug baron is less enduring than that of the anonymous *sicario* – the fourth world actor. I argue that this is due to the *sicario*'s apparent anonymity. Although the *sicario* introduced in the novel is given a name, this is the only real information presented and as a result, mystery surrounds his character. All that can be recorded are his acts of violence. In contrast, the drug barons are well known by the population, and both their personal and professional lives are in the public domain. After the deaths of the two principal drug barons, violence reigns, but there are no longer identifiable characters. In this way, the novel is an excellent illustration of the importance of the myth of the *sicario* as an example of the increasingly homogenised representation of the fourth world inhabitant.

The novel had been subject to little in-depth analysis until the very recent publication of Deborah Martin's monograph, in which one chapter is dedicated to the novel.[193] Her analysis focuses on the presentation of gender in the novel, and its relationship to the theme of *telenovela* which, she argues, creates a playful subversion of the distinctions between high and low culture, and between televisual and literary forms.[194] She argues that the novel highlights the importance of women, and develops the historical context of drug production in Colombia through melodrama and in particular a 'camp aesthetic'.[195] In contrast, my focus is upon the presentation of the two male protagonists – the drug barons Mani Monsalve and Nando Barragán – and the underexplored, marginal character Fernely – the *sicario*

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[193] Martin, 2012.
[194] Martin, 2012, p. 91.
[195] Martin, 2012, p. 93.

and fourth world inhabitant. I explore the representation of each by the narrative voices of the text, which illustrate the differences between the myth of the drug baron and that of the *sicario*. I consider how the construction of each of these myths is portrayed in the novel, and in particular, how the visibility of an audience contributes to this sense. I also highlight the importance of the recognition of the space to which the *sicario* as the Colombian fourth world inhabitant is linked in his alignment with the audience. This aspect is absent from *Leopardo al sol*, and I suggest that it is in the death of two drug barons and their families that Restrepo's novel introduces its readers to the next stage of violence in Colombia in which the fourth world space is more visible in the context of the city of Medellín of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In this way, this chapter provides an important introduction to the consumption of violence and violent actors in Colombia and highlights the move towards the fourth world inhabitant as violent actor as the twentieth century comes to a close. I begin the chapter with a focus on narrative formation. I give an outline of the plot before exploring how it is conveyed in the novel through an innovative use of multiple narrative voices. I then move on to consider the contrasting presentation of the *sicario* and the drug baron within the novel by the different narrative voices.

Narrative Formation

In the context of a substantial corpus of literary texts within Colombia which tackle the subject of violence and the drugs trade, Restrepo's novel stands out because of its innovative use of narrative voices. The technique is one which is recognised by other scholars, however, I identify a further narrative voice to the two previously identified: a media voice. I will go on to explore the three narrative voices after first exploring the story that together they recount.

The narrative voices recount the story after the final events have occurred. That is, at the time of writing, Nando and Mani are both dead, their families have disappeared into obscurity, and new violent actors have subsequently emerged. At the centre of the narrative is a family feud which was triggered by one of the protagonists - Nando Barragán – during an adolescent fight which leads to the death of his cousin Adriano Monsalve. An ancestral ghost declares that Nando has broken an ancient code of honour, and as a result the opposing family members may avenge the death on a specified date. All other subsequent deaths will be treated in the same manner which leads to a spiralling cycle of death and vengeance which slowly eradicates members of the opposing families. The conflict is governed by

rules that stipulate that only men must partake in the activities, revenge attacks may only take place on special anniversaries, which are given the name *zetas*, and finally, these revenge attacks must alternate between the opposing families. The winner will be the family that eradicates all male members of the opposing side. Although this 'game' resembles in some ways the many conflicts of Colombia in the escalation of a small conflict to a massive loss of life, in this chapter I am concerned with the representation of violent actors: the drug baron and *sicario*.[196]

Returning to the novel, after establishing the origins of the long-standing conflict, the story then fast-forwards to around twenty years later. Each family has turned to the drug trade in order to finance its part in the conflict, the head of each family now resembling a mafioso-type figure. Nando Barragán is a war-hardened survivor of the conflict living in the *barrio* of *La Esquina de Candela*, while Mani Monsalve is a younger, yet just as charismatic leader, who struggles with his conflicting desires for a legitimate, family life on the one hand, and a thirst for vengeance and family honour on the Other. Both drug barons respect the rules of the conflict, however, a rival brother in the Monsalve family decides to hire a mercenary - a *sicario* - to bring the conflict to an end and finally eradicate the Barragán family. It is at this point that the system on which the conflict functioned collapses. Barraganes are killed by men other than the Monsalves, *zetas* are not adhered to, and chaos reigns. Mani attempts to leave the family feud because of his wife's desire for a happy and safe family life. Nando, on the other hand, is consumed by a thirst for vengeance as the Monsalve's *sicario* kills his only brother not to have been involved in the conflict. However, for both Nando and Mani, it is their destiny to bring an end to the cycle of death. Mani is ultimately killed by Nando at the airport, whilst he is protecting his wife who is fleeing her marriage for fear for the life of the unborn child she is carrying. Nando, after Mani's death is left alone with no remaining family members to die an old man in a drunken stupor watching the violence around him escalate at the hands of new actors. Most interesting in this representation is that Fernely the *sicario* is the catalyst for the descent into ungovernable violence, yet the local population have very little knowledge of him in comparison to the drug barons. At this point, he disappears from the narrative, yet there is a growing acceptance that violence and new, unnamed actors proliferate. It is this incongruence that is the subject of analysis in this chapter.

This narrative is recounted through three narrative voices: two extra-diegetic ones who tell the tale after it has happened, and a media voice which is diegetic and

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[196] Martin also comments upon the narrative's similarities to violence in Colombia, asserting that in this way, 'at one level, the novel functions as a historical document' (2012, p. 91).

thus is recollected by the two extra-diegetic voices. These two voices are recognised by a number of scholars, including José Cardona López and Martin. Cardona López describes the existence and functions of the 'narrator' and 'collective voice'.[197] Martin also refers to a collective voice, although adds the prefix 'anonymous' to highlight that the identities of those speaking are unknown, and a third-person narration.[198] She rightly underlines that the form of narration varies, from simple third-person narrative to a dialogue between the two.[199] The collective voice is composed of La Esquina de la Candela's residents, whilst the 'narrator' has a neutral and singular voice.[200] I suggest that Cardona Lopez's label 'narrator' is not sufficient because it does not allow for a differentiation between the two narrators. Similarly, I also argue that Martin's terminology – third-person narrative – does not accurately describe the voice's function. Instead, the term 'quasi-omniscient narrator' is more appropriate because it describes the narrative function. Although this is an official voice, it is not a fully omniscient narrator because it does not have access to all information. Instead, the knowledge is supplemented by the collective voice, and together the story is constructed through dialogue.[201]

This is illustrated in the way the voices interact with one another throughout the novel. Indeed, Cardona López asserts that the principal function of both narrative voices is to question the validity of one another's accounts.[202] The quasi-omniscient narrator appears in the text to be an official version of events, however, it is often undermined by the recollections of the collective voice:

> *- Nando y la rubia se decían cosas, se besaban, entreverados de piernas, cuando les dieron plomo. Lo digo porque yo estaba ahí, en ese bar, y lo vi con estos ojos.*
> No. Esta noche Nando no toca a Milena. La trata con el respeto que le tienen los hombres a las mujeres que los han abandonado. Le conversa, pero no toca. Más bien la mira con dolor.[203]

There is much to indicate within this quote that the quasi-omniscient narrator represents an official discourse. Short, staccato sentences predominate, which

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[197] Cardona López, 'Literatura y narcotráfico: Laura Restrepo, Fernando Vallejo, Darío Agudcelo', in *Literatura y cultura: narrativa colombiana del siglo XX Volumen II: diseminación, cambios, desplazamientos* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000), pp. 378-406 (p. 385).
[198] Martin, 2012, p. 92.
[199] Martin, 2012, p. 94.
[200] Cardona López, p. 385.
[201] The presentation of the narrative voices within the text is interesting because it has varied between editions. For example, the 2005 Rayo edition used in this thesis uses italics to differentiate the collective voice from that of the quasi-omniscient narrator. Martin notes that in the edition to which she refers (Planeta, 1993), bold text is used to differentiate the collective voice from the quasi-omniscient narrator. Daniela Melis's interview with the author includes a section on narrative voices, in which Restrepo confirms that the differentiation was deliberate, whilst highlighting her discussions with the publisher regarding the presentation of the two distinct voices in the textual product. The publishers argued that audiences needed differentiation between the quasi-omniscient and collection narrative voices, although the author disagreed; she argues that the reader would distinguish between the two because of the different verb tenses used. This has led to the publication of texts where the collective voice appears in italics, and others where both voices are presented in the same typeface and format.
[202] Cardona López, p. 386.
[203] Restrepo (2005), p. 15.

indicate that the narrator is at least attempting to create an official, dispassionate report. However, this report is undercut by the words of one of the inhabitants of La Esquina de la Candela, speaking through the collective voice. The difference in style is clear, with this report being much more emotional, since the speaker claims to have seen the events which are being narrated. The words directly contradict those spoken by the quasi-omniscient narrator. Although the official version of events which follows the words of the collective voice dismisses the sentiments of the former, the dialogue as a whole illustrates the subjectivity of the topic and its vulnerability to individual whims. The quasi-omniscient narrator simply dismisses the words of a witness, and constructs his/her own version of events. This is, I argue, an allusion to the formation of myths, in which the repetition of information leads to the aceptance of a generalisation as something which is 'natural'. The collective voice makes statements which sensationalise the meeting, whereas the quasi-omniscient narrator attempts to remove these aspects and give a more accurate version of events. This occurs elsewhere in the novel in relation to the demand for narratives of violence, as I now go on to explore.

The differentiation between the narrative voices extends to illustrating the demand from the first world public for narratives, in the shape of consumer products, which relay details of violence in Colombia. This sense is conveyed through the interaction between the quasi-omniscient narrator and the collective voice, as well as in the media voice, as I will explore later in the chapter. There is no doubt throughout the novel that both principal narrative voices focus on violence in Colombia. The way in which the story of the Barraganes and Monsalves is told foregrounds issues of violence, rather than, for example, the interpretation of the consequences of this violence by the women of the two families (the subject of another of Restrepo's novels).[204] Throughout the novel the collective voice pushes the issue of violence to the fore in many of the discussions with the quasi-omniscient narrator:

> En medio del barrio viejo de casas con tamarindos en los solares y mecedoras de mimbre en la puerta de la calle, los cuarteles generales de los Monsalve chillan como injerto de otro mundo.
> *-El edificio parecía de oficinas pero era una fortaleza blindada, y tenía tal ejército de gente armada adentro que los del barrio le decíamos La Brigada.*[205]

Again, the difference between the language used by the quasi-omniscient narrator and the collective voice is manifest. However, the account by the collective voice betrays a particular preoccupation with violent imagery. The Monsalve home is described according to its inhabitants' association with conflict; it is a fortress,

[204] Laura Restrepo, *Delirio* (Bogotá: Alfaguara, 2004).
[205] Restrepo (2005), p. 75.

surrounded by an army. The collective voice represents audience demand, suggesting that Restrepo wishes to bring attention to the fascination with violence in Colombia. This is increasingly evident if one considers that Cardona López states that one of the principal functions of the collective voice is 'la de dar dinamismo narrativo a la historia, conduciéndola a la presencia de nuevos prismas por explorar y que de otra forma el narardor no podría presentar dada su limitación de omnisciencia total.'[206] The official discourse of the quasi-omniscient narrator makes no reference to violence, while the emotive, passionate account of the collective voice transforms the representation of a mundane building into a site of violent conflict, and as Cardona López asserts, it pushes the conversation towards the topic of violence. This again alludes to the formation of myth due to the repetitive and sensationalist utterances of a collective voice. Whilst the previous two examples allude to myth formation, the following tackles the subject more directly.

Within the novel, the collective voice makes a direct reference to the processes of myth-making, while discussing the tale in which Nando Barragán, having killed his cousin, searches for the ancestral ghost. One of the voices asks, regarding the assertion that he wandered around the desert for many days whilst carrying the body:

> -Esos sucesos, ¿son leyenda o fueron reales?
> -Fueron reales, pero de tanto contarlos se hicieron leyenda. O al revés, fueron leyenda y de tanto contarlos se volvieron verdad.[207]

The quote can be read through Barthes's contention that the key to the success of myth lies in its acceptance as an idea which is natural. The self-reflexivity demonstrated by the collective voice represents the wider foregrounding of myth-making processes throughout the novel. While Cardona López states that the quote 'corresponde a la creación del aura indecisa de leyenda o verdad que rodea la historia de las dos familias', I argue that its function is to highlight that many of the stories within the novel itself have been constructed in a similar way.[208] In this way, the references to *leyendas* function to illustrate the mythologizing process, a process which is under constant scrutiny in the novel as a whole. Throughout the novel there is this sense of self-reflexivity created by the narrators, in which the presentation of a violent conflict in the form of a ritualised game is questioned. It allows the reader to doubt the portrayal of violence in Colombia, and generates questions regarding those who are represented – the drug barons and the myths which surround them – and

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[206] Ibid, p. 387.
[207] Restrepo (2005), p. 29.
[208] Cardona López, p. 385.

those who are less well represented – the *sicarios*. This sense is very strong in relation to the third narrative voice – that of the media – as is now discussed.

Media Voice

Throughout the thesis I make reference to media representations of fourth world spaces and their inhabitants. In this chapter, the significance of the media is in the presentation of spectacular violence and the construction of the drug baron as an individual hero. I now explore the presentation of violence and its actors by the media as represented in Restrepo's novel. The composition of the collective voice allows for a variety of stories, myths and witness accounts to be heard, alongside the more 'official' reporting style of the quasi-omniscient narrator. Together they contrast markedly with the final narrative voice: that of the media.

This third narrative voice is diegetic, as it forms part of the story itself and is recounted most often by the collective voice. It reveals the reciprocity in the demand for narratives of violence in Colombia and the role played by the media and public discourse - represented by the collective voice - in constructing myths about violence and violent actors in Colombia. The collective voice recalls the information given by different media formats throughout the Barragán-Monsalve conflict, and its reaction to this content:

> *Los periódicos locales hablan de guerra sucia, de carnicería de barbarie sin ton ni son. Los del barrio abríamos la prensa buscando noticias de ellos. Hacíamos apuestas sobre cuál iba a ser el próximo muerto. Sus historias despertaban mucho chisme, mucho morbo.*[209]

The relationship between the media and the public is displayed as one which is reciprocal. It seems, from this quote, that the public demand stories detailing the brutalities of the conflict, and yielding to this, the media provide them. The anonymous voice describes a collective foraging for information about the extraordinary barbarism of the conflict that the local newspapers provide. Stories of violence, 'barbarism', and death are the topic of conversation among the neighbours of the two families. The sensationalist language leaves those in La Esquina de la Candela wanting more information. The collective voice, as representative of the popular imagination, reveals, through its demand for sensationalist, brutal depictions of violence in Colombia, the larger audience of the mythologies which dominate the representation and perception of Colombia.

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[209] Restrepo (2005), p. 78.

While the sentiments of the quote above reveal Restrepo's critique of the consumption of myths of violence, the language used reveals how and why these stories become consumer products. Regular media reports of the conflict allow gossiping and betting in relation to the conflict to flourish. Gossip allows the process of constant mythologizing within the novel to continue; while media reports perpetuate myths, so does the resultant gossip. That reports of violence encourage the placing of bets on the next person to be killed suggests that the Barragán-Monsalve conflict became a consumer product. In addition, the reference to 'morbo' at the end of this quote reveals the reason for the perpetuation of particular mythologies. This reference to 'morbo' is not a single occurrence, but a running trope throughout the novel, and a sentiment expressed on the whole by the collective voice. On receiving invitations to the house of the previously very secretive Barragán family, one anonymous member of the collective voice remarks, '*Era curiosidad morbosa de conocer las entrañas del monstruo'*.[210] This morbid curiosity is another element of the reflexive nature of the collective voice. The author illustrates the way in which conflict is not just consumed, but becomes a consumer product. That is, through the juxtaposition of the different narrative voices, this desire for the reporting of violence is conveyed as an important cause of the perpetuation of the myth of Colombia as a violent nation. It is the collective voice, the representative of the popular imagination, which fuels this demand. As the myth is accepted, it is consumed as a product for entertainment; in this case as a narrative in the local paper.

The novel's presentation of the construction and perpetuation of myth through the media extends further. Throughout the novel references to different forms of the media are made, and each of these references provides a different example of the relationship between public discourse and the media in myth-making processes surrounding Colombian violence. The previous example illustrated the demand for news stories by the public. I argue that in this case it highlights the media's tendency to create myths based on incomplete stories and images - another element of myth formation as described by Barthes. As the story develops, and indeed as the level of violence increases, the quasi-omniscient narrator recalls the attention given to the conflict in a national publication:

> Entre el maletín tiene el último número de la revista Cromos. En la sección de sucesos trae un informe completo, "La guerra de los Barraganes contra sus primos los Monsalve", sobre la noche de la matanza del Tinieblo y sus amigos. Fotos de las cadáveres esparcidos por la carretera, destrozos, mutilaciones. Horror desplegado a todo color y a todo morbo.[211]

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[210] Restrepo (2005), p. 90.
[211] Restrepo (2005), p. 258.

The brutal imagery used in this report is clear. The dispassionate, informative tone of the quasi-omniscient narrator conveys this sense particularly well. As in the previous example, this news report cedes to consumer demand for news of the conflict, and indeed also includes another reference to 'morbo'. However, the mistakes made in the article reveal a scathing criticism of media coverage of conflict. The headline which accompanies the article is clear in its message; accompanied by the photograph of mutilated bodies scattered on the street, it claims to report on an incident in which Barraganes and Monsalves killed one another in a bloodbath. However, the reader is aware that this is a simplification, because of the content of the previous chapter. It reports on the circumstances surrounding the killing, in which 'El Tinieblo' (Raca Barragán) was ambushed on the beach by Fernely, the Monsalve's *sicario,* through the combination of narrative voices. The *sicario* was accompanied by a number of his associates, in addition to a number of Monsalve brothers who are not named in the novel. In this way, the report is shown to have distorted the complexity of the situation; this was not a simple ritual killing on the night of a *zeta*, rather it details the results of a dangerous shift in the conflict. The criticism made within the novel is underlined by the phrase 'informe completo', which, juxtaposed with the content of the previous chapter, illustrates that the full story, extended to a national audience because of the magazine's circulation, is not available to all of those who consume that single article. The lack of complexity in the story highlights to its readers that media reports do not provide sufficient information, and thus serves as a warning with regard to the consumption of real violence.

However, this is not the only feature within the magazine which carries a story that is misinformed. Within the novel, almost immediately there follows another description of an article in the same edition of *Cromos* that illustrates a form of distortion:

> La revista trae todavía más […] En las páginas sociales aparece el reportaje gráfico de una fiesta de cumpleaños en la capital.[…] La homenajeada es la señorita Melba Foucon, que cumple treinta y cuatro, y junto a ella aparece en todas las fotos "el próspero empresario costeño" Mani Monsalve.[212]

The irony of the description of this article as a *reportaje gráfico de una fiesta de cumpleaños* is almost comical in comparison with the previous *informe* which included gruesome photographs of mutilated bodies. The titles and their content contrast markedly: the first report is a graphic report of death and mutilation, whereas the latter is a report about a party.

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[212] Restrepo (2005), p. 258.

The contrast between the two is also important because the content is linked, yet this point is hidden within the publication. The articles are featured in different sections of the publication, and focus on very different sentiments – the former of horror and mourning, the latter celebration. The only continuity in both is the name Monsalve. Mani Monsalve, the drug baron and financier of the previous attack is here depicted as *el próspero empresario* and no link is made to the report on another page. Within the novel, the drug baron's wife is used as an example of the consumption of the two articles. Despite knowing that both articles are related, she chooses to ignore this, as recorded by the collective voice: '*Vio al Mani bello, rico, elegante, fino. Distinto al matón que había sido su marido. Vio gente distinguida a su alrededor. Nada de armas. Ni un pistolero, ni siquiera el Tín Puyúa*.'[213] Alina's reaction is to ignore the violent imagery of the previous attack, which in the novel suggests that there is a selective form of amnesia at play, not only by characters such as Mani's wife, but by the media formats in the stories which are published. The drug baron too is illustrated to be a three-dimensional person, with more than one personality, unlike the *sicario* who is a killing machine. The drug baron's myth is thus complex, and he is able to switch from his role as a violent actor to that of a social climber with relative ease. This is not something afforded to the *sicario*, as I go on to discuss later in this chapter.

The critique of the media through the creation of this third narrative voice is directed towards the manipulation of facts. In both of these articles, only the most visible, basic details of the event have been published; overlooking the crucial details which could change the information understood by its audience. If the first report recognised that the murders, represented by the graphic images of mutilated corpses, were in the majority carried out by a *sicario*, the title would no longer be of significance. In the second case, pointing out that the man in this story, *el próspero empresario*, Mani Monsalve, is the brother of many of those killed in the story in the *sucesos* section of the magazine, would illustrate the depth of penetration of the drug barons into the elite sectors of Colombian society.[214] Barthes states that 'myth essentially aims at causing an immediate impression – it does not matter if one is later allowed to see through the myth, its action is assumed to be stronger than rational explanations which may later belie it.'[215] I argue that this encapsulates the sentiment of the novel's critique of the media at this point. Both articles provoke an immediate impression, which are defective interpretations of the events narrated

[213] Ibid.
[214] Restrepo has tackled this topic more directly in the novel *Delirio*.
[215] Barthes, p. 130.

within the novel. The recollections of the collective voice and the quasi-omniscient narrator allow for the realisation that the media stories do not begin to describe all aspects of the events reported. The realisation that these articles distort the truth, as narrated by the novel's principle narrators, functions only to highlight that the myths constructed within the magazine are those which will prevail. As Barthes states, '[m]yth's function is to distort.'[216] In this way, both articles function as examples of the media's role in myth formation, and together they suggest that it is those who consume these inaccurate and misleading reports who must take responsibility and demand the real truth and complexities behind such reports.

Having explored the lack of complexity in media reports of violence in Colombia, my final analysis of the media voice within *Leopardo al sol* relates to its immediacy. The previous examples chart a progression in the level of attention paid to the Barragán-Monsalve conflict, from the local newspapers to a national publication. Indeed, the increasing visibility of the conflict seems to correlate with the levels of violence involved. The *Cromos* articles mark the point at which violence between the two families is at its most fierce and uncontrolled. Indeed, to be the subject of a national magazine article suggests that it was perceived by the fictional nation, to which the inhabitants of La Esquina de la Candela belong, to be an extreme case which warranted such attention. It is also a conflict which until that point had been governed by a strict code of honour which was upheld by charismatic drug barons. The aftermath of the attack reported in the first of the *Cromos* articles is the last interjection of the media voice, as Mani is killed shortly afterwards and the collective voice loses interest in Nando. This, I argue, corresponds to the level of engagement felt by the collective voice with the lives of the drug barons, and the comparative lack thereof with regard to the *sicario*, who is an unknown. I go on to argue in the remaining chapters of this thesis that the consumptive practices surrounding the *sicario* are very different to those related to the drug baron. Audiences have had to adapt in order to consume this very different violent actor, and in order to do so, he has been constructed, mythically, as an anonymous figure who cannot be known personally in the same way as the three-dimensional drug barons. He is attached to the fourth world space, which in this novel is not present, and as a consequence, the *sicario* has no background. In terms of Smith's levels of engagement, the narrative voices, and thus the reader, are not aligned to the *sicario* because that crucial background information is missing. I now go on to explore how Restrepo's novel creates very different representations of the *sicario* and the drug

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[216] Barthes, p. 121.

baron, before moving on to analyse this problematic trend of tying representation of the *sicario* and his identity as a violent actor to the fourth world space.

Myths of Violent Actors: hero drug barons and *sicario* ruptures

The collective voice recalls the process by which the Barragán-Monsalve conflict was remembered somewhat romantically, *'Digamos que de pronto, un día, Barraganes y Monsalves quedaron reducidos al folclor local. Empezamos a verlos como una prehistoria de la verdadera historia de la violencia nuestra'*.[217] This reference to *la verdadera historia de la violencia nuestra* reveals a sense of ownership of the drug barons, in comparison to the *sicario*, with whom the collective voice has neither allegiance nor alignment. Instead, the drug baron is a member of the community, and as such, his myth is highly personalised and cannot be merged with that of other violent actors. This is also conveyed through the differences portrayed between Mani and Nando as individuals, as I now go on to discuss.

The contrast between the two types of violent actors is manifest in the contrast between the respect which the drug barons pay to the rules of the game, and the *sicario*'s disregard for them. Within the novel, the entry of the *sicario* marks the change from manageable violence to uncontrollable chaos. Holman Fernely enters the novel as a mercenary, employed by Mani's brother Frepe, to transgress the rules of the game so that the Monsalve family can finally end the family feud with the Barraganes. His actions result in the debunking of the *zeta*, the only dates on which revenge can be taken for the murder of a family member. Fernely, however, kills Narciso Barragán the day following a *zeta*, the first *zeta* on which an assassination attempt has not taken place. The collective voice explains the effects of this failed *zeta*:

> -Para la gente del desierto, la zeta, o sea el momento de ir a cobrar el muerto, era el punto de estrelar en una cadena de sangre. Como el nocaut en el box, el home run en el béisbol, la voltereta en los toros. Sin la ejecución de las zetas el juego no tenía pies ni cabezas. Una zeta duraba una noche, ni un minuto más, ni uno menos, según una tradición estricta que Barraganes y Monsalves habían respetado durante veinte años. Llevaban dos decenios de sacrosanto acatamiento de esos aniversarios, que regulaban sus vidas en ciclos de muertes y venganzas, tan naturales como el verano y las lluvias, la Cuaresma y la Pascua, la Semana Santa y la Navidad.[218]

Before the entry of the *sicario*, violence was as much a ritual as a harmful and destructive activity. The ritual had been ingrained into the culture of the families

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[217] Restrepo (2005), p. 313.
[218] Restrepo (2005), p. 153.

involved and the communities surrounding them. The emotive language in this quote, spoken by the collective voice, emphasises the extent to which the local population accepted and respected this practice, and the terminology of sport also suggests that the violence was more than simple killings: it was a form of entertainment. The anniversaries are also described in relation to religion, which, taking into account that the *zeta* is at the heart of the violence within this conflict, suggests that for the collective voice the conflict was on a par with religion in terms of its significance in their lives. The people of La Esquina de la Candela had got to know the rules of the game and embraced it, whereas the introduction of the *sicario* changed the rules, and at this point the public had yet to learn these new ones. It is for this reason that Restrepo's text is so interesting and important in this thesis, because it illustrates that the *sicario* as a separate violent actor necessitated a different myth for his consumption by the first world public. The collective voice illustrates one of the reasons for this, in that the drug baron's actions were linked to a romantic set of honour codes ingrained in the Colombian nation. On the other hand, the *sicario*'s myth is less linked to the national context and instead to the much-feared global representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor.

Restrepo's novel focuses in particular on the figure of the drug baron and highlights a phenomenon in which this figure is held in high regard, interpreted as a somewhat romantic figure, and in some cases, is the subject of his own hero cult. Héctor Abad Faciolince again shows his concern with this phenomenon stating, 'Sufrimos de una especie de fascinación por la maldad; le rendimos culto al muy dudoso heroísmo de los asesinos; […] Antes había un temor reverencial por sus actos violentos; ahora es pero, ahora se leen con fruición sus palabras.'[219] Indeed, within Restrepo's novel, the fascination with the actions of the protagonists is evident, both through the way in which the story is told, and the references to media reports of violent occurrences. As illustrated earlier, the collective voice showed a particular fascination with the actions of the drug baron, and in this section I explore the links between the ways in which his story is presented, which I argue have many links to myths of national heroes. This contrasts with the minimal representation of the *sicario* which is explored after this discussion of the drug baron.

The concept of 'heroism' is key to the criticism of the reverence shown towards the drug baron. The feminist scholars Lilian Paola Ovalle and Corina Giacomello add to this debate, complaining that 'la prensa, los noticieros, las películas e incluso las telenovelas' promote drug barons as 'construcciones míticas

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[219] Héctor Abad Faciolince, 'Estética y narcotráfico', *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 42 (2008), 513-518 (p. 518).

de superhombres poderosos, valientes y violentos'.[220] Nando and Mani are remembered as heroes by the collective voice, as illustrated by the fact that the story is told by so many voices, in addition to the way in which the protagonists are described. In order to analyse in detail the way in which Nando and Mani are remembered as heroes, it is necessary to first explore the phenomenon of heroes and hero cults in Latin America.

The Latin American region as a whole has a history of iconic figures, from the military-political figures of the wars of independence, to the political populists of the twentieth century.[221] The individual attributes of each of these men have been essential in creating a hero myth as part of their legacy. The 'founding father' Simón Bolívar, arguably the most iconic figure in Latin America's history, is now renowned as a military strategist, without whom the liberation of Spanish-speaking Latin America would not have been possible, and is the clearest example of this phenomenon.[222] Ben Fallaw and Samuel Brunk, editors of a volume dedicated to the exploration of the many hero cults in Latin America, assert that the key to the status of figures such as Bolívar are the many myths which surround their lives and their conduct.[223] For many of these Latin American heroes, and in particular in the case of Bolívar, their legacies are predicated on the use of violence, and thus so is their status as heroes. In this section I argue that, as represented in Restrepo's novel by both primary narrators, the figure of the drug baron is now the subject of similar myth-making processes. In order to develop the argument, I will engage with a number of theories which relate to the phenomenon of hero cults, and the mythologies which result in the 'heroisation' of particular figures, while discussing the depiction of the protagonists Mani Monsalve and Nando Barragán.

Nando and Mani Monsalve both have the air of violent heroes in a number of respects. Charisma, physical presence, patriarchal dominance, and military skill, among others, are attributes which dominate the portrayal of these opposing characters, and have also been marked as important characteristics for iconic males (heroes) in Latin American history. Fallaw and Brunk state that a hero 'is a person to whom remarkable courage, talent, and other noble, even godlike traits are attributed by members of a community and who thus acquires a lasting place of importance in that community's culture.'[224] The depiction of the two protagonists illustrates the

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[220] Ovalle & Giacomello, p. 297.
[221] Ben Fallaw & Samuel Brunk 'Introduction: Heroes and their Cults in Latin America', in *Heroes & Hero Cults in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), pp. 1-17 (p. 1).
[222] John Chasteen, 'Bolívar: Man & Myth', in *Heroes & Hero Cults in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), pp. 21-39 (p. 22). It is notable that the same model of heroic figure appears in other contexts, such as Martín Fierro, who gained notoriety through his actions as a bandit in the Argentine *pampas*, and is now a legendary figure.
[223] Fallaw & Brunk.
[224] Fallaw & Brunk, p. 1.

courage, talent and noble traits which are attributed to them, while the fact that the story itself has been narrated in a way which foregrounds their actions demonstrates that they have acquired a lasting place of importance in the community of La Esquina de la Candela. Indeed, the sheer number of speakers who contribute to the discourse of the collective voice illustrates the extent to which the two figures are admired.

The opening words of the novel, spoken by the collective voice, illustrate the legend which surrounds Nando Barragán, both while he was alive, and after his death, as the story is narrated:

> *Ese que está ahí, sentado con la rubia. Ese es Nando Barragán.[…]* Ese es. Nando Barragán. Cien ojos lo miran con disimulo, cincuenta bocas lo nombran en voz baja.
> *- Ahí está, es uno de ellos*.
> Donde quiera que van los Barraganes los sigue el murmullo.[225]

The quote illustrates the legend which surrounds the figure of Nando Barragán. The murmuring which follows him is indicative of his 'celebrity' status while he was still alive, while the irony of these words after Nando's death cannot be missed – Nando continues to be the subject of conversation in La Esquina de la Candela. The number of people who utter his name could represent the number of anonymous speakers whose utterances compose the discourse of the collective voice. These opening words function as an indication that Nando Barragán and his legend are key elements of the plot, while the introductory descriptions of each protagonist reinforce the notion that each figure is remembered as a hero.

The physical descriptions of the protagonists are vital in the construction of the mythologies surrounding Nando and Mani. As Fallaw and Brunk assert, male heroes are defined as such by their actions, as opposed to women, whose words are more important that their actions.[226] The physical descriptions of the protagonists which appear in the opening pages of the novel suggest that they are men of action. Nando is first to be described:

> Tiene el rostro picado de agujeros como si lo hubieran maltratado los pájaros y los otros miopes ocultos tras unas gafas negras Ray-Ban de espejo reflector. Camiseta grasienta bajo la guayabera caribeña. Sobre el amplio pecho lampiño brillado por el sudor, cuelga de una cadena la gran cruz de Caravaca, ostentosa, de oro macizo. Pesada y poderosa.[227]

Nando's description likens him to a warrior. The reference to the 'pájaros' suggests that Nando is a veteran of conflict, but that to have survived an attack by the notorious assassins, he is experienced to the highest level.[228] His Ray-Ban

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[225] Restrepo (2005), p. 11.
[226] Fallaw & Brunk, p. 11.
[227] Ibid.
[228] The *pájaros* were groups of hired killers. For a more detailed description, see Eduardo Santa, *Sociología política* (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1964), p.65.

sunglasses are a recurring motif throughout the novel, which indicate that Nando's riches enable him to participate in the world of consumer goods very successfully, which in turn is indicative of the author's underlying criticism throughout the novel of the commoditisation of Colombian violence through the consumption of the mythologies surrounding the conflicts. Nando's outfit associates him with the north coast of Colombia, which is vital in the links to Caribbean culture locating Nando as a local hero, as opposed to a national or even international one. His chain, described as 'pesada' and 'poderosa', works as a transferred epithet, as these characteristics are transferred to Nando. In sum, his powerful description reveals his status as a man with a history of action.

While Nando's introduction in the novel describes him as a man of experience, that of Mani takes more interest in his physical appearance in comparison to this nemesis Nando:

> es el Mani Monsalve. Parecido al Nando Barragán en lo físico, como un hermano a otro. Y es que aunque se odien son la misma sangre: primos hermanos. El Mani más joven, menos alto, menos grueso, menos feo.[229]

The comparison with Nando highlights the conflict between the two, and illustrates that there are many differences between the two opposing drug barons. Nando is older than Mani, and is more concerned with tradition, as is established as the novel progresses. The narrator deems it important to notify the reader that Mani is more aesthetically pleasing than Nando, a fact which will be more important as the novel progresses and Mani attempts to be seen as a legitimate businessman, rather than the leader of a criminal racket. Taken together, the descriptions of both protagonists highlight not only the importance of the drug baron as a figure, but also emphasise the individuality of each figure. There are core principles of the drug baron as a 'figure', but each is also afforded his own personality. This is interesting at the end of the novel when both figures have died – their memory is very much individualised, whereas the *sicario* is still a largely unknown person. Darío Betancourt and Martha L. García assert that 'la mafia colombiana […] es el resultado de la fusión de elementos ancestrales con elementos modernos, profundamente dinamizados por la producción y comercio de marihuana y más tarde la cocaína.'[230] In this way, both figures are very different versions of the same myth. Nando's description places him in a world in which ancestry is of great importance, while his appearance suggests that he proudly displays his wealth for all to see. On the other hand, Mani Monsalve is portrayed as more modern and focused on his appearance. These elements of

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[229] Restrepo (2005), p. 16.
[230] Darío Betancourt & Martha L. García, *Contrabandistas, marimberos y mafiosos: historia social de la mafia colombiana (1965-1992)* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1994), p. 136.

individuality illustrate that it is difficult to produce a myth that extends to all drug barons because each is attributed with his individual characteristics. He is too important to be overlooked as a 'type', and so he is difficult to represent, as illustrated in the paratextual analysis that precedes the conclusion to this chapter.

The nature of the representation of the drug baron, as described by Faciolince as well as Giacomello and Ovalle, which is replicated within the novel - powerful, brave, heroic men - resembles the very similar characteristics attributed to the military heroes of the independence period. The historian Matthew Brown has analysed the period in which Colombia, as well as other Latin American nations, won independence, indentifying a trend which illustrated, not surprisingly at this time, that masculinity was constructed around military experience and prowess. As Brown asserts: 'the soldier hero was deemed, for the duration of the Wars of Independence at least, to sit at the pinnacle of hierarchies of masculinities during the period of transition to republican rule'.[231] During this period the nation as an independent entity was founded through violence, and as such, a violent model of masculinity predominated. Brown describes the criteria by which honourable men of war were distinguished from 'anarchists'. I suggest that the attributes described by Brown are those which continue to be valued by the narrative voices in Restrepo's novel.

The concept of the 'military hero' was, Brown argues, founded upon the principle of status. In order to be of high status, one's conduct had to be honourable. The criteria described by Brown highlight how these men came to gain high status through their conduct in this time of war. Men were expected to prove their 'manliness' through displays of feats of adventure and daring both on and off the battlefield.[232] The conflict between the Barraganes and Monsalves illustrates this, as within the novel, male characters from opposing families fight to kill a member of the opposing family. However, this competition between men is also shown to exist between brothers, especially within the Monsalve family. While Nando and Mani are recognised as patriarchs at the beginning of the novel, Mani's status is challenged by his brother Frepe. Mani's authority has derived from his difference and assumed superiority to his brothers:

> Preside la reunión pero no se sienta a la mesa: guarda las distancias. Encabeza el clan, pero no se mezcla. Se mueve distinto a sus hermanos, habla distinto, se viste de otra manera: jeans Levi's, tenis marca Nike, camisa abierta, escapularios en el pecho. No ostenta un gramo de oro sobre el cuerpo. De niño desdeñaba la rudeza primitiva de sus hermanos, y de adulto cultiva las diferencias como fórmula eficaz para reforzar su autoridad.[233]

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[231] Matthew Brown, 'Soldier Heroes and the Colombian Wars of Independence', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 7:1 (2006), 41-56 (p. 42).
[232] Brown, p. 50.
[233] Restrepo (2005), p. 75.

Rather than the ostentatious display of wealth through gold chains and medallions, which were also noted at the beginning of the novel as worn by Nando Barragán, Mani instead displays his power as a consumer. The number of brand names in this quote exemplifies the different models of masculinity which are exerted by the drug barons. Again, in terms of the representation of the drug baron, the novel illustrates that the many characteristics ascribed to the drug baron cannot be displayed by one figure. Mani is able to remain the family patriarch because of his more 'modern' values – at heart he is a capitalist, rather than a killer governed by the traditional rules of his ancestors. As such, his authority derives from his ability to manage his brothers without the use of physical violence. Unlike his brothers, Mani's life is not dominated by his role in the conflict, it is only a part of it.

However, Mani's attitude towards the conflict ultimately results in his temporary loss of control over the actions of his brothers. While his power derived from his modern approach to the management of his resources, he continues to respect the rules of the conflict when his brothers suggest that they hire a mercenary, a *sicario*, to bring it to an end quickly, before any other Monsalves are hurt or killed. Mani's reaction is one of disgust, which puts him at odds with all of his brothers:

> Sicarios. La palabra eriza a los hermanos, como un hilo de agua helada rodando por el espinazo. Matar a los Barraganes por mano propio es lo correcto, lo que ordena la tradición que han cumplido hasta ahora. Nadie ajeno a la familia debe meterse. […] El Mani queda aislado. Sólo él desaprueba, se indigna, discute con ira. Defiende con las viejas reglas del juego.[234]

While Mani gains little respect from his brothers for respecting the code of honour which governs the conflict, the quasi-omniscient narrator recalls the events knowing that Mani's thoughts were justified, that the actions of the *sicario* cause utter chaos and result in the deaths of the remaining brothers in the Monsalve family. This narrator, usually so dispassionate, in the final sentences defends Mani's decision, and highlights the extent to which Mani tried to defend the rules of the game. In sum, while the family see Mani's defence of the conflict's rules as a weakness, the narrator interprets it differently – Mani is a man of honour, and should be remembered as such.

Honour is a theme which is used throughout the novel by all three narrative voices to distinguish between what is perceived to be 'permitted' violence (within the *zeta*), and that which is unjustified (the murders of Narciso and Raca Barragán by the *sicario*). Both drug barons adhere to the rules which were set down by their ancestors to govern the conflict, and this fact is emphasised by the narrative voices

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[234] Restrepo (2005), p. 80.

in a number of ways. Another of Brown's points in his analysis of the mythologies which surround the military hero is that the violent hero was expected to use the language of chivalry, in order to distinguish himself from the more common anarchist.[235] Within the novel, those who kill according to the rules of the conflict are remembered as heroes, while those who do not, are remembered in the same way as the anarchists of the Wars of Independence.

Brown also emphasises the importance of loyalty to the military unit for hero myths.[236] I argue that in the context of Restrepo's novel, the loyalty which is most respected is that of the characters who show loyalty to the rules of the game. Mani is admired for his extreme protection of the rules of the conflict. In order to stop the *sicario* killing one of his rivals, he warns his adversary of what is about to happen:

> Dicen que [Mani dijo] solo cinco palabras: "Esta noche cuiden a Narciso"
> […] Lo que acaba de suceder no tiene antecedentes en la larga historia de su guerra cruenta.
> Dicen que fue un hombre distinto antes y después de la llamada de su primo hermano, el Mani Monsalve. Toda una vida peleando según unas reglas del juego, y de pronto, de buenas a primeras, aparecía tu enemigo para advertirte por qué lado iba a golpear, para contarte el secreto de su siguiente jugada…[237]

Although Mani breaks the conventions of the conflict, he does not break the rules. Rather, he attempts to protect the sacred nature of the honour codes which govern their conduct. The collective voice recounts this story, using the phrase *dicen que,* which is essential in conveying the idea that this moment has been discussed on numerous occasions by many members of La Esquina de la Candela. He did not break the rules of the honour code, which the narrative voice is keen to convey. As a result, his actions are now a part of the local myths which surround the drug barons. Mani's loyalty to the rules of the conflict is one of the principal reasons why he is remembered as a hero by the collective voice.

Through their association with a code of honour, and the attribution of individual qualities to each of the drug barons, the narrative voices of Restrepo's *Leopardo al sol* illustrate that a loose myth existed around this figure. They highlight that the *sicario*, as a very different figure, was one with whom they were unable to make a connection on the same level. I argue that this is because of the absence of the fourth world space in the text, and because of its local dimension. In all three other texts, there are links to the global context in which the fourth world inhabitant is represented as a violent actor. The local incarnation of that myth in Colombia, and in particular in the city of Medellín, is tied to the *sicario*. Because that presence is

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[235] Brown, p. 52.
[236] Brown, p. 51.
[237] Restrepo (2005), p. 146.

absent in this novel, the collective voice and quasi-omniscient narrator, who together form an audience for the events that they are now recounting, were unable to be aligned with the *sicario*, as I now explore. The *sicario* is relatively unknown, and as a result, the narrative voices have little to say about him.

Fernely is discussed in small snippets throughout the novel. He does not have a life story like the drug barons, and all references to him are made in relation to his violent actions. This association of the young violent actor is a persistent trope throughout the thesis, as all that the only knowledge 'ordinary' – or first world – inhabitants of the city have regarding the *sicario* realtes to his violent actions. Restrepo's novel provides a clear contrast with this in the case of the drug baron, about whom much is known by the narrative voices of *Leopardo al sol*. Fernely is introduced relatively early in the novel, in a short chapter dedicated to the character, and conveyed solely through the quasi-omniscient narrator. The purpose of the chapter is to give him an origin, and entry into the conflict, but the information given purveys very little. Fernely is in prison, a punishment for an unnamed crime, but his release is arranged by an unknown benefactor, and this allows him to walk free from his sentence early. The description of the *sicario* at this point indicates that he is unremarkable and has very few links to the outside world. The quasi-omniscient narrator observes that '[n]o hizo amigos porque desconfiaba'; and that 'nunca recibió vista de mujer'.[238] This is presented as an exception in the prison, portraying the *sicario* as a professional dedicated to his trade. The voice continues '[a] Fernely no se le conoció familia, ni amores, ni amistades […] No conversó, no contestó, no dirigió la palabra'.[239] It is in this way that the narrator points out why there is little information that can be conveyed about Fernely – he will not speak to others, therefore it is difficult to find information about him. The narrative throughout the novel is driven by conversations between people in the city which are then conveyed in a dialogue between the quasi-omniscient narrator and the collective voice. Because Fernely does not speak to those around him, there is nothing to tell, and so his descriptions in the text are based only on what those around him can observe – his physical appearance and his actions, which are violent.

Fernely's physical descriptions characterise him as the antithesis to the drug baron. He is unextraordinary, as the collective voice remarks when they recount his arrival into the city: 'Fernely no era hombre de impactar con su presencia. Al contrario. […] Nada de corpulencia, ni de pelo en pecho, ni de mirada fría de

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mercenario'.[240] He is unremarkable, completely lacking in charisma. In comparison to the two colourful drug barons there is very little to say. He does not wear heavy, powerful looking gold chains, and he does not dress distinctively enough for his clothing to be remarked upon. The *sicario* is plain in appearance and he makes little impression on those around him. I go on to argue in the following chapters that this plain appearance and lack of information surrounding the figure fuels the myth of the *sicario* because he is anonymous in comparison with the charismatic drug barons, who each have distinctive characteristics and personalities. I argue therefore, that the drug baron's myth is attached to the individual, as illustrated in Restrepo's novel by the many things remembered by the collective voice, whereas there is very little to say about the *sicario*. This means that his myth grows as he is replaced by countless other anonymous figures – inhabitants of the fourth world – who carry out spectacular acts of violence that appear to be without end, because so little is known about the individual violent actor.

The spectacular nature of the *sicario*'s acts of violence is emphasised by the narrative voices' reactions to them. He changes the dynamic of the conflict by refusing to adhere to its carefully established rules. After listening to a description of the roles of the Barragán family, he decides that Narciso should be next, despite the character's popularity in the *barrio* and his relative disconnection from the conflict: '[l]o que propone la lógica extranjera de Fernely es otra cosa: liquidarlo porque maneja los dineros, las listas de clients, los contactos'.[241] The conflict escalates to a more strategic level with the professional assassin's introduction. However, it is the language used in this quotation by the quasi-omniscient narrator that is most expressive. The *sicario*'s logic is described as foreign, and it is not difficult to extend this to the character himself. He is not considered to belong to the community, and his professional opinions certainly alienate him from the local population. It is here that I argue Restrepo marks the beginning of the *sicario*'s recognition as an Other. He is cited as an other later in the novel, when again the quasi-omniscient narrator comments that '[e]l plan de Fernely es otra cosa, está diseñado según otro estilo'.[242] Again the character is marked as different to the practices of the inhabitants of La Esquina de Candela – the word otro is used twice which emphasised that difference. Further references are made to the *sicario*'s foreign-ness later in the novel. It is noted by the same voice that 'siendo un extranjero desconocido, le queda fácil llegar a la ciudad sin ser notado'.[243] This sense that the *sicario* does not belong to this space,

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[240] Restrepo (2005), p. 85.
[241] Restrepo (2005), p. 86.
[242] Restrepo (2005), p. 104.
[243] Ibid.

and is different from the inhabitants of La Esquina de Candela, although not distinctive, is strong throughout, and I argue that this is indicative of the attitude towards the young violent actor that is visible in the cultural products analysed in the next three chapters of this thesis. Throughout the remaining chapters this theme of differentiation between those who consume the narrative (here the collective voice) and the *sicarios* who are the unknown protagonists of violent acts is prominent. In this way Restrepo makes clear the transition from the domination of the drug baron to that of the *sicario*, and their differences.

Fernely's representation, or relative lack of representation, in the novel, is important in illustrating why the myth of the *sicario* is more enduring than that of the drug baron. As discussed above, the drug baron, although given mythical properties, is also recognised as an individual. After his death, he is remembered by the local people and his passing is mourned. The past in which he existed is looked upon romantically, before the descent into violence and chaos. On the other hand, the *sicario* is not known. He is a fleeting presence, and is killed and forgotten. In Restrepo's text, he cannot be described as an individual because no information about him exists other than his name. He has no context. Instead, he is consumed as a *desechable*, and it is this which allows the *sicario*'s myth to develop. Because the body of the young person can be discarded easily without leaving a lasting trace in the mind of the novel's consumer, the myth is, I argue, more enduring than that of the drug baron.[244] I now go on to analyse the paratexts of the novel to further the argument that it is difficult to represent a genreal myth of the drug baron – he is not present in any of the paratexts of the various editions of the novel, despite his central role in it.

Paratexts

The multiple editions of *Leopardo al sol* make it difficult to make many overarching assertions about the relationship between the book sleeve image and the text contained within it. One clear conclusion can be drawn however, and that is that in comparison with the three other cultural products analysed in this thesis which carry the image of the violent fourth world violent inhabitant, the many marketing paratexts of Restrepo's novel do not convey the same encoding of violence. Instead, the images on the jacket sleeves have three consistent themes: the leopard of the title

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[244] I explore in much more depth the consumption and treatment of the dead body Chapter Four: Consuming Lives and Deaths in *La Sierra*.

represented through leopard print or an image of an actual leopard;[245] a passionate embrace between a man and a woman;[246] and of the grief of women.[247] In this way, although there are three 'themes' into which the paratextual images can be categorised, the themes are not consistent in their approaches. This reflects the many ways in which the text can be read because the themes within it also vary. I analyse two of the novel's editions which contrast markedly: the passionate embrace and the grief. I explore the visual encoding of each of the images and their relation to the text, before making some final reflections on the importance of the violent actors in *Leopardo al sol.* I begin with the edition that has a cover depicting grief and then explore the more sexual image that appears on the cover of the most recent variation of the cover image theme analysed.

The 1997 Grupo Editorial Norma edition highlights the element of grief within the novel. It markets *Leopardo al sol* as a novel of feminine grief. The image foregrounds a cross shape, presumably a headstone, with a woman crouched over it, her face obscured by the arm which holds her up. She carries a chain around her arm, and a man can be seen behind her in the background of the shot. The image itself is greyscale, and this contrasts markedly with the bright, bottle-green border that surrounds the image. Together, these aspects of the image convey an overall sense of suffering. It implies that the novel's focus is grief. Although the narrative does focus on the effects of grief upon women it is not the primary theme. However, this does illustrate the way in which paratexts often give a snapshot view of the text which may or may not accurately reflect its key themes. This is a concern throughout the thesis as I explore in relation to the three remaining cultural products.

The second paratext carries a very different visual encoding because it portrays two lovers in a passionate embrace. The male in the image is the focus of attention, and the woman is beneath him, with only one side of her face visible. The young couple appear to be about to kiss, and the white vest top worn by the male partner emphasises that the couple are undressing. Clearly, this highly sexualised image contrasts markedly with that of the 'grief edition' analysed above. It references

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[245] For example, the Anagrama 2001 edition carries the image of a woman wearing a golden leopard mask against the backdrop of leopard print. The woman's honey blonde hair is visible, but blends into the golden colour scheme. This image has a beige border in which the title appears. Similarly, the Alfaguara 2006 edition carries an image of a leopard mask, without a woman's hair, with a gold background minus the leopard print. This image fills the jacket sleeve, and appears to be very similar to that of the previous example. The 2011 Punta de Lectura edition's jacket image is predominantly white, featuring a pair of leopard-print sunglasses.

[246] The Rayo 2005 edition carries a soft-focus, close-up head shot of a young couple in a passionate embrace. The man's face is the focus of the image, as he leans in to kiss his female partner, whose face appears underneath his. The dark background blends into the dark hair of the two people featured.

[247] The 1997 Grupo Editorial Norma marketing paratext carries a striking bottle-green border, within which is a greyscale image of a cross and a person, presumably a woman, crouched over, her face obscured.

the *telenovela* aspect of the text which utilises a melodramatic style.[248] The identities of the two individuals are not clear, as there are a number of sexual relationships within the novel, and so they take on a more symbolic function. The novel's primary theme is violence, which is instigated by two drug barons and catalysed by a *sicario*. As discussed above, the collective voice functions to represent the audience who seek out narratives of violence in Colombia and illustrate the processes by which this same violence is mythologised.

Together, these two contrasting images illustrate that paratexts can vary significantly because they are such small snapshots of the text within. In the case of this novel, it is interesting that none of the paratexts references the violence within, whereas the further three cultural products set in Medellín forefront the violent actor. I suggest that the reason for this is that the text's tone is that of melodrama, even if this melodramatic tone is deliberately parodied, whereas the three that follow are much more realist in tone. This raises significant questions, however, in the comparison of the myth of the drug baron with that of the *sicario*. The drug baron is an actor who can be represented through melodrama – he is rich, and has entered the world of the Colombian elites, as illustrated in the novel. His life, therefore, resembles that of the great Dons of *telenovela*, and it is easy to focus upon these more appealing aspects of his life. He thus is one aspect of the many themes within the melodramatic format, and as such his myth is not as strong as that of the *sicario.* In contrast, the *sicario* is a representative of the fourth world, and is known to live in this mythical space which does not lend itself to the *telenovela* aesthetic. He lives for a very short period – he is a *desechable* – and as such his story cannot be told because there is supposedly little to learn. In this way, the figure himself is the focus of attention because he is an unknown. He cannot fade into the background as the drug baron does in *telenovela*, because he is the representative of the fourth world space, which is a new category that is underexplored.

Conclusion

The analysis of the novLeopardo al sol has illustrated key differences in the presentation of the *sicario* and the drug baron. Their myths are very different, and the novel's narrative voices highlight that the drug baron's myth is localised specifically in the Colombian context. I go on to argue in the following chapters that the myth of the

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[248] For further analysis of the role of *telenovela* in the novel, see Martin, 'Performing Gender, Identity and Desire in Laura Restrepo's *Leopardo al sol*' in Martin, 2012, pp. 91-118.

sicario is tied to the global context in which the representation of the fourth world inhabitant is increasingly homogenised, resulting in the myth of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. Within the novel drug barons are aligned to the narrative voices, and thus the reader, due to their proximity to the anonymous individuals who together compose the collective voice. In contrast, the reader is not aligned to the *sicario* because the collective voice and quasi-omniscient narrator do not provide information about him. They do not know him, and as such, this contrast illustrates that knowledge of the *sicario* can only be achieved through the context of the fourth world space. This novel is set in the unknown territory of *La Esquina de la Candela*, and there is no reference to any space represented as fourth world. The *sicario* is introduced as having appeared from elsewhere, with no other context given. This is the important distinction between the two: the drug baron is aligned with the audience who are then able to make a judgement on their allegiance to each of the characters. In contrast, this option is not offered to the reader in the case of the *sicario* because he is not provided with a context. As I go on to explore in the three subsequent chapters of this thesis, he is tied to the fourth world space which provides audience alignment. However, due to the presence of a first world voice, which in this novel is that of the collective voice, alignment is less likely to be made with the fourth world inhabitant unless the author/filmmaker actively encourages the establishment of that link. I now go on to explore this in relation to the non-fiction text *No nacimos pa'semilla*, authored by Alonso Salazar, which I argue is an example of travel writing, in contrast to the opinions of other scholars. I suggest that this is due to the alignment that the reader feels with the author rather than the testimonies he collects and presents within the cultural product. Because of this, I read the text as a journey to the fourth world space to collect information about the fourth world inhabitant for a first world global audience.

Chapter Two: The Medellín Fourth World Space Travelogue: *No nacimos pa'semilla*

Alonso Salazar's *No nacimos pa'semilla* explores the fourth world space of Medellín in the late 1980s. Unlike Laura Restrepo's *Leopardo al sol*, it belongs to the non-fiction genre, and focuses upon the violent actors of the fourth world rather than their financiers. It is a text that, upon its publication, was heralded as a much-needed insight into the real lives of young assassins seen daily on TV screens of whom little was known. Indeed, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Martín Barbero laments that the early reporting of assassinations perpetrated by *sicarios*, who were represented as young inhabitants of Medellín's fourth world spaces, did not take an objective approach. He states that these studies were often affected by established preoccupations regarding youths in the *barrios marginales*, suggesting that 'el estigma del inicio ha estado marcando fuertemente la preocupación y la mirada de los investigadores sociales'.[249] It is in this focus on research and its failure to work objectively that Martín Barbero praises Alonso Salazar's text, *No nacimos pa'semilla*, which he states is an exception to that practice. Salazar, he asserts, was the first to put himself in danger in order to understand the culture of these young men, and to consequently reveal the breadth of the phenomenon of young men involved in violence – there were many manifestations of violent groups, and the interests of young men were not confined to violence. In this way, Martín Barbero suggests that *No nacimos pa'semilla* is an important contribution to the study of young men in late-twentieth-century Medellín. To a certain extent, I would agree with those sentiments. However, it is my aim in this chapter to look more closely at *No nacimos pa'semilla* as a text published more than two decades ago. Whilst recognising the value of the text upon its publication in 1990, with this temporal distance I argue that as a cultural product today it is problematic in its representation of these young men, in particular in their status as inhabitants of Medellín's *barrios marginales*, which are represented in the text as the space of the Other. In the process, I question the text's generic classification as *testimonio* and propose a new, alternative reading.

   No nacimos pa'semilla includes the testimonies of ten individuals, nine of whom are male, who inhabited, or had recently inhabited, some of Medellín's *barrios marginales* throughout the late 1980s. The text is the result of Salazar's work with community groups for El Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP)

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[249] Martín Bárbero (1998), p. 22.

between 1984 and 1990, a time when the city, and indeed the nation, was experiencing one of its most violent periods. The testimonies include those of practising *sicarios*, a former *sicario*, *milicianos*, a guerrilla, a prisoner, a non-violent friend of a *sicario*, a priest, and a mother.[250] Thus, because of those contributions, and due to the purported function of the text as telling the stories of those whose voices are not heard, the text is most often referred to as a *testimonio*. However, by analysing the text's multiple voices, I suggest a new reading, and argue that it is instead an example of travel writing. The voice of Alonso Salazar, the text's compiler and author, is the most prominent throughout, and therefore is that to which the reader is aligned. This voice is focused upon the fourth world space and its inhabitants, pointing out differences between this fourth world space and the first world space of its author and its readers. In its aligning readers with the traveller Salazar, through constructing and emphasising the differences between fourth and first world space and inhabitants, I argue that it functions as an example of travel writing. In order to explain this, I first discuss the conventional articulation of the text as an example of *tesitmonio*, before moving on to my original contribution to scholarship surrounding the text – reclassifying it as an example of travel writing.

Testimonio was a flourishing genre by 1990 - the date of *No nacimos pa'semilla*'s first publication, which was enthusiastically explored and analysed by scholars within and outside of Latin America - and was perceived by some, such as John Beverley, as the defining genre of the post-Boom era, in which the voice of subaltern subjects could finally be heard.[251] The texts are most often constructed in mediated form through collaboration between a non-literate informant and a Western intellectual who transcribes and publishes the oral narrative related to them, and prepares it for global consumption in the form of a published text. They were produced in solidarity, in order to draw attention to a particular catastrophic event or state of repression. In this way, the texts were characteristically tied to the particular historical period in which leftist Latin American political movements and governments gained prominence globally in the period in which Salazar carried out his travels – the late 1980s. However, the movement's validity was called into question when its most prominent figure, Rigoberta Menchú, was involved in a scandal which cast

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[250] The term *sicario* is widely translated as 'hired assassin', although in Medellín, and indeed Colombia as a whole, the term is much more loaded, denoting an adolescent killer who is willing to risk his own life to earn a small amount of money. The *sicario* has been the subject of fascination and many cultural products in Colombia, for example, Fernando Vallejo's novel *La virgen de los sicarios*, and the subsequent cinematic adaptation directed by Barbet Schroeder; Jorge Franco's *Rosario Tijeras*, which in a twist on conventional conceptions of the figure, places a female *sicario* at the centre of the narrative; Arturo Alape's *Sangre Ajena*, amongst just a few examples.
[251] John Beverley has published numerous texts discussing the potential of the genre, which he suggested would bring a change the concept of 'literature' itself. See, for example, *Against Literature*.

doubt on the truthfulness of her account.[252] This was a testing time for scholars who had followed the movement wholeheartedly, and the fall of Leftist governments across the Latin American region contributed to the demise in the perceived importance of the movement in scholarly circles. Beverley, who had been one of the genre's strongest supporters, declared that *testimonio's* 'state of emergency' had ended.[253] However, despite the difficulties that the genre faced, and the diminishing attention paid to it by scholars, *testimonies* continue to be produced to the present day, and often attempt to tackle issues of representation associated with the writing style.[254]

No *nacimos pa'semilla* is most often referred to as a *testimonio*, by scholars such as Hermann Herlinghaus and Margarita Jácome. Although it focuses on the lives of those who are unable to speak for themselves, and it is mediated, like many texts within the *testimonio* movement, I suggest in this chapter that it is better understood as belonging to the genre of travel writing. *No nacimos pa'semilla* is informative and well written, and although many would classify it as a *testimonio* due to its form as a collection of testimonies, I argue that the primary focus is upon Salazar's own journeys and encounters in an 'Other' space, and how these interact with his experiences in the 'home' culture from which he has travelled, and which his ideal reader inhabits. He foregrounds the testimonies of his informants with prologues that reproduce myths of Otherness in the inhabitants of Medellín's peripheral *barrios marginales*. His '*testimonio*' seeks to give a voice to the voiceless, yet in Salazar's text, in addition to the textual mediation which takes place, their voices often follow an introduction by the editor. These introductions are value-laden and encode existing mythologies regarding the Other.[255] In this way, the location in which Salazar's encounters with his informants took place is central to the text, both in the narratives and in the text's form. In order to illustrate my point, rather than focus on the genre of *testimonio*, in this chapter I analyse the particularities of this text, undertaking close readings of Salazar's written contribution in addition to the testimonies. In analysing the text as a *testimonio*, the editor's introductions could be

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[252] Rigoberta Menchú was seen as the figurehead for the *testimonio* genre, as a woman who defended her rights as an indigenous woman through activism, yet told her story through *testimonio* in order to bring to light many of the abuses against the indigenous populations of Guatemala in the late twentieth century. However, the anthropologist David Stoll questioned the accuracy of her account through dialogue with other members of her community. Menchú's alignment with the political Left gave ammunition to the right in the U.S. academy's 'culture wars', and although the topic is still debated today on undergraduate syllabi, the production and study of new *testimonio* has been heavily impacted. For more on the controversy and the resulting issues, see Arturo Arias (ed) *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[253] John Beverley, 'The Real Thing', in *the Real Thing: Testimonial discourse and Latin America*, ed. by Georg Gugelberger (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 266-285, (pp. 280-1).

[254] Kohl and Farthing's article is a very good example of contemptorary testimonio editors' attempts to tackle the inherent ethical problems of representation in compiling such a text. For commentary and analysis of more recent *testimonios* see, for example, Maier & Dulfano, Joanna Bartow, and Detwiler & Breckenridge.

[255] These mythologies have become hegemonic discourses, especially through their dissemination in the media.

regarded as paratexts to the testimonies, whereas in my analysis, they are treated as part of the text as a whole. In this way, I am able to consider the possible effects that the editor's words have on the subsequent testimonies. I am also able to make assertions regarding the prominence of the editorial voice within the text and its effect in its classification.

As stated above, my positing of Salazar's text as a piece of travel writing rather than *testimonio* is based on the similarities with the former genre, rather than any particular deficiencies in relation to the latter. Indeed, both forms of writing defy most attempts at definition, due to constantly changing conceptions of what constitutes *testimonio* and travel writing.[256] Both are also highly controversial forms of writing, in which questions of representation are at the forefront of concern. Travel writing, in its attention to Other places and spaces, has been a focus of postcolonial criticism from numerous scholars. Indeed the title of Mary Louise Pratt's foundational exploration of the genre, *Imperial Eyes*, conveys the primary criticism directed towards the genre, which was originally used to inform of, thus to classify, faraway lands. In more recent times, and in particular from the mid-twentieth century onwards, the genre has perpetuated myths of Otherness between traditionally opposing spaces.[257] *Testimonio*, on the other hand, was at first perceived to have a more collaborative form of engagement with its subjects, through its political impetus to highlight situations of urgency which otherwise would not receive attention.[258] However, as has now become evident, these collaborations between informants and writers were far from harmonious, often to the detriment of the former rather than the latter.[259] My analysis of *No nacimos pa'semilla* problematises its classification as

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[256] In the heyday of *testimonio* scholarship, John Beverley declared that 'Since testimonio is by nature a demotic and dynamic form, not subject to critical legislation by a normative literary establishment, any attempt to specify a generic definition for it […] should be considered at best provisional, at worst repressive' (*Against Literature,* p. 71). Travel writing, Holland & Huggan affirm, 'is hard to define, not least because it is a hybrid genre that straddles categories and disciplines' (*Tourists with Typewriters,* p. 8). Jan Borm, commenting on travel writing, asserts that, because of the many different forms of writing which are classified under the rubric of 'travel writing', it 'is not a genre, but a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel.' (p. 13).

[257] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[258] George Yúdice defines *testimonio* according to its function in highlighting injustice: '[it] may be defined as an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of a situation'. '*Testimonio* and Postmodernism', in *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*, ed. by Georg M. Gugelberger, (Durham NC: Duke Unievrsity Press, 1996) pp. 42-57, (p. 8).

[259] There are many points of discussion in relation to *testimonio* and its effects on the informants. A particularly interesting assessment of *testimonio*'s many problems comes from Kathleen Logan, who, by reviewing ten texts documenting the lives of women in Latin America, finds a number of problems which are rarely addressed in the text itself. For example, she raises the issue of the distribution of revenue, pointing out that the Brazilian Carolina de Jesus died in poverty, despite having two best-selling *testimonios*, as well as authorship, as more often than not it is the editor of the text rather than the informant who takes ownership of the text. The relationship between author and informant is most often discussed by critics, for example Kimberle S. Lopez discusses in depth the ethical and practical issues involved in the relationship between 'author and narrator' in the testimonial process. Using the particularly problematic case of Elena Poniatowska's relationship with Josefina Borquez in the production of testimonial novel *Hasta no verte Jesús mío*, Lopez argues that this relationship can at worst reproduce the oppressor/oppressed relationship of internal colonialism. More recently Kohl & Farthing have reflected on their own relationship with Felix Muruchi Poma, a Bolivian activist with whom they published *testimonios* in Spanish and English. Despite recognising the difficulties of their relationship with the activist, and confronting the question of

testimonio because of the characteristics which, I contend, render it a piece of travel writing. It is Salazar's experiences with the inhabitants of the peripheral spaces of Medellín that form the crux of the text, rather than the life stories of the young men that it purports to represent.

No nacimos pa'semilla gives an insight into how the presence of politicised armed groups in the city's fourth world spaces catalysed the development of bands of young boys into gangs of violent youths through the 1980s, and it illustrates that by the end of this decade there were many forms of violent groups operating within the city such as the guerrilla, paramilitaries and the Medellín drug cartel. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Medellín is a divided city, and as well as being geographically defined this has been articulated linguistically using the *parlache* term Medallo. My analysis of *No nacimos pa'semilla* posits the idea that the text relies on the myth of Medallo, and capitalises on its recognition by the ideal reader to establish difference between the text's many voices.[260] Although Salazar seeks to complicate the representation of the *barrios marginales* as simply hotbeds of violence which are inhabited by *sicarios* by articulating a more complicated analysis of violence in these areas, the text continues to mark the area as one dominated by violence, and develops the myth that identifies it as the space of the 'Other'. Throughout, Salazar anchors his encounters in a comparison with his home in Medellín; accentuating those aspects of life in 'Medallo' that differ from those of Medellín. I argue further that this anchoring in a differentiation between Medellín and Medallo also extends to his appeal to his ideal reader. The text is aimed at the inhabitants of the lettered city; therefore the anchoring in Medellín as a space becomes emblematic of the central city in a globalised era. Medellín comes to represent the wealthy centres in which readers will consume the text, wishing to learn more of the dark city of Medallo. In short, it is my contention that *No nacimos pa'semilla*'s primary function is to document Salazar's journeys and encounters in the perceived Other space - Medallo.

Following a discussion of travel writing and its criticism in present-day Latin America, this chapter will focus upon the similarities that Salazar's text has with this genre of writing. The field of contemporary travel writing in Latin America as a whole is largely unexplored.[261] Claire Lindsay's 2010 monograph, entitled *Contemporary*

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authorship in the English-language version of the text, they conclude that the process overall was successful, given that their informant specified its positive effects upon his own life and struggles.

[260] Salazar shows clear recognition of the term in the text. It is referenced and translated in the glossary (discussed in more detail later), and in his preface to the first edition (p. 13).

[261] Much has been written, however, in relation to travel writing during the colonial and early post-Independence periods. Much analysis focuses on the writings of Europeans visiting vast areas of Latin America such as Patagonia, and their discriminatory discourse in their reporting of their observations. See, for example, Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

Travel Writing of Latin America, calls for a new practice in which analysis is focused upon contemporary travel texts which were written by Latin Americans recounting their travels across different parts of the region.[262] She states that in doing so, she contradicts the tendency to overlook 'domestic' travel narratives.[263] This chapter, in its consideration of *No nacimos pa'semilla*, follows the impetus in Lindsay's work in classifying the text as an example of travel writing by a Latin American citizen within his own city. In this way, I argue that the text is an example of 'domestic' travel writing. Salazar remains within the same city, yet documents his travels to different sites, and chronicles the scenes that he encounters. This domestic encounter, as Lindsay suggests, is far from banal, and although he remains geographically within the same city, Salazar is able to construct difference between himself and the fourth world inhabitants with whom he converses. He is able to construct this difference despite not being in a different national context, which would permit a more easily defined Othering.

In order to develop my argument, my analysis will focus primarily on the role of Salazar's narrative voice in the text, but also on his role as editor in constructing the text as a collection of testimonies, and finally on the paratextual elements which convey this sense of difference. I argue that unlike other texts conceived to be part of the *testimonio* genre, *No nacimos pa'semilla* features the voice of its editor so frequently that it is the lead narrative voice, rather than the collective voice of his informants. Although the prominence of his narrative voice could heed to calls by *testimonio* critics, outlined above, to make the process of compiling the texts more transparent.[264] Salazar's voice focuses only on his own experiences and understandings of his surroundings and informants, and sheds very little light on the editorial process other than the location in which some interviews took place.[265] Instead I suggest that this narrative voice which holds the text together gives strength to my argument that the text is an example of domestic travel writing rather than *testimonio*. It is the author's voice which is most prominent, and in those parts of the text where he writes, he discusses primarily his travels. If this were to be *testimonio*,

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[262] Previous scholarship on travel writing in Latin America, she asserts, focuses on texts written by European travellers exploring the 'New World' who 'sought to convey a sense of far-flung lands visited to an audience back home' (pp. 3-4).

[263] She notes 'until recent time and with specific exceptions, these kinds of journeys have been underestimated as somehow more banal and inferior than the apparently more dramatic intercultural or transatlantic encounters' (p. 6)

[264] Salazar provides some limited information regarding the processes behind the construction of the text in its first edition. He states simply that interviews took place in 1989 and the beginning of 1990, that they chose the most representative examples from these interviews, and tried to conserve the style and language of the original interviews. He adds, crucially perhaps in terms of readership, that 'organizamos los relatos buscando cierta coherencia y fluidez que facilitan la lectura y la comprensión'. Finally, he makes clear that some alterations have taken place with regard to names, places and circumstances, 'por razones obvias' (pp. 13-14).

[265] As I will argue below, the place of the interview functions primarily to establish difference between Salazar and his informant.

it would be the collevtive voices of the participants that would be most prominent. In *Extreme Pursuits*, prominent postcolonialist scholar Graham Huggan considers the purpose of the narrator's observations within travel writing, suggesting that 'travel writing, traditionally, has acted as a medium for personal opinion masquerading as considered socio-political analysis'.[266] The statement, although directed at writings produced during the colonial period of the British Empire, has much resonance in relation to my interpretation of Salazar's text, despite his undoubtedly good intentions at the time of publication. It is in his introductions primarily that his personal opinion is manifest, although this is apparent in the way that the text is composed, as I analyse below.

There are three clear areas of focus in my analysis, which although they are in this thesis considered separately they do overlap. Together they illustrate the techniques used by Salazar and the publishers to highlight and accentuate difference between the first world (inhabited by the editor and his ideal reader), and the Other situated in thr fourth world (those observed and who speak in Medallo). The first section will focus on Salazar's introductions, which preface some of the testimonies of his informants. The book itself is divided into six main chapters, each of which focuses on the testimonies of either violent actors and their friends and family, or professionals living and working in the *barrios marginales*. As I illustrate, in some chapters, Salazar provides an introduction to the testimonies, focusing on the location of the interview and his journey to reach it, and describing the homes and lives of his informants. In these introductions he constructs difference through description, yet he also conveys a divide between those who are deemed to necessitate an introduction and those who do not. These introductory passages have in common the editor's experience and understanding as a visitor to the *barrios marginales* as a focal point, thus linking him to Huggan's definition of traditional forms of travel writing as a medium for expressing personal opinion, as his observations suggest difference. As a result, the text reads as an account of Salazar's encounters with many different inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* rather than the life of its inhabitants in their own words. Many chapters are mediated through this voice, and as such, the speaker is not permitted to speak entirely for him or herself. This section will be divided into the different functions of these introductions, including journey narrative, his use of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective, *costumbrismo*, and the artistic license used to construct scenes and project emotions.

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[266] Graham Huggan, *Extreme Pursuits: Travel/Writing in an Age of Globalization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), p. 24.

The second strand of my analysis focuses on Salazar's composition of the text, in the use of different narrative voices and how these represent the speakers as inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*. Mediated *testimonios* have always been problematic due to the often problematic relationships between informant and editor. The aim is, in almost all cases, to foreground injustice committed against the speakers in order to gather support. However, in this text, I highlight through close readings of a number of chapters, patterns and contradictions within the text that demonstrate that Salazar has selected material which gives priority to the demands of the text's consumer - the ideal reader - who reads the text to learn more of this Other space. Again, in this way the text is aligned with the genre of travel writing rather than *testimonio*.

The final stage of the analysis centres upon the role of paratexts in elucidating difference between the ideal reader and those who speak within the text. I explore the glossary, a device meant simply to provide context and assist understanding, yet when this is contrasted with the experiences of those observed within the text, the construction of difference once again emerges. I also consider the more traditional paratextual elements of the cultural products. There are two editions of the text, and so I analyse the different book sleeve images and prologues that accompany each edition. What is crucial in this aspect of the analysis is that the paratexts are the only element of the text which changes between the two editions, and so I also consider the implications of this in this section.

Salient in all three strands of this analysis is the question of purpose: who is the text written for? And what does it attempt to achieve? Traditionally, I would argue that *testimonio* aims to produce a text to highlight injustice and therefore is written for the *testimoniante* to gain attention, and written with the lettered society in mind.[267] I suggest that Salazar's text is a different case, in that although the *'testimoniantes'* are given a voice, this is not the primary function of the text. Instead it is to inform Salazar's ideal reader, who sits in fear, consuming the stories of violence highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. Although the text attempts to deconstruct simplistic myths regarding violence in Medellín, which was largely attributed to the figure of the *sicario*, in its focus on the heterogeneity of violent actors, I suggest that the violent actor is further fetishised. Despite *No nacimos pa'semilla* articulating a diverse number of actors, the focus of attention remains on the violent actor, and, further, his presence is directly tied to the spaces of the *barrios marginales*.

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[267] This is of course a contradiction that has been a focal point of *testimonio* scholarship.

The introductions, or 'prologues', conform to a formula established in the text, in which Salazar can comment upon any of the following aspects: his journey to the *barrios marginales,* his distance from home through references to height, the space in which he finds himself whether private or public, interior or exterior, and the concise life story of his informant, in the form of a brief biography. These introductions within a *testimonio* would be treated as prefaces, as the introductions lead into the testimonies, contributing to the upcoming account and providing a useful context for the reader. As with other forms of cultural products, generally, such paratexts often are largely overlooked. However, because I am analysing the text as an example of travel writing, I will explore these introductions in depth because, I argue, they give narrative coherence to the text and reveal the author's own interpretation of and prejudices towards his informants. These introductions take on major significance, forming a unifying element of a text composed of many narrative voices. Taking into account the significance of Salazar's introductions, the text is clearly written from the point of view of its editor, rather than the collective voice, therefore the content of the introductions must be analysed in a wider exploration of the testimonies within the text. In this section, I analyse the introductions in terms of their content, where they appear, where they do not, and the purpose of each specific example analysed, and I explain their significance when considering the text as an example of travel writing. My primary hypothesis is that the introductions construct and enhance difference between the editor and the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* in a way that would not have resulted from the publication of the testimonies alone.

My argument regarding the construction of difference in the introductions stems from the implication of necessitating an explanation. This extends in his introductions to both his location and his informants. In this way, those who are given an introduction are immediately identified as different, and therefore 'Other' simply in the perceived need to explain their circumstances. Later in this chapter I will analyse in more detail a number of those prefaces, however before embarking upon this, I must highlight some specific techniques used by Salazar that make the introductions significant. These techniques, I argue, accentuate difference. They include techniques recognised as belonging to travel writing, and some which, although not directly linked with the genre, result in the Othering of those who speak in the testimonies – the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*, of Medallo. These include the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' perspective, recognised widely by scholars as a characteristic of the travel writing of colonial explorers and subsequent travel writers

of imperial era; a modern day form of *costumbrismo*, another archaic practice in which the traditions and customs of indigenous cultures were documented as a form of preservation; and finally the practice of distancing from home, highlighted by Debbie Lisle as an Othering technique of travel writing.[268] After an explanation of each of these practices, I illustrate how they are employed by Salazar in *No nacimos pa'semilla* to achieve the impression of difference.

The monarch-of-all-I-survey trope is a characteristic of much travel writing, and was a term coined by Pratt in *Imperial Eyes*.[269] The trope whilst still found in contemporary travel writing was characterised by a rhetoric of discovery, in which the landscape was aestheticised to illustrate both the significance of the discovery (through its aesthetic qualities) and of the need for intervention (due to its people's deficiencies).[270] I argue in this chapter that Salazar's introductions, in which he describes his surroundings in the *barrios marginales* constitute a modern-day example of the trope. Essential to my argument is that the comments made by Salazar contribute little to the testimonies which follow, and often bear no resemblance to the stories narrated by the informants. Pratt, in describing the trope, suggests that '[t]he verbal painter must render momentously significant what is, especially from a narrative point of view, practically a non-event'.[271] This narrative 'non-event' is, I argue, characteristic of Salazar's introductions, as I will analyse further below.

Pratt's description of the trope highlights that there is much written about travel writing in relation to the present day that is relevant to Salazar's text. Although she first introduced it using examples from the Romantic period, during which British and other European explorers 'discovered' the territories of the colonial powers, Pratt continues chronologically to survey how the trope developed in travel writing through the twentieth century, as far as the 1980s - only seven years prior to the release of *No nacimos pa'semilla*.[272] The author points out that although the sites in which the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene featured have changed, 'like their explorer forebears, postcolonial adventurers perch themselves to paint the significance and value they see'.[273] I argue that Salazar is no different. However, Pratt also suggests that there are principally two different ways in which the significance of their observations are articulated by modern travel writers. Referring to two texts written by western

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[268] Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[269] Pratt.
[270] Pratt, p. 205.
[271] Pratt, p. 202.
[272] The final text considered is *Salvador*, by Joan Didion, published in 1983. This focuses on violence in El Salvador, and takes the approach that nothing can be understood by the western observer.
[273] Pratt, p. 216

intellectuals regarding their travels in Latin America, she refers to a 'realist' version of reality, and another that requires 'different forms of understanding' for a different form of reality incomprehensible to both the writer and his/her reader.[274] I argue that both these elements are prominent in Salazar's introductions, and here I explain their importance in analysing *No nacimos pa'semilla* as an example of travel writing.

The former derives from Pratt's reading of Paul Theroux's *The Old Patagonian Express*,[275] in which he describes not the 'wonders' of the mythical space of Patagonia, but its bleakness, and the poverty of the Latin American people.[276] This acknowledgement of the imperfections of old spaces creates in the reader, Pratt suggests, an 'effect of the real', or a form of authenticity. However, she states, this is not an indicator of authentic representation, but simply a reformulation of the trope developed in the Romantic period: 'they are still up there, commanding the view, assigning it value, oblivious to limitations on their perceptual capacities, their relations of privilege perfectly naturalised'.[277] This form of description is used in many of Salazar's introductions, in the way in which spaces, places and individuals are described. Although attempting to highlight the bleak reality of life in the *barrios marginales*, the aestheticising descriptions in fact create binaries between this space and Salazar's home, and construe the former with a lack of meaning, the latter being a space of opportunity and value.

The second form of twentieth-century travel writing identified by Pratt is explained with reference to Joan Didion's *Salvador*, which explored conflict and its effects in El Salvador in the 1980s. In this text, Didion derides the very medium through which she communicates, suggesting that travel writing is not a sufficient tool to convey the horrors experienced in the nation during this period. However, Pratt asserts, Didion continues to make recourse to tropes typical of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective in travel writing, such as darkness and light to describe situations she cannot comprehend, and uses artistic license to make sense of physical traces of violence left behind but not explained.[278] Conversely, Salazar's text as a whole is an attempt to make sense of the growth of violence in Medellín throughout the 1990s and in this way is similar to that of Didion. He often suggests that he cannot find answers, yet he continues to use the tropes of travel writing, and of binary distinctions between the *barrios marginales* and home, in order to convey his

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[274] Pratt, p. 226.
[275] Paul Theroux, *The Old Patagonian Express* (London: H. Hamilton, 1979).
[276] Pratt, pp. 217-21.
[277] Pratt, p, 219.
[278] Pratt, pp. 225-7.

observations. He also uses artistic license to fill in gaps in his knowledge, as I will explore further below.

According to Pratt, in almost all cases, the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope was characteristically evoked from a high vantage point, with the effect that the speaker looked down upon the landscape that (s)he observed. In *No nacimos pa'semilla*, height is referenced in many introductions, owing to the geographical height of the *barrios marginales*. In his presence in this space, Salazar has a higher vantage point because he surveys the peripheral edges rather than the space below - his home - thus bringing a new interpretation to the now well-established term. Rather than look down upon those he surveys, he looks down to see those whom he addresses in the first world in the valley below the fourth world spaces of the city. However, despite this inversion, the implications of Salazar's gaze closely resemble those described by Pratt, as he uses his height to convey a sense of authority. He uses it to highlight that his travels to the Other space make him qualified to comment upon its inhabitants' lives. Medellín then becomes a specific space in which the characteristics associated with the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope must be modified, yet the same outcome is achieved by the author. In many cases, the technique that he uses combines the perspective noted by Pratt with the Hispanic practice of *costumbrismo*, as I explore below.

Costumbrismo

In many of the introductions, Salazar combines the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope with descriptions resembling the Hispanic custom of *costumbrismo*.[279] *Costumbrismo* was used in previous centuries to capture 'quaint anachronisms on the verge of disappearance' in various forms of cultural production.[280] The descriptions often purported to celebrate those customs. However, in recent years, Jean Franco has sought to reconceptualise the term in line with the growth of globalization.[281] She refers to 'the *costumbrismo* of globalization', which has as a common theme 'the life and death of delinquents'.[282] She continues to describe the key differences between the practice in the nineteenth century – a response to modernization - where 'the old customs could be captured as quaint anachronisms on the verge of disappearance

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[279] John Beverley, in 'The Margin at the Centre', was notoriously concerned that *testimonios* could become a 'depoliticised articulation of [...] a sort of *costumbrismo* of the subaltern' (pp. 18-9).
[280] Jean Franco, *Critical Passions: Selected Essays* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 222.
[281] Jean Franco (1999), p. 316, n. 7.
[282] Ibid, p. 222.

[whereas] the contemporary texts are postapocalyptic, reflecting the horror of the middle classes as their whole world implodes'.[283] She compares traditional forms with this contemporary trend, highlighting that, '[n]ineteenth century *costumbrismo* was expressed in descriptive sketches of human residues left behind by progress; contemporary urban chronicles are descriptions of this process in reverse'.[284] Franco's thoughts on this new form of *costumbrismo* are useful, as they highlight the predominance of artists attempting to describe the customs and practices of subcultures. In the present day however, *costumbrismo* focuses not on quaint anachronisms, but upon the unintelligible. The way of life which it now documents is one which puts the lives of others in Medellín in danger. In my critique of Salazar's text here, I diverge somewhat from Franco's central point, which is the recording of the breakdown of society in the eyes of the middle classes. Instead, I focus upon how Salazar uses the practices of *costumbrismo*, of recording his observations of a cultural Other, and argue that its use within the introductions overwhelms the testimonies of the individuals who are purportedly given a voice in the text.

It is my contention that Salazar's introductions combine a form of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective with *costumbrismo.* The introductions typically detail observations made by Salazar regarding the customs, clothing and households of those with whom he speaks, and it is in these observations that a problematic pattern emerges, in that the author focuses on those aspects which, in hegemonic discourse, are deemed as belonging to low culture, and would be described as *cursi*. It is in this way that *costumbrismo* becomes very problematic, and seems to be combined with the trope of travel writing (the monarch-of-all-I-survey). I suggest that in this combination, with the authority construed by Salazar through the monarch-of-all-I-survey voice and his descriptions of an 'Other' culture, the introductions have an effect on the testimonies before the informant begins to speak. My analysis illustrates that this technique facilitates the foregrounding of Salazar's voice and opinions before the words of his witnesses and therefore the alignment of the reader with the author. This, I argue, has an effect on the way in which the testimonies are interpreted, as Salazar's views are introduced first, and are therefore more likely to effect the reader's thinking as they begin to read the testimony itself. The reader begins to decode the story of the informant before beginning to read his or her account, in a similar way to other forms of paratexts such as book jackets or movie

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[283] Ibid.

[284] Ibid. Although predominantly referencing Fernando Vallejo's novel *La virgen de los sicarios*, Franco also makes explicit references to Salazar's text, albeit in relation to the representation of consumption.

posters.[285] Salazar's introductions are Genette's 'thresholds' to the testimonies of those with whom he speaks. His descriptions illustrate a scene and develop characters, as would any generic paratext; the recourse to *costumbrismo* practices and the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective only reinforces a sense of comparison between the Other space and Salazar's home.

Thus far, in relation to Salazar's narrative voice, I have argued that the observations recorded in his introductions, in a form resembling *costumbrismo*, are forced comparisons between the lives of Salazar and the ideal reader in Medellín, and those of his informants in Medallo. I argue further that these forced comparisons serve to perpetuate myths which surround the *barrios marginales*. As I illustrate in this chapter, these myths, as articulated by Martín Barbero and Riano-Alcalá, include the supposed inevitability of a life of violence for young men, and one of misery and poverty for young women. A further element that contributes to this Othering effect is Salazar's tendency to recount the journey upon which he embarked in order to reach the Other space and undertake his encounter with his informant. Below I explore the final theoretical paradigm of this chapter, which relates to these journey narratives, before embarking upon the analysis of the text, commencing with Salazar's introductions.

Tropes of Travel Writing

I have explained above how a differentiation between an Other and home space has been articulated through an exploration of Pratt's thoughts on the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope, and Franco's interpretation of modern-day *costumbrismo*. Before going on to analyse how these tropes and techniques are used in *No nacimos pa'semilla*, I explore further the importance of the differentiation between home space and Other space in travel writing.

Debbie Lisle, in *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, suggests that at the heart of a travelogue is the sense of a journey taken from home, which will end with the return home.[286] She argues that an anchoring in what a sense of home is allows difference to be conveyed in relaying the writer's travels and the actions and scenery which he/she has observed: '[a]ll travelogues pursue an engagement with

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[285] See Chapter Four for more detailed analysis of how paratexts can cause this problem.

[286] Lisle, p. 37. Kristi Siegel also discusses the importance of an anchoring in home in travel writing, which she states helps to define what is Other – that which is not the same as home: ''in journeys outward – away from home- other landscapes, countries and cultures are often viewed in terms of how they compare to one's home' 'Introduction: Travel Writing and Theory', in *Issues in Travel Writing: Empire, Spectacle & Displacement*, ed. by Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 1-9 (p. 4).

difference, with something other than the usual, everyday experiences of home, and organise that engagement through the categories of subjectivity, space and time'.[287] In terms of subjectivity, Salazar is aligned with his ideal reader, and this is principally achieved through his use of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective, as he reports his findings back to those familiar with his 'home' space. Subjectivity is thus linked to space, as the ideal reader is assumed to inhabit the same home space, and to find his observations of note because the people, places and practices differ from the readers' own experiences of everyday life. This sense of alignment with the ideal reader is amplified in a shared recognition of the Other space within the same city, to which Salazar has travelled. His act of writing, however, takes place after the encounters with his informants do, and therefore he achieves distance temporally. The descriptions are memories of the encounters, and like many cases of travel writing in previous centuries, Salazar writes after returning home.

Lisle goes on to discuss, with reference to Todorov's reflections on travel writing, the importance of accentuating spatial distance between the travel writer and the space about which he writes.[288] Todorov, she states, suggests that the further one travels, the more significant differences become.[289] Taking into account Todorov's assertions, I suggest that in this particular case, in a city subject to such existing divisive discourse, despite the nominal geographical distance between Salazar's home in the central city and his journey to the marginal space, the differentiation constructed by the editor, creates a metaphorically larger distance. To aid this sense, his voice in the introductions conveys a significant, lengthy and difficult journey. Salazar accentuates the distance between home and Other space by emphasising every aspect of his journey to reach his informants, and the difficulties that are encountered on such journeys. In addition, Medellín's geographic make-up permits the editor to construct difference through distance. The established perceived divide between Medellín and Medallo and its spatial configuration allows Salazar to amplify distance in order to convey difference. The earlier cited geographical and visual signification of the articulated divide in Vallejo's *La virgen de los sicarios* in which Medellín is the city below, and Medallo is that which lies above is also used by Salazar. It is my contention that in order to convey that he has travelled to the Other city, Salazar too invokes this trope of height throughout the text to emphasise the difference through distance travelled. In the introductions, the four aspects discussed in this theoretical discussion – the monarch-of-all-I-survey,

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[287] Ibid, p. 41.
[288] Todorov, Tzvetan, 'The Journey and Its Narrative', in *The Morals of History*, trans. by Alyson Waters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp. 60-70.
[289] Lisle, p. 42.

costumbrismo, journey and height – combine to allow Salazar to construct a travelogue in which difference is fetishised. Medallo, as I will now explore, is a culturally distant space, which Salazar has travelled to, observed, and recorded for those who inhabit his 'home' space. The strange, sometimes dangerous customs and lifestyles he encounters combine with the almost exotic setting of the hillside *tugurios* to create a binary division between the mythical city of Medallo and the home space of Medellín.

Salazar's Introductions

The trope of travel writing that is most consistently visible in *No nacimos pa'semilla* is the monarch-of-all-I-survey*.* It is used in each of Salazar's introductions, as well as in his prologues and conclusion, and provides continuity between the different chapters in which the editor speaks. For this reason, I begin this discussion with examples of the trope, and develop it the argument by analysing how the trope combines and interacts with other aspects of travel writing discussed above. Salazar's first chapter focuses on the testimonies of Antonio, the *sicario*, and his mother Doña Azucena. His description of the family home, in the introduction preceding Doña Azucena's testimony, illustrates the editor's tendency to utilise aestheticising description that is characteristic of the monarch-of-all-I-survey. He begins with a focus on the composition and appearance of the house, in a sentence loaded with significance: 'El techo de zinc y cartón, las paredes sin revocar, pintadas con cal azul, los sanoajines florecidos de rojo'.[290] The content and vocabulary are indicative of his Othering discourse, as they reinforce the location of the interview, and of the family's home, in the *barrios marginales*, by referencing the typical characteristics of a home in Medellín's *comunas*, with a roof made of zinc and cardboard. The description creates a scene familiar to the ideal reader, which is visible from Medellín. The lack of familiar materials, such as plaster, and references to natural construction methods indicate both a colourful poverty and a closeness to nature. For example, the red flowers, which also grow freely across Antioquia, exist, without having been purchased and deliberately planted, yet create an attractive picture in what could be a bleak description. Difference is constructed in the sense that these materials and natural resources do not conform to the more consumer-led practices of the editor's home space. The aesthetic deficiencies characteristic of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective are clear in the narrative, which allow Salazar to mark difference

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[290] Salazar (2002), p. 28.

between this space and his 'home' because these materials would not be used in the latter. Pratt suggests that twentieth-century travel writing was marked by the 'scarcity of meaning' in the 'third world'.[291] In her use of this phrase, she refers to the lack, or scarcity, of ability among the inhabitants of the 'third world' to represent themselves, which means that the travel writer then has an opportunity to not only represent them, but to explain them using his own terms of reference. Although Salazar is not a European traveller visiting the third world, he is a first world inhabitant observing a fourth world space. In describing building materials used simply for their availability, Salazar represents the fourth world inhabitants according to his own terms of reference, and thus suggests both uniformity in the space and a lack of diversity, again a contrast to the 'home' space. The items described in this home suggest that the household is supported by nature, and those resources which are cheap to manufacture, rather than the expensive array of consumer goods used in the centre of the city, and therefore marking difference from those with which both Salazar and his ideal reader are familiar. The notion of 'home' in travel writing is clearly apparent here, as it is evident that Salazar has included these observations because this building and the practices used to decorate it are not the same as those to which he is accustomed. The scene maintains its pleasing aesthetic in spite of the implied simplicity, and so is in keeping with the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope.

His attention to the interior later in this introduction bestows a similar perspective and highlights a scarcity of meaning described by Pratt as a major feature of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective. He describes items which purportedly give an insight into the interests of those inhabiting that home, and it is here that the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective combines with *costumbrismo*:

> En las paredes están pegados varios afiches de artistas de cine y cantantes de rock. Perdido en un rincón, envuelto en telarañas, hay un cuadro pequeño de la Virgen del Carmen. Del techo, encima de la puerta, cuelgan una herradura y una penca de zábila, que se acostumbra para la buena suerte.[292]

Within the text as a whole, this is the only domestic home that is described in any detail and as such it functions as a representative of a typical home in the *barrios marginales.*[293] The description, although seemingly long, is actually rather brief in terms of specific content, and again conveys a scarcity of meaning. Pratt suggests that observations of this kind create a binary with the home space, in which the

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[291] Pratt, p. 218.
[292] Ibid.
[293] It is interesting from a gender perspective to note that it is in relation to the only female informant that Salazar speaks of her home (and as discussed later in this chapter, her body). The only other interior home space explored in any detail is the prison cell of Mario in the chapter entitled 'Universidad del mal', which will be analysed later in this chapter.

opposing normative categories are of density compared to a scarcity of meaning. The implication is that while one of the 'conspicuous hallmarks of western commodity culture is precisely the proliferation of differentiations, specialisations, subdivisions, games of taste', in the *barrios marginales*, this is lacking.[294] Each reference to film and music is non-descript. There are no specifics and the implication is that in this space details do not matter. This sense is reinforced by the practical discarding of the religious idol in the room, which is implied by its description as covered in cobwebs. In this case, Salazar insinuates that religion, brimming with meaning and interpretations, is wasted in this space. Instead, unidentified film and rock stars are the subject of idolisation, and hence function as a generic signifier of what he understands to be bad taste and low culture. The final reference to superstitions in the home relates to Pratt's contention that these descriptions also allow 'games of taste' to proliferate, as it makes a final contribution to a collection of observations linking this household to perceived 'low culture', and the popular. Superstitions are not based upon reason, and therefore, neither is this space, it is implied.

Through recourse to the all-knowing monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective, Salazar projects his own interpretation of Doña Azucena's life before she is permitted space in which to speak for herself. Her life has been linked to the prejudices derived from the representation of her home. In addition, she does not herself describe her home in her own words, highlighting that although she may be allowed to speak, she is not permitted to fully represent herself in this chapter. Instead, Salazar begins that process. *Testimonio*'s foundational function, to create a space in which the voiceless can speak, is somewhat undermined by Salazar in this way. Salazar speaks before her, fetishising the space she inhabits for the benefit of the ideal reader, who reads of Salazar's encounter with this space, one which the first world reader in the city is unlikely to see nor visit. The techniques used to describe the home clearly follow those identified by Pratt as belonging to the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective, and also borrow the more negative traits of *costumbrismo* to form an ideologically constructed picture of a typical home in the Other space of Medallo. The description of the home does not complement in any way the testimony of Doña Azucena, and in this way, Salazar's project of creating a *testimonio* is undermined by his own interferences.

Salazar observes his surroundings and makes comments based on his experiences at 'home', making this space Other. This is characteristic of travel writing, as for example, Lisle has asserted. Although he makes observations which

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[294] Pratt, p. 218.

seem rather innocuous, as Lisle points out, 'travelogues are politically interesting because they mask the process of […] discursive ordering and offer their observations as neutral documentations of a stable, single and ordered reality'.[295] Salazar's observations, although presented as such, are not neutral documentations because he chooses what to remark upon. His causal observations regarding homes, people and customs are ideologically loaded, and create an opposition based on a hierarchy. Lisle explains with reference to Theroux's *Old Patagonia Express* that discursive ordering is a characteristic of much travel writing. She argues the 'hierarchy is secured every time Theroux reinforces his superiority as a rational and objective travel writer against objectified others such as the dirty, weedy, Mexican garlic seller.'[296] This occurs in the same way in relation to his depiction of Doña Azucena's home. She has an unruly home which is disordered and filled with *cursi* items.

Distancing and Height

Location is a central theme in Salazar's introductions, as it is throughout the entire text. As a travelogue, the establishment of his location is key to the narrative in each chapter and in the text as a whole. The introductions often begin with references to geographical distance, which is determined by the distance from 'home' – central Medellín – through at least one of two measures: the recounting of an arduous journey or a simple reference to height. These two techniques allow difference to be established, as described by Lisle. Height is essential in establishing location in the city of Medellín, as the mythical city of Medallo is *la ciudad de arriba*, and therefore signifies distance from the centre. As I explain below, there are many examples in which Salazar articulates clearly that he is no longer in his home space. By commencing with exploring these references to distance from the centre, I follow the chronology of tropes within Salazar's introductions.

The first chapter of the text, 'Somos los reyes del mundo', which includes the testimony of Doña Azucena, contains illuminating examples of Salazar's references to distance. Both references are found in the short, two-paragraph introduction to Doña Azucena's testimony, which immediately follows the testimony of her son, who is close to death in hospital, and in the text, has just spoken about a party thrown

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[295] Lisle, p. 12
[296] Lisle, p. 13.

with the proceeds from the murder of one of his victims. The text then cuts to the editor's voice, and his arduous journey to reach the boy's mother:

> el bus sube venciendo con dificultad la pendiente, recorre calles estrechas y curvadas repletas de gente y negocios. Desde la calle principales camina dos cuadras por un callejón estrecho y finalmente se sube por una cañada. Allí está la casa.[297]

The journey is described as a conquest through the difficult terrain of the hillside, and the bus clearly becomes a metaphor for Salazar, as a representative of the lettered city, where technological advances are made. The concept of the bus 'winning' suggests an overcoming of nature by technology, yet also highlights isolation. That the route takes a *callejón*, and that he disembarks in an unidentified *cañada* indicates that this is not normal terrain in which Salazar would find himself. He establishes in this first chapter the impenetrability of the area, and of the long streets with few features to remark upon. So, early in the text, the author is able to emphasise how difficult to reach the *barrios marginales* are in comparison to the central city through their distance from the latter. With every obstacle conquered, whether it is one of numerous curves in a difficult road, a steep slope to climb or another sharp corner turned, Salazar emphasises the distance travelled to gain access to his speaker. Indeed, the distance from home is mirrored by the editor's description of the Other's home which follows the recollection of the difficult journey, highlighting cultural difference. Although Salazar narrates his own journey, he is also indicating that his informant inhabits an Other space. The sense of difference that is conveyed through distance is linked to the existing hegemonic discourse of Medallo that surrounds the space in which Salazar is now situated. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the *barrios marginales* were documented as an Other space, which had emerged through migratory processes, but had become more sinister in their association with violent *sicarios.* Salazar could have simply edited Doña Azucena's testimony and added it to the text without including his re-enactment of the journey, but he chooses to add it, and crucially does so before she speaks. Again, Salazar's formation of the text affects the decoding of the testimony itself, undermining its status as a *testimonio*.

This journey narrative also emphasises the height of the slopes, thus allowing Salazar's ideal reader to identify this space as part of the feared peripheral neighbourhoods which are visible from the centre of Medellín, yet rarely entered. In invoking this space, Salazar stimulates his ideal reader to recall those hegemonic

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[297] Salazar (2002), pp. 27-8.

discourses surrounding the mythical space of Medallo, communicated by the media in relation to young *sicarios*, which means the testimony which follows has already been affected by the editor's words. The fusion of the journey narrative with the references to height in this introduction contributes to a sense that Salazar has travelled much further than simply to another part of the same city, and has taken more effort than a simple bus journey. This is a key trope in almost all travel writing, termed the narrative 'nonevent' by Pratt, in which the journey itself is narrativized, and is clearly displayed in the early stages of *No nacimos pa'semilla*.

The tropes of upward movement and reference to height are reinvoked in the text's second chapter, 'Un círculo vicioso'. Here, Salazar makes a more constructed differentiation between two halves of the city, and narrativises the journey between the two. In this case, the journey narrated is that taken by the inhabitants of the peripheral *barrios marginales,* and once again the account embellishes the distance between the two spaces. In an introduction to the testimony of Don Rafael, the founder of a *milicia*, Salazar describes the return to the *barrios marginales* of workers at the end of a 'typical' day:

> A las seis de la tarde empiezan a llegar los campeones del rebusque: las mujeres que hacen los oficios en la casa de algún rico, las que trabajan en fábricas de confecciones, los hombres que camellan la construcción, los de las ventas ambulantes…Suben en uno que otro autobús atestado, y en colectivos que les cobran ciento cincuenta pesos.[298]

This example is similar in its content to Salazar's recollection of his own journey in the previous chapter, in that it once again highlights the difficulties in reaching the area through the metaphor of the struggling bus. Although in this case Salazar describes a journey which is not his own, it again takes on mythical status. This scene, of workers returning from the city, could be found in any of the *comunas* that make up the *barrios marginales* as a collective entity. In this way alone, the scene reminds the reader that Salazar is in the Other space. In the persistent usage of the verb 'subir', he emphasises his own distance from the central city. The spaces from which he narrates are those visible within the centre, yet are rarely viewed in close-up. Salazar's use of this terminology highlights the up-close view which he will provide in relating these testimonies.

It should be noted also in this sequence that in describing this scene, and the typical occupations of those he observes, Salazar also achieves the Othering of the subjects, and of the space to which they return. The description of those returning is a dramatic device, contributing nothing to the testimony which follows, yet adding to

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[298] Salazar (2002), p. 46.

the narrative of travel and the observations of the editor. He not only documents his own travels, but those of the people he encounters, and the journey in reverse. The occupations of those returning to the area are stereotypical jobs associated with those who live in the *barrios marginales*, and connect those faces seen regularly within the city, of the *resbusque* sellers and domestic maids, with the Other space of the *barrios marginales*. It is troubling that this sequence has, like other introductions in the text, no relevance to the testimony that follows. The occupations of those on the bus bear no significance to Don Rafael's account, and as such their inclusion is part of Salazar's aestheticising use of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective. The *barrios marginales* are also identified in this description as an unproductive space, as those who seek employment, and to earn enough money to live, must leave this space to do so. The impression is that the space is a wasteland, and its people are marked by living in such a space. Although Salazar may be attempting to make a serious point regarding structural violence, in the lack of coherence to the testimony that follows, any political argument that could be made is undermined, and disappears within the primary purpose of the introductions - Salazar's travel narrative.

The second quotation from this chapter illustrates the extent to which the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope is apparent in the references to height and distance throughout the text. Salazar reflects upon his positioning within the city, emphasising the height of the space and the distance from the city centre, using rhetoric which is both aestheticising yet which also implies deficiency in terms of adequate space and building materials:

> El barrio se extiende hacia la montaña, siguiendo el trazo caprichoso de una vieja carretera. Hace treinta años nadie podría pensar que en estas pendientes pudiera construirse. Ahora todos los rincones están habitados. Los viejos ranchos de madera y cartón se han ido remplazando por casas de adobe y cemento, que se agarran con fuerza a la montaña.[299]

Pratt's positing of the monarch-off-all-I-survey trope underlines the presence of opposing characteristics in travel writing. The observer emphasises aesthetic qualities of the scene observed in order to highlight the significance of his discovery, yet simultaneously draws attention to the deficiencies of the people within that space. In emphasising that these settlements are new, Salazar justifies the existence of the text as one which explores new territory. In this passage, the opposition is clear in the aesthetic quality of the description, yet within his comments lies an underlying criticism of the people who dared to build homes on precarious slopes, upon sites which had previously been thought of as uninhabitable.

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[299] Salazar (2002), p. 45.

Returning specifically to Salazar's trope of height, here it again highlights the distance from Salazar's home. Location is at the foreground of Salazar's narratives, and the use of the trope of height in this description highlights the differentiation made throughout the text between Medellín and the mythical Medallo, again using tropes characteristic of the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope. Lack of meaning in this space is communicated through a denial of history, and the implied proximity to nature, both temporally and spatially, communicates an opposition between Salazar's civilisation and the barbarism of the *barrios marginales.*

In the passage Salazar articulates a temporal division between Medellín and Medallo, the former carrying a rich history, while a very limited historicity is ascribed to the latter. The collective history of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* is erased as their past is limited to the space in which they currently reside. Not unlike those observed by European explorers from the sixteenth century onwards, in Salazar's introductions in *No nacimos pa'semilla*, the history of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* begins when the settlements were built less than thirty years previously. In those testimonies in which the speaker refers to his or her past, this serves to emphasise the lack of a collective history of the people of the *barrios marginales.* In the introductions in particular, Salazar focuses only upon what he has observed on his travels, rather than contextualising the specific account that follows. The result is the overarching sense that this text is a travelogue rather than a *testimonio*. Returning to the articulated lack of collective history of the *barrios marginales* in the example quoted above, the space and its inhabitants are presented as lacking meaning – another aspect of the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope. Because of the specificity of the temporal description of the birth of the *barrios marginales*, there is a clear marker of the beginning of history. Before that, the area was lost to nature, lacking all sense or meaning. That Salazar does not pursue the thirty-year history of the area in any of his introductions further strengthens the sense that there is a lack of meaning in this area. Its inhabitants, as described previously, must travel to earn a living, and therefore the introductions construct the image of the *barrios marginales* as a space without history, and lacking a productive and meaningful future.

In addition to the lack of meaning implied by the temporal division between Medellín and Medallo, his reference to the historicity of the *barrios marginales* and the sense of an ill-conceived settlement implied by his comments, echoes the discourses of the civilisation and barbarism dichotomy, in the connotations of an inhospitable space. He emphasises both the precarious nature of the settlement,

through the emphasis on its use of an old mountain passageway, and by claiming that the settlement clings to the side of the mountain. The description is heavy in ideological discourse. The reference to the *montaña* aligns the space with the rural as opposed to the urban, a binary that is historically linked to discourses of civilisation and barbarism in Latin America, where the rural is associated with barbarism that cannot be controlled nor tamed by man.[300] His references to building materials - a mixture of cement and adobe which result in homes which 'se agarran con fuerza a la montaña' - suggest an uneasy mixture between natural and man-made substances which seems destined to fail. Adobe is known for its use by indigenous populations, and according to Salazar is mixed with cement - a material used universally to create strong structures. Salazar suggests that, in the proximity to the mountain, and the use of adobe for building, the area is closer to rurality than urbanity, as the inhabitants cling on, like the house, to natural practices of the land, rather than to more 'developed' practices used in his own home, in the central city.

Returning more closely to the trope of height, it is in the final chapter, 'La resurrección de Desquite', that Salazar reveals his rationale for referring to it so frequently. The chapter as a whole serves as a conclusion to Salazar's travels, and in it he makes more assertions about the *barrios marginales* based on his observations. It is during these remarks that he makes an explicit link between the height of *barrios* in Medellín and poverty, and their links to violence. His first assertion relates to violence and poverty: 'el mapa de las bandas en Medellín coincide con el mapa de las zonas pobres y más populares de la ciudad'.[301] He then makes an explicit reference to poverty and height in the city, therefore making a clear link between violence and the *barrios* situated high in the hills: '[e]n Medellín el nivel de ingresos es inversamente proporcional a la altura del barrio. Mientras más alto se viva mayor hacinamiento, menor calidad de vivienda y menos servicios sociales'.[302] In this way, the intent of the author in highlighting the height of the *barrios* in which his encounters took place is revealed. The trope serves to remind the reader that the author has travelled to another space, and that this space is one in which the poor and violent reside. Although there may be statistical support for this statement, because Salazar has throughout the text made repeated references to height, this link seems crude, and constructed specifically to pander to hegemonic discourses regarding the supposed violent nature of the inhabitants of Medallo, the mythical

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[300] This is a long-running trope in Colombian literature as well as Latin American literature as a whole. For example, José Eustadio Rivera's novel *La Vorágine* articulates the perceived threat of barbarism in the new nation. For more on civilisation and barbarism's presence in Latin American literature, see Philip Swanson's 'Civilization and Barbarism', in *A Companion to Latin American Studies*.
[301] Salazar (2002), p. 150.
[302] Ibid.

space. Riaño Alcalá's assertion regarding the growing link between the image of the *sicario* as a violent threat and his status as an inhabitant of the *barrios marginales* is not challenged by Salazar. Instead, it is reinforced. He adds to the myth by highlighting the many social Others who inhabit the space of Medallo, such as Doña Azucena.

While the author attempts to highlight that poverty is one root cause of such spectacular violence, he reinforces the conception that the *barrios marginales* and violence are intrinsically linked. He also focuses upon consumer culture within Colombia, suggesting that *sicarios* use their employment to fulfil their consumerist desires. However, there are problems with this representation, not least within the text itself, where consumerism is rarely referenced by any of the '*testimoniantes*', and references are made to other youths who did not succumb to a life of violence. It is in relation to this latter point that Salazar makes a key error, in not exploring further the importance of those young men who choose other life paths.[303] Although Salazar makes a serious and important point in highlighting that the areas which he represents as plagued by violence are also the poorest, he facilitates another generalisation regarding violent actors. Rather than explore poverty as a cause of such violence in the testimonies, he leaves this until the end of the text. In attempting to force links through his own narratives, Salazar only achieves a differentiation between two distinct parts of the city, that of his own home in which the ideal reader resides, and that which he has come to know. In this way, he strengthens the myth of a divided city, of a Medellín and a Medallo.

Journey Narratives through Prison

The narratives explored thus far emphasise difference through distance have involved Salazar's journeys into the *barrios marginales*. He utilises the trope of height to differentiate between the central city of Medellín, which represents the global anonymous postmodern city, and the peripheral edges of the city where many violent actors, in particular the mythical *sicario*, reside. He narrates journeys that have very little significance to the testimony that follows, which suggest an overarching theme of a narrative of travel rather than a *testimonio* in terms of the input of the editor in the text. The final chapter in the text in which the editor speaks frequently, 'Universidad del mal'*,* demonstrates similar tropes, but in a very different setting. The

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[303] This issue is discussed later in this chapter, in relation to Mario and Juan.

title is a reference to the primary location in which the recording of the testimonies took place, Bellavista prison in Medellín.[304] The chapter features the testimonies of two informants: Mario, an imprisoned gang member who previously worked as a *sicario*, and Juan, his childhood friend who chose a life different from that of his friend, and at the time of meeting with Salazar is training to become a lawyer. I argue that this chapter as a whole functions as an 'insider's guide' to what arguably was, and continues to be, the nation's most high-profile prison. This is apparent in my subsequent analyses of it later in this chapter, but to complete the examination of Salazar's use of the journey narrative I begin here with Salazar's first introduction in this chapter, in which he describes his journey to reach the interior of the prison to speak to Mario.

The journey narratives within this chapter focus only on interior spaces rather than the mix of interior and exterior locations experienced in previous chapters exploring the *barrios marginales*, and for this reason they are remarkable in the overall text. Despite this, there are still some similarities between the previously analysed chapters and the one to be discussed here. In its structure, this first introduction resembles that which preceded Doña Azucena's account, and it includes a description of obstacles that had to be overcome to obtain the prisoner's testimony, observations about the building, and finally, a paragraph focusing on the appearance of Mario's living space: his cell. I argue that the focus on his own journey to reach the prison is foregrounded, with information included for the benefit of the ideal reader, who can thus learn more about the high-profile institution, experiencing Salazar's journey vicariously. The journey itself is narrated, again, as a huge challenge, with various obstacles to overcome in order to reach his informant. However, unlike in other chapters, these obstacles are not geographical in nature but bureaucratic, and confined to the interior space:

> debe presentarse la cédula y el permiso de un juzgado o 200 pesos en cada uno de los puestos de control. En total son cinco: el primero en la entrada principal; el segundo, donde ponen el primer sello en el brazo derecho a los visitantes, a media cuadra por la carretera que sube hasta el edificio; el tercero, en el punto en que la larga fila empieza a correr entre la pared y una malla metálica; el cuarto en la entrada del edificio, donde los guardianes en pequeños cuartos, que parecen baños, realizan las requisas y ponen el sello segundo. El quinto donde toman las huellas digitales, guardan la cédula y ponen el tercer sello.[305]

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[304] Bellavista prison, built in 1976 and with a capacity of 2,424 prisoners, remains operational today, and despite being the largest facility in Colombia, continues to suffer from immense overcrowding. For more on Bellavista in the present, see, for example, Anonymous, 'El vergonzoso hacinamiento en cárcel Bellavista, *Semana*, 11 Jan 2013 <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-vergonzoso-hacinamiento-carcel-bellavista/329217> [Accessed 09/08/2013].
[305] Salazar, p. 84.

Although the journey taken differs markedly from that to the home of Doña Azucena, it does mimic a familiar journey found most often in travelogues – the journey through customs houses and airports.[306] The stages are described meticulously and this is a very long passage, despite the otherwise simple outcome – entry into the prison. It is the attention paid to small details that again suggests that the introduction is for the benefit of the reader who is eager to learn more about a space which he or she does not wish to visit in person, rather than to highlight conditions in the prison and to explore the crimes committed by prisoners. In addition, the manner in which the journey is narrated means that reaching the prisoners is reminiscent of the crossing of a geographical border. The result of this is to once again highlight the distance – both physical and metaphorical - from Salazar's home space.

In addition to the journey narrative, in this chapter Salazar reproduces the text's trope of height. The verb *subir* is used once again to make reference to the climb into the building, and once through the checkpoints, the editor uses it again to describe his entry into this inner part of the prison: '[s]ubiendo por las escaleras del edificio se ven más imágenes'.[307] In invoking the trope of ascending to accentuate the sense of a journey being undertaken to reach this destination, Salazar uses the monarch-of-al-I-survey trope, in order to, once again, construct a physical sense of difference. This had been previously established in other chapters, but is significant here because of the very different setting, one which adds to the myth of Medallo.

This chapter is essential to the development of the mythical space of Medallo in *No nacimos pa'semilla*. As he continues to record his observations while travelling through the prison in an attempt to find his informant, Salazar highlights similarities between the prison space and the *barrios marginales*, and in particular those parts of the city he has previously visited to speak with other informants. He draws attention to the organisation of cell blocks: '[e]n el patio segundo los pasillos tienen nombres de barrios de Medellín', and later adds to the sense of a replica city by detailing that '[c]uando se busca en Bellavista a alguien, hay que saber dónde vive, tener su dirección: el número del patio y el nombre del pasillo'.[308] With these two short statements, Salazar is able to invoke Bellavista as another incarnation of the mythical space of Medallo. The reference to addresses, and to the correspondence of the names in the prison with areas of the *barrios marginales* create a parallel city which is inhabited by *sicarios* and other criminals associated with violent crime, as

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[306] The bureaucracy of travel has been a consistent theme in travel writing. See, for example, Craig Robertson, *The Passport in America: The History of A Document* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and David Pascoe, *Airspaces* (London: Reaktion, 2001) which focus respectively on documents and spaces related to that bureaucracy.
[307] Salazar (2002), p. 85.
[308] Ibid.

the testimony that follows appears to affirm. In addition to the nominal similarities between Bellavista and the *barrios marginales*, Salazar's use of tropes and narrative devices further strengthens the myth of Medallo. He emphasises, as he does when travelling to visit Doña Azucena and Don Rafael, the difficulties in reaching his informant, and consistently makes reference to height as an indicator of distance travelled. The use of the trope of height, and of the journey narrative, draw the representations of the two spaces closer, and the prison becomes an extension of the city's marginal spaces. The myth of Medallo is thus developed in the introduction of the chapter as it becomes a pluri-centre rather than consisting only of the newly, precariously built, peripheral *barrios marginales.* While the trope of difference through distance is conveyed in this chapter, in terms of travel writing, it is my contention that the most important function of this chapter is to consolidate the existence of the mythical 'Other' space within Medellín - Medallo.

Difference is conveyed in the editor's introductions to the many chapters of *No nacimos pa'semilla* in a number of ways other than through distance. Throughout a sense of differentiation between the editor as an inhabitant of Medellín, the global city, and the marginal inhabitant of Medallo is developed. This is achieved through a combination of the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective and the practice of *costumbrismo*. Salazar records encounters and incidents from a different vantage point to those he observes, and it is the observations that are recorded which reveal the construction of the myth of difference and Otherness. The examples I explore below highlight how Salazar constructs difference between himself and his informants and by extension between the reader and the inhabitants of Medallo.

Salazar's choices are important when analysing how the text conveys difference. In order to complete the text, he has chosen to recount encounters with some individuals, and to include details of specific scenes, while excluding others. As I illustrate below, it is my contention that each of the examples included in the final version of the text contributes to the author's construction of difference. For example, in 'Universidad del mal', Salazar recounts his journey within the interior of the prison, taking note in particular of the content of murals on the wall:

> Subiendo por las escaleras del edificio se ven más imágenes de la Virgen y pinturas: unos sicarios disparan desde un carro contra una persona que va caminando. Desde una moto, que va a alta velocidad, se suelta una ráfaga de submetralladora contra un Mercedes Benz. Una calavera se enfrenta a palos con la muerte.[309]

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[309] Ibid.

Here Salazar focuses on one particular image amongst the many other pictures he passes.[310] The content he describes allows him to easily differentiate himself from those within the prison. Although the existence of the painting appears to point to a celebration of crime in the prison, there is no indication of any other paintings nearby, or of the circumstances under which it was produced. Rather its inclusion functions, as in other aspects of his introductions, to construct difference. Again, the difference constructed is between the inhabitant of Medellín – the victim of this attack – and the Other, in the form of the *sicario*. As a result, again before speaking, Mario, the *'testimoniante'* has been categorised as Other before being permitted space to voice his story.[311]

The previous example illustrated how Salazar chose to distinguish between those with capital power, and those who gained power through violence with recourse to the trope of height. In the next three examples, I continue to focus on the construction of difference, although in relation to gender. I highlight how Salazar uses descriptions of 'typical' gender roles and customs in the *barrios marginales* to allow for easy differentiation on the part of those in central Medellín. I explore the depiction of women in the same order as they are presented in *No nacimos pa'semilla* and analyse how each of these representations contributes to the Othering effect of the overall text. As with previous sections of this chapter, each of my examples focuses on Salazar's presentation of the women of the *barrios marignales*, rather than a representation in their own words.

The practice similar to that of *costumbrismo* is also apparent in the editor's observations regarding the clothing of the young people he encounters, documenting yet another gender divide which also differentiates the inhabitants of this space from the practices of Salazar's home space:

> Los sardinos pasan luciendo sus camisetas anchas de colores fosforescentes: rojas, naranjas, verdes, amarillas; escapularios sobre el pecho y los tobillos; tenis Reebok y Nike. Las sardinas lucen pantalones ceñidos al cuerpo, camisetas de manga sisa que dejan ver su cintura. Van con un contoneo insinuante, riendo tranquilas y desprevenidas.[312]

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[310] Earlier in this chapter he focuses on another mural, which is described as 'despintado' and details men playing basketball, with the tag-line «Aquí entra el hombre y no el delito» (p. 83). This acts as a foil to the image now discussed, as those ideals of a fair justice system which seeks to rehabilitate have faded.

[311] The details used in the description are also significant. Why does the editor specify that the car is a Mercedes rather than a generic vehicle? I suggest that the Mercedes as an object, and a brand loaded with significance, is utilised to emphasise difference. It represents consumerism, luxury, and marks a divide between the owner of the luxury branded car, and the marginal *sicario*. In addition, the Mercedes is also significant as a trope, as in previous paragraphs, while recording his observations, Salazar has made reference to the Virgen de las Mercedes on more than one occasion. This suggests a dual significance for Mercedes (intentionally ironic), as both a religious and consumptive desire, yet this also alludes to a link consciously made by Salazar between consumption and religion, in which consumption has for these young men become a religion.

[312] Salazar (2002), p. 45.

Salazar once again passes comment on those who are deemed to be 'Other'. Young men wear branded clothing in lurid bright colours, emphasising their success in fulfilling their consumerist desires, while young women dress and walk provocatively. Salazar has established, by this point, a clear gender binary: women are sexualised beings, while men in their proud display of the spoils of war – their expensive symbols of wealth gained from illicit activities - are warmongers. Although these observations may have been made within the area in question, their inclusion in the text again portrays the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope, and, given that the testimonies make no reference to gender divisions, clothing, nor consumer-oriented desires, the reference to gender difference is irrelevant to the narrative and his mention of the 'contoneo insinuante' encodes this from a male heterosexual perspective. In this way, Salazar himself reads the women as sexually provocative – the description of sexual allure is in fact the description of the male narrator's desire, not a description of the women themselves. In this regard, Salazar reflects on life in the *barrios marginales* from his own perspective, again representing his observations to those who share a fascination with the Other space and its inhabitants. In this chapter he meets the two members of the *milicia*, and rather than allowing the figures to speak from the outset, he prioritises the continuity of his own narrative voice rather than the polyphony of underrepresented speakers in the text as a whole*.

Of the ten testimonies, only one woman speaks for herself- Doña Azucena – and her testimony is prefaced by Salazar's own impressions of her home, her appearance and life.[313] As discussed earlier in this chapter, the editor's short two-paragraph introduction to her testimony contains a description of her home and the journey undertaken to reach it. The second paragraph is more personal, and dedicated to Doña Azucena's appearance and a brief biography. In particular, Salazar chooses to focus on her clothing, roles and make-up:

> De sus faldas cuelgan dos niños, de cuatro y seis años, que son hijos de su segundo marido. Ella trabaja en una cafetería en el centro de la ciudad. Hace algunos años, cuando todavía tenía piernas para mostrar, trabajaba en El Porteño, en Guayaquil. Un bar de arrabal donde los hombres van a tomar aguardiente y a buscar amores. De un álbum viejo saca unas fotografías, que nunca deja ver a sus hijos, donde aparece de tacones, minifalda y los labios pintados de rojo intenso.[314]

In this paragraph Salazar's writing again resembles closely *costumbrista* practices, in which the description of the clothing and bodies of the indigenous and *mestizo* Other was customary. There is a clear differentiation between two phases of her life, yet both are described with reference to the use made of her body. However, Doña

[313] In other introductions, women are referenced and sometimes described, but are almost always supporting characters rather than the subject of his attentions.
[314] Ibid.

Azucena's testimony does not make such a specific reference to a split between two prescribed roles, indeed, she speaks mostly of her childhood, of hardships caused by structural factors she was unable to control, such as forced displacements. The absence of these aspects of her life in the editor's introduction is problematic when contrasted with its Othering content described above. Forced displacement, among other aspects of her life, is a form of structural violence, which should be explained within her biography. If *testimonio* seeks to build solidarity with its readership, it must highlight these occurrences of structural violence. Instead, Salazar constructs her life as a binary between her role as a dancer and then as a mother, which is unnecessary, and again is formulated to aid a consumptive narrative, fulfilling existing hegemonic discourses about women in the *barrios marginales* which conform to the machismo/marianismo dichotomy, in which women are either objects of male desire, or women revered and respected as long-suffering mothers.[315] The two roles that Salazar chooses to emphasise are portrayed as mutually exclusive, to the extent that her children will never see evidence of their mother's life as a young woman. She is, in the present day, just a mother, devoid of a past. In constructing such an image about the solitary female contributor to the text Salazar influences the decoding of her testimony according to existing ideologies before she is able to speak for herself. This, once again, provides another example of how *No nacimos pa'semilla* does not function as *testimonio*, since the voiceless here is given a voice only through her casting as a stereotype. Through highlighting her appearance in this way, the editor again reinforces difference between himself and his informant.

The problematic representation of gender by Salazar, first conveyed in the introduction to Doña Azucena's testimony, continues into the chapter entitled 'Un círculo vicioso'. The subject that unites this chapter's '*testimoniantes*' is the *milicias*.[316] Despite the subject matter and the potential for contextualisation in the introduction, Salazar instead describes everyday scenes within the *barrios marginales*, and in particular recounts an episode from his travels that foregrounds a clear gender binary between male and female roles displayed by children playing:

> De todos los rincones brotan niños bulliciosos. Corretean disparando con un palo que hace de metralleta. Imitan el ta-ta-tá de su sonido mientras sus manos son sacudidas por la descarga de la ráfaga. Montan sus carros de madera y rodillos de calle abajo… En un rincón unas niñas juegan «mamacita». En sus ollotas preparan la comida. Alguien toca la puerta imaginaria, tan, tan, tan. Es Rosita, la vecina.
>
> - Dónde está tu marido? –pregunta la recién llegada.

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[315] For more see Evelyn Stevens, 'Machismo and Marianismo', *Society*, 10: 6 (1973), 57-63.
[316] *Milicias* are self-defence groups established in the *barrios marginales* of Medellín to protect law-abiding inhabitants from juvenile delinquents. See Appendix 1: Glossary for more details.

- Se fue con otro, me abandonó –responde el ama de casa.[317]

This scene is described at the beginning of the chapter, which immediately follows that in which Doña Azucena speaks. The description of female roles resembles the depiction of women projected in her introduction, and thus functions as a continuation of that representation as the text develops. Having identified this role through the representation of an individual in the opening chapter, Salazar now uses children to suggest a larger cultural pattern of gender roles which, due to the anonymity of the children involved, suggests universality and circularity in the *barrios marginales*.[318] The role of women is contrasted and explained by the role of men. He further suggests that from a young age and through play, young girls demonstrate that they naturally expect to be left alone to raise children, while young boys expect to be involved in violent conflict as they grow up. The games described are universally recognisable, yet in Salazar's text they take on a sinister twist because of the knowledge that in this area, as narrated in the previous chapter by Salazar, young men are using guns, unsupervised and unchallenged, actions which ultimately will be fatal, while young women are left alone to raise the children of those absent fathers, as evidenced in the text.[319] Although the scene appears to highlight gender roles in the *barrios marginales*, its inclusion must be questioned, as it has no relevance to the testimony that follows. Instead, it reinforces myths and stereotypes attached to gender roles in order to strengthen the myth of Medallo. From his recollection here, it seems that young people in the *barrios marginales* are unable to transcend the roles assigned to them. However, the testimonies which Salazar recounts later in the text tell a different story, as Juan lists the many professions of his peers, the vast majority of which do not conform to stereotypes, nor relate to violence or the drug trade in Medellín.[320] However, the introduction seeks to create difference through the representation of gender division in Medallo, which does not correspond to that of Salazar's home space.

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[317] Salazar (2002), p. 45.

[318] Indeed, the use of children's toys in myth production is the subject of Roland Barthes' work *Mythologies*. As I argue is apparent in Salazar's text, Barthes suggests toys and the games that children play prepare them for predestined roles, rather than encouraging them to invent new roles. In his discussion of dolls for young girls which resemble babies in their bodily functions, Barthes asserts: 'This is meant to prepare the little girl for the causality of housekeeping, to "condition" her to her future role as mother', p. 53. Salazar similarly invokes in this passage, the myth that children are socialised into their roles from an early age, although as I go on to discuss, the likelihood is that this scene is constructed in order to convey that very myth, rather than represent reality. In this sequence, Salazar suggests children are socialised to perform particular gender roles which perpetuate the discrimination women face in the *barrios marginales*.

[319] As is discussed in more depth in Chapter Four, the plight of young women gains little attention, whilst spectacular representations of young, male violent actors have dominated representations of the nation, and indeed the wider Latin American region since the mid-twentieth century. The use of two similar sounds by Salazar in this sequence - the ta-ta-tá of the imaginary machine gun, and tan tan tan of the neighbour's knocking - highlights the contrasting types of representation afforded to men and women in cultural products that explore violence in Colombia.

[320] Of his friendship group, all but one of Juan's male friends have gone on to paid employment or education outside the realm of violence, the subject of the text.

As Pratt describes in relation to travel writing characteristic of the monarch-of-all-I-survey trope, the composition of any scene in travel writingis highly literary, again aestheticising, and almost certainly fictional in its representation of all events recounted in this sequence. Highly constructed, aestheticised scenes are characteristic of Salazar's introductions, as I explore now. Salazar employs artistic license in his introductions to convey the thoughts and mindset of the inhabitants of the supporters of Mario, the young gang member who is on trial for murder, is most prominent in the courtroom scene. The introduction to which I refer in this section is found within the chapter 'Universidad del mal', between the testimonies of Mario, the prisoner, and his friend, Juan. I explore how Salazar uses his artistic license to speak for the people of the *barrios marginales* rather than permitting their own voices to be heard, and then moves on to highlight how, later in this chapter, Juan's testimony further demonstrates the degree to which the violent actors of the *barrios marginales* are able to represent themselves in this text. Each case demonstrates techniques used by Salazar to construct difference between the inhabitants of Medellín and Medallo. Essential to this is the creation of rumour by Salazar. Corinne Pubill has explored the issue of rumour in relation to *testimonio*, and asserts that it undermines the objective of the genre, because they leave 'no space for the Other to speak'.[321] She writes in relation to *testimonios* produced based on explorations of the circumstances surrounding the arrests of some of the *desaparecidos* in Argentina during the military regime of the 1970s. The principal assertion of her work can by transferred to this context to illustrate the effects of Salazar's tendency to speak about his informants rather than to let them speak for themselves. My discussion below analyses how Salazar's creation of rumour both denies a voice to some inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* and allows a prejudice to develop which cannot be defended by the inhabitants of the foruth world space.

In the interlude between Mario's testimony and that of his friend Juan, Salazar employs an omniscient narrative voice to describe the courtroom scene in which Mario had previously been convicted of the murder of local juvenile delinquent, Chorizo. The narrative voice is used in the same way that it is employed in fictional novels to create a sense of an all-knowing presence; however, I also argue that it is used to evoke collective rumours regarding the attitudes of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*. Salazar describes the courtroom scene as he observes it – he records those present, the sequence of events, and the words of those who speak to

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[321] Corinne Pubill, 'Rumours as Testimonios of Insile in *La mujer en cuestión* by María Teresa Andruetto', in *Pushing the Boundaries of Latin American Testimony: Meta-morphoses and Migrations*, ed. by Luise Detwiler & Janis Breckenridge (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp. 131-146 (p. 136).

create arguments. However, he also curiously begins to report the thoughts of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*, who do not speak throughout the scene. For example, he first focuses upon an anonymous figure: '-Ese juez no parece juez –dijo en secreto a uno de los acompañantes'.[322] Despite the clear statement made in this case, there is no indication that Salazar has spoken to this person. Instead he uses a literary device - the omniscient narrator - to produce a sense of tension in the courtroom. He develops the scene using the same strategy, with a clear focus upon Mario's mother: 'Doña María hacía un esfuerzo por tener fe, por creer que el juez comprendería que en el fondo su hijo era bueno y que tenía derecho de libertad. Pero sus ilusiones empezaron a desvanecerse'.[323] With yet more dramatic effect, as the trial begins, Salazar again cuts to Mario's mother: 'Volvió a preguntarse lo que ya muchas veces le había preguntado a él: «¿Por qué?, ¿qué le había hecho falta en la casa?, ¿qué mal ejemplo le habían dado?»'.[324] In both cases, rather than allowing his mother to give direct testimony, the author speaks on her behalf, constructing a rationale and attitude that may or may not be true of Mario's mother in reality. In this way, Salazar foregrounds his own interpretation of events rather than ceding space to those attending the court case, and he creates rumours.

The previous examples highlight Salazar's use of artistic license, as indicated by Pratt. However, I argue that this use of artistic license to create rumours indicates a more destructive function in other examples from the same passage, whereby an opposition is created between the inhabitants of Medellín and those of Medallo. Medellín's inhabitants respect the law, and seek justice based on the written laws of the nation. On the other hand, according to Salazar's text, those who inhabit the mythical space of Medallo – Mario's friends and neighbours in the *barrios marginales* – cannot understand the law courts and believe that Mario, in committing a crime, acted in the best interests of the community. However, as illustrated in the examples above, this opposition is manufactured in Salazar's representation of events. He records the spoken words of the representatives of Medellín – the judge, officials and lawyers – yet he invents the thoughts of the representatives of Medallo. For example, while the *fiscal* states in the courtroom: 'Es deber de la Nación, a quien represento, que ningún delito quede impune, ni siquiera los que ejecutan los particulares en nombre de la justicia', Salazar suggests that an observer from the *barrios marginales* thinks '«Si el muerto era una lacra, ¿por qué hay que pagarlo?», se preguntó un

[322] Salazar (2002), p. 94.
[323] Salazar (2002), p. 95.
[324] Salazar (2002), pp. 95-6.

vecino a la salida de la audiencia'.[325] An opposition is thus created between Medellín and Medallo, yet the attitudes of those in the mythical city are inferred by Salazar, rather than being a true representation of reality.[326]

The opposition between the two sides is clear to see in this introduction. This is not, however, the most divisive aspect of the court case's representation. The editor, through his choice of vocabulary, transforms the courtroom into a battlefield, in which Medellín declares war on the barbarism of Medallo. He first invokes the vocabulary of weaponry: 'la madre de Mario, intentó seguir la lectura del expediente. El secretario leyó, con voz de metralleta, los numerosos folios del proceso'.[327] The mechanisms of justice are portrayed as a deadly weapon similar to that already recorded within the walls of the prison. However, in its use against Mario's mother, who is not the defendant, but simply a representative of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*, the two sides of this battlefield are clearly drawn between Medellín and Medallo. Salazar also includes, at the end of a shortened quotation from the *fiscal*, the term barbarism, invoking old colonial myths regarding the 'Other': 'Permitir que cada ciudadano tome como cosa propia el castigo de quienes consideran delincuentes, es estimular la barbarie…'.[328] In his/her lack of understanding of the law and his/her support of the murder of a nuisance figure, the inhabitant of Medallo is considered a supporter of barbarism.[329] Indeed, Salazar does not choose to intercede here to give his own thoughts, and therefore his silence indicates support for the *fiscal*'s term, as he has throughout the text aligned himself with representations of Medellín rather than Medallo. The connotations of the bellicose vocabulary in this introduction are thus made clear – Medellín is fighting a war against the barbarism of Medallo and its inhabitants. However, this battle is manufactured by Salazar and his use of artistic license, highlighting his tendency to create difference between his home space of Medellín and the space to which he has travelled, Medallo. Pubill writes that rumours are based 'on the prejudices attributed to Otherness, thus producing an appearance of knowledge manipulated by power.'[330] Salazar demonstrates most clearly in this introduction the argument Pubill conveys. He confirms the prejudices of the courtroom by creating rumours,

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[325] Salazar (2002), p. 96.
[326] It is worth pointing out the irony that this debate about the existence of social cleansing would have been more suited to the introduction to the second chapter, 'Un círculo vicioso', in which members of *milicias* give testimony. Instead, that chapter, as discussed above, is foregrounded by a discussion of children's games by Salazar.
[327] Salazar (2002), p. 94.
[328] Salazar (2002), p. 96.
[329] It seems important to note here that I do not support the actions of Mario, but simply do not advocate the opposition created by Salazar through his use of artistic license.
[330] Pubill, p. 136.

representing the thoughts of those present rather than affording them space to deny or confirm the accusations that they favour a form of restorative justice.

The artistic license demonstrated in the courtroom scene is not the only literary device used in this chapter that is not customary of conventional *testimonio*. For example, the chapter as a whole follows a non-linear structure, which further suggests that the editor deliberately organises his material for the benefit of his ideal reader rather than to provide an accurate representation of the voices of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*. Although testimonies are characteristically non-linear narratives, because Salazar here switches from the words of his '*testimoniante*' to his own narrative, and then to that of another informant, the sense conveyed is that Salazar chose to regress chronologically, rather than following the tale narrated by Mario. The chapter is, I argue, indicative of the way in which testimony is used by Salazar throughout the wider text to inform the ideal reader – the inhabitant of Medellín - about the lives of those who live in Medallo. As I mentioned previously in relation to 'Universidad del mal', it is my contention that it reads as a guide to the prison, rather than as the testimony of a prisoner. As I now go on to explain, Mario's testimony is used to explain how life is conducted in Bellavista, and to give the 'insider-view' on high-profile events that had occurred in recent years. Mario's own story is told by his friend Juan, who is introduced at the end of the courtroom scene as a person who has traversed the divide between Medallo and Medellín. He has, through education, moved from Medallo to Medellín.

Juan is an important character within the text for a number of reasons. He is first introduced as a foil to the less 'enlightened' inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* through his comprehension of the court proceedings:

> Juan, un vecino, amigo de toda la vida, fue tal vez el único que encontró alguna lógica filosófica en el discurso del fiscal, por lo que había aprendido en sus primeros semestres como estudiante de derecho. Para los otros vecinos y su familia la condena, que venían llegar, era injusta e incomprensible.[331]

This opposition is another example of Salazar's use of artistic license. Juan is presented as an exception to the rule, in his ability to understand the rhetoric of the courtroom and, in considering the courtroom the site of battle between the civilised and the barbaric, of the battle between Medellín and Medallo, Juan has switched sides, as he gains knowledge to join the lettered side of the city. In this way, Juan is aligned with Salazar's ideal reader, and becomes an informant for both the latter and

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[331] Salazar (2002), p. 96.

Salazar. In this role, Juan goes on to speak of Mario's life and his descent into violence, the significance of which I will now discuss.

Again, the issue of rumour is important in this chapter. Juan's contribution, like Salazar's recollection of the courtroom scene, supports my claim that this text is not a *testimonio*, and instead is an example of travel writing centred upon an opposition between the home space of Medellín and the newly 'discovered' mythical space of Medallo. The main premise of *testimonio* was to allow the subaltern to tell his/her story in his/her own words, yet here Juan tells the life story of his friend Mario. My question in this regard relates to why Juan is needed to tell Mario's story? Why is Mario not afforded the space to tell his own story, rather than speaking as an informant on prison life? The answer, I argue, lies in Juan's role as a figure aligned with the ideal reader and the editor. His understanding of the courtroom jargon informs the reader that he is a reliable informant, whereas Mario is an unreliable Other, an opinion confirmed in Juan's own words, 'se volvió otro, seguro, tuvo un cambio tenaz'.[332] Juan reinforces the sense of opposition and therefore difference between Medellín and Medallo by suggesting that he, as an educated young man, is more reliable than his friend, who is an Other. In the act of retelling the story to Salazar, Mario's story is subject to double mediation, yet it also fosters a sense of rumour, because Mario is not able to speak for himself. Like the protagonist explored by Pubill in *La mujer en cuestión*, in 'Universidad del mal' Mario 'is not in charge of [his] representation and moreover is silenced by rumours'.[333] Indeed, so too are Mario's mother and all of those in attendance at the courtroom who were not permitted to speak. Mario is permitted space in which to speak, but this space is used to inform the ideal reader about life in prison. In this way, by allowing Juan to speak on behalf of Mario, any claim that this text is *testimonio* is lost. Instead, there is a clear sense of Othering, and of reporting on Others who cannot be trusted to represent themselves, as is often present in travel writing.[334]

Introductory Prologues and Their Absences

The examples discussed thus far have related only to Salazar's own words within the introductory prologues that accompany many of the chapters. However, not all

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[332] Salazar (2002), p. 97.
[333] Ibid, p. 132.
[334] It is also interesting to note that Juan's testimony undermines some of the tropes already developed by Salazar, such as the description of young people being unable to escape their own destinies. Instead, Juan describes a situation in which only Mario became involved in urban conflict, while the majority of his friends went on to further studies.

testimonies are preceded by such introductions, and it is necessary to analyse these instances. I argue that the inclusion of introductions relates not to the content of the chapter but to the identity of the person(s) who speak(s) within the chapter and their place in relation to Medellín and Medallo. As the introductions are littered with observations and comments about those who will speak, it seems that Salazar, in some cases, feels that certain informants require more explanation than others. The witnesses or speakers in this text vary greatly in their age and occupations, and generally those who are not given an introduction are those with whom Salazar and his ideal reader, the inhabitant of the lettered city, are familiar.

The priest, Padre Jorge Galeano, is a particularly prominent example of this.[335] His testimony is not prefaced by Salazar. Instead, the chapter opens with the Padre recounting the rituals practiced by young gang members and *sicarios* in the days following the death of their friends and colleagues. The story is related using only the Padre's own voice: there is no scene setting, nor a short biography. His character is recognised and identified easily by Salazar and his ideal reader because he is an inhabitant of the lettered city. His testimony is also significant in its subject matter. He does not speak about his own life, but the stories of local people, and in particular, the customs of the young men involved in gangs.[336] I argue here that the Padre's chapter, in its lack of introduction, contextualisation, or attention to his life, functions as an aid to the authority of Salazar's voice in his prefaces. His testimony is another example in which the point of view of the lettered city is most prominent and influential in the text. The lack of introduction signifies that the priest is aligned with Salazar and his readers, and his testimony functions to increase the knowledge gained by members of the first world observing the Others of the *barrios marginales*.

The addition to the introductions to selected testimonies that emphasise the more stereotypical aspects of the informants' biographies, evidence of *cursi* culture within their lives, and the alternative means by which they construct their homes, allows Salazar to emphasise difference. I argue that in doing so, the space which the editor affords to the voice to the voiceless is undermined by these short introductions and their absence at the beginning of other speakers' testimonies.

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[335] There are other examples throughout the text, for example 'El Crucero', in which Salazar does not include an introduction. In this chapter, the speaker is aligned with Salazar because of his frequent travels between the *barrios marginales* and the central city.

[336] In this way, the inclusion of the Padre is similar to that of Juan, Mario's friend who has become a lawyer, and narrates parts of Mario's story as he is seen as a more reliable witness than the prisoner. However, the Padre differs to Juan in that he is not given an introduction. I suggest that this is because Juan must be explained as a transgressive ex-inhabitant of the *barrios marginales*. On the other hand, the Padre does not have a history, he has a societal role which is widely recognised within mainstream society, and therefore does not require an introduction.

Paratexts

Through an analysis of Salazar's introductory prologues to individual testimonies, and to those chapters which do not include introductions, I have in this chapter demonstrated how, through the development of a discourse of difference, the text should be considered an example of travel writing, rather than of *testimonio*. I have illustrated how his narrative voice, in a text composed of many voices, functions cohesively to develop an opposition between the editor's home space and the area to which he travelled – the mythical space of Medallo, the home of the Other in peripheral Medellín. These aspects form part of the central text, yet before concluding I wish also to consider its paratextual elements and explore the extent to which these support my contention that Salazar has created a travelogue in *No nacimos pa'semilla*. The paratexts of *No nacimos pa'semilla* are particularly of interest because between the two different editions of the Castilian-language version, the only differences in format and content relate to their respective paratexts, while the main chapters remain consistent.[337] Paratexts, as discussed throughout this thesis, are essential elements of cultural products, and I will explore this as I analyse examples from each of the two editions. In particular, I will pay attention to the different contexts in which each was published and how this contributes to the overall sense of *No nacimos pa semilla* as a travelogue. First, however, I explore in detail the only paratext which is consistent in both editions: the glossary.

The glossary is described in the text as 'un listado de palabras de uso común o frecuente entre los integrantes de las bandas', and includes over 250 terms.[338] The words in the list belong to the dialect *parlache*, where many of the terms refer to violent activity, and these are translated into more familiar forms of Castilian Spanish.[339] The glossary's explanatory function in relation to *parlache* helps to draw the cartography of a divided city, and reinforce the sense that Salazar has travelled both geographically and culturally in order to produce this text. It is reminiscent, therefore, of his allusions to height and difficult terrain, but here rather than indicating geographical distance, the opposition between Medellín and Medallo is illustrated through linguistic division.[340]

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[337] The two versions of the Castilian-language text were published in 1990 and 2002. There are further versions of the text in translation. For example, Nick Caistor's English-language translation, entitled 'Born to Die in Medellín' was published in 1992.

[338] Salazar (2002), p. 167.

[339] Adam Baird, 'Methodological Dilemmas: Researching Violent Young Men in Medellín, Colombia', *IDS Bulletin*, 40: 3 (2009), 72-77 (p. 75). For more on *parlache* and its effects on society in Medellín, see Castañeda & Henao, 'El parlache: historias de la ciudad', in *Literatura y cultura: Narrativa colombiana del siglo XX. III. Hibridez y alteridades*, (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000), pp. 509-542.

[340] It is interesting to note that the term Medallo features in the glossary, but is translated simply as 'Medellín'.

I suggest, however, that the glossary is most divisive when it is considered as a tool to aid the ideal reader to understand. As explored above in relation to the courtroom scene, this contrasts to the treatment of the '*testimoniantes*' throughout the text itself. The courtroom scene illustrated a tendency by Salazar to imply a lack of knowledge on the part of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales,* and to indicate a division related to understanding basic fundamentals of the law. What is striking when reading the courtroom scene is that it is constructed to emphasise the projected ignorance of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*. However, written exclusively to aid the ideal reader, who throughout the text could be in the same position as the Other projected in the courtroom scene, the glossary ensures that this does not occur, while the ideal reader consumes the testimonies of inhabitants of Medallo. Indeed, it compensates for a lack of knowledge that is mocked in previous sections of the text. When this is compared to the courtroom scene, in which Salazar portrayed Mario's family and friends as lacking in knowledge, a disparity emerges. Those in the courtroom are not afforded a translation, yet the consumers of this text are. In this way, the Othering which is inherent in travel writing emerges again from Salazar's text, in a divide between those who are able to gain knowledge and those who are not. The text's function is revealed here again as one to inform the lettered citizens about the lives of Medellín's Others - those who inhabit Medallo. It is not a solidarity-building exercise as was imperative to the *testimonio* genre at the time of publication.

As noted above, all other paratexts differ in each edition of the text, and I now discuss these in more detail. I will consider each text as it was published chronologically, identifying key themes that are consistently apparent in all aspects of the paratexts. The paratexts are divided into visual (book sleeve images for marketing purposes), and textual (prologues). It is worth highlighting that like other texts in this thesis, in line with Nicole Matthews' view – discussed in the Introduction - I consider each edition of *No nacimos pa'semilla* as a cultural product in its own right with a visual dimension that sets it apart from other editions.[341] I will consider first the visual paratexts of each edition, and compare their separate prologues, in the process highlighting continuities between paratexts of each edition, and indicating the differences constructed between them. In each, I identify those elements which are identified as a clear concern in relation to the mythical city of Medallo from the onset of the text. This allows me to highlight how the myth of Medallo has adapted over time as a representative of all that is Other in the city of Medellín.

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[341] Nicole Matthews, 'Introduction', in *Judging a Book*, pp. xi-xxi (p. xi).

Book Sleeve Images

The book sleeve, as described by Pears in *Judging a Book by its Cover*, is important because '[i]t is always the first part of the book to be recognised. If the cover does its job effectively, the potential reader will pick up the book and either look through the first few pages or turn the book over in order to glance at the back cover'.[342] As notes in the introduction, Matthews and others have argued that consumers do indeed 'judge a book by its cover.'[343] Pears, analysing the paratextual images of Algerian women's writing, affirms that in order to sell the text to the consumer, media representations of constructed groups can either criticise or replicate simplistic stereotypes and myths.[344] It is the former which I argue is evident in both editions of *No nacimos*, as each image represents the subject of fear within the city of Medellín at the time of publication. The ideal reader is attracted to the text through that image as it reflects the concerns projected in media representations of the problems discussed in the text itself.

A major concern for the ideal reader and the media in 1990, as articulated at the beginning of this thesis by Martín Barbero and Riaño-Alcalá, was the *sicario*. He was the uncontrollable and unpredictable mythical figure who, if encountered by the inhabitants of Medellín, would at worst lead to death, at best to the traumatic experience of witnessing an assassination. The image for the 1990 edition thus reflects that preoccupation, as the cover, eye-catchingly bright, represents the *sicario* within the city, transported on a motorbike by an accomplice. It is on his motorbike that the *sicario* carries out his crimes, as it enables a fast escape. The focus on death is also reflected in the image as the *sicario* himself is a depicted as a skeleton – he is the incarnation of death itself. Following previous interpretations of paratexts and their meanings, the image carried on the 1990 edition would have conveyed to the potential reader that the text itself was concerned with *sicarios*. This is not a particularly accurate representation, as there are a diverse number of members of the community – some are not violent actors, and those who are, are not always *sicarios* who give testimony within the text. However, in terms of travel writing, the motorbike is more accurate, as the journey taken by the *sicario* on his motorbike reflects the sense of movement that Salazar takes to the *barrios marginales* and the narratives in which he develops his movement amongst *sicarios* and other marginal figures.

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[342] Pears, p. 163.
[343] Matthews, p. xi.
[344] Pears, p. 162.

The 2002 edition of the text, published by Planeta, reflects a change in attitudes towards the object of fear as discussed in the text. Rather than the figure of the *sicario*, whose presence had subsided, the image on the cover of the edition instead highlights the city itself as the object of fear. The image is a fragment of a painting entitled *Insomnio*, by the artist Fredy Serna who grew up in the *barrios marginales*, and depicts a dark city, living under the shadow of those who watch it from above. The painting is depicted from an aerial perspective – like that of its creator in his positioning within the city - and of Salazar when collecting the material to write the text. It portrays the difficulty in distinguishing visually between the *barrios marginales* and the central city in such a scenario, and thus conveys the contemporary preoccupation with the city itself as a site of violence. Medallo is the subject of this fear, and it is to this feared space where Salazar has travelled in order to learn more of its distrusted and ill-understood inhabitants. The two cover images reflect the images which, at the time of publication, would have inferred to the ideal reader the contents of the text. In the first publication, the impression from the cover image is that Salazar travels to the site inhabited by the much-feared *sicario*, whereas in the second, it seems that he attempts to differentiate between opposing constructs within a 'divided' city by documenting the lives and customs of the Other, despite the content of the two editions being near identical.[345]

Prologues

Both editions of the text differ in their prologues, although the first edition of the text includes more than the second. The prologues largely tie the subject of the cover image to the content of the text itself, as I now explore. The 1990 edition carries includes three prologues, and each focuses upon the *sicario* as a central figure. The prologues illustrate contemporaneous representations of young *sicarios.* For example, the first prologue, anonymously written, focuses on 'los jóvenes que pasan matando',[346] and, as is consistently asserted throughout the three, suggests that the the text aims to 'proteger, dignificar y hace más visible la vida de todos los hombres y las mujeres de Colombia'.[347] Indeed, in this first edition, the overarching theme in each prologue is to suggest that *No nacimos pa'semilla* as a text allows the *sicario* to speak for himself, as a fully-rounded person rather than a stereotype. However, as analysed throughout this chapter, I disagree with this view, and assert that, to the

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[345] The only difference between the two editions is an updated prologue from Salazar in the 2002 edition.
[346] Anon, in Salazar, 1990, p. 7.
[347] Anon, in Salazar, 1990, p. 8.

contrary, this is a narrative recording of Salazar's travels which further mythologises the people of the *barrios marginales* by constructing an opposition between the editor's home space and the people of mythical Medallo.

In a radical departure from the original publication, the 2002 edition of *No nacimos pa'semilla* features a single prologue from the author and compiler. In the eleven paragraphs of the prologue, Salazar's words prove my contention that the text is a piece of travel writing. The subject of the cover image – the city of Medellín - is evident in the prologues as he discusses his own travels. For example, in the opening paragraph, he focuses on himself, and the experiences that led to the publication of the text:

> Este libro […] es producto de mis andanzas por los barrios populares de Medellín entre 1984 y 1990, una época en la que, mientras estudiaba comunicación social en la Universidad de Antioquia, me vinculé activamente al trabajo de organización comunitaria.[348]

The text thus opens with a focus upon the author rather than those who speak within the text. This initial focus upon the author's experiences indicates their importance to the text overall, rather than those narrated by the '*testimoniantes*'. The phrasing of this opening sentence also suggests travel, in particular the word 'andanzas', and his 'active' participation in community organisations. Indeed, the editor directly attributes the production of the book to his travel to the *barrios marginales*, further strengthening my positing of the text as a travelogue. The composition and focus of his first sentence of the prologue is replicated throughout the entire first paragraph, and, as a result, the comments which follow later in the prologue read as additions to the editor's experience. In other words, due to the emphasis placed upon Salazar's experiences in the opening paragraph, the subsequent discussions of the general context read as background to his own experiences, rather than those of the city as a whole.

As this prologue was published twelve years after the original publication, the editor uses it as an opportunity to address criticisms of his work. In particular, he focuses upon the problem of representing Others, and the stigmatisation faced by inhabitants of Medallo:

> En muchas ocasiones, a lo largo de estos años, he escuchado reclamos de jóvenes de las comunas sobre la estigmatización a la que han sido sometidos y a la que pudo haber contribuido este texto. […] Sólo podría decir, si tiene sentido, que tanto la aguda violencia como esa estigmatización preceden a este libro.[349]

Salazar's dismissal of the problem of stigmatisation as one which existed before writing the text fails to recognise the contribution the first publication made to the

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[348] Salazar (2002), p. 15.
[349] Salazar (2002), p. 16.

myth of the iconic *sicario*, and how this edition will continue to cause stigmatisation for those who inhabit the *barrios marginales*. He goes on to affirm that much positive work has occurred in the *barrios marginales* to bring about change, but clarifies: '[p]ero este reconocimiento no puede implicar el silencio sobre las realidades de muerte que viven nuestras ciudades'.[350] In this way, the prologue serves as a means through which Salazar expresses his ideas about the text, and his travels. Rather than draw attention to the testimonies within, he attempts to defend the publication of the text, and draws attention to the fact that constructs portraying the city as divided will continue to be produced. Indeed, this prologue presented an opportunity to acknowledge changes in the *barrios marginales* in the twelve-year period since publication which Salazar fails to do. In failing to develop this sense, Salazar has created a permanent representation of the fourth world space which has not changed in a twelve year period, thus condemning the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* to the very stigmatisation of which he speaks, implying sense of circularity that is reinforced in the scene in which young girls and boys play out stereotyped gender roles.

Conclusion

This chapter is the first step in the analysis of representations of the violent fourth world spaces of Medellín and its inhabitants. *No nacimos pa'semilla*, compiled, edited and authored by Alonso Salazar, I have argued is best understood as an example of domestic Colombian travel writing. The author's voice is at the forefront of the text, rather than those of his informants as a collective, and the formation of the text creates a juxtaposition by contrasting the imagined territories of Medellín and Medallo. Salazar emphasises his travels to the Other space, and of the height difference in comparison with his home in Medellín. He employs descriptive techniques resembling those of the archaic *costumbrismo* movement, and practices the monarch-of-all-I-survey perspective. The examples I have analysed in this chapter highlight the cases in which this is apparent, but what are the implications of such a rereading of the text? How does this affect the way in which cultural products that focus on violent actors in Medellín are understood?

Reading Salazar's text as travel writing allows us to reassess its function. Rather than as a text which first looked in-depth at the lives of notorious, violent

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[350] Ibid.

young men known as assassins, instead I argue that it marks an attempt to record an 'unexplored' mythical territory – Medallo. The settlements of the *barrios marginales* on the periphery of Medellín, were formed during the late twentieth century, and are popularly perceived as a new form of wilderness in which the barbaric reside. As Roldán and others have asserted, they are ideologically separated from mainstream society. Salazar's text is representative of one of the first attempts to document the area, and to record the 'Other' side of the city. However, rather than provide an objective account of the lives of the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales* in their own words, the text constructs division, and as a result contributes to the growing myth of Medallo which is discussed in later cultural products.[351]

Salazar's text illustrates that the violent actor is clearly linked to the fourth world space, mythically labelled Medallo. As established in the writings of Martín Barbero and Riaño-Alcalá, media attention was tightly focused upon the image of the young *sicario* and his location within the *barrios marginales* contributed to the growing myth surrounding him. The examples that I have pointed out link the development of the myth of the iconic violent figure to the marginal mythical space. Salazar speaks as a traveller to the *barrios marginales*, to the ideological construct that is Medallo. He observes his surroundings and makes comments based on his experiences at 'home', making this space Other. He observes aspects of the customs, appearances and living quarters of his informants and describes them in comparison to his own. His living is not linked to the uses he can make of his body, but suggests that this is the reality for those like Doña Azucena. His description of the items found in her home – the kitsch movie posters, and the worshipping of idols- are conveyed as casual, objective observations, but they in fact reinforce the hegemonic discourse by which the population of the *barrios marginales* is linked with 'low' culture. Salazar's comments are not objective; they are indicative of a hierarchy, in which he and his readers are above those about whom Salazar speaks.

The thesis now moves on from written texts to cinematic cultural products. The following chapters explore visual representations of myth, and like in these first two chapters, the paratexts are contrasted with the main text in order to illustrate continuities and discrepancies between each version. The chapters maintain the focus upon the relationship between the consuming first world audience and the members of the fourth world who are represented. Barbet Schroeder's fictional film *La virgen de los sicarios* alludes to distorted representations of violence and the fourth world violent actor, whilst engaging in a conversation with the audience

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[351] For example, two texts analysed in this thesis – *La virgen de los sicarios,* and *La Sierra.*

through the problematic protagonist Fernando. Finally, Scott Dalton and Margarita Martinez's documentary *La Sierra* constructs an unconventional relationship between the audience and a violent actor, as well as with the mothers of his many children. This technique is particularly powerful because it highlights the impact of the violent actor's death and the implications for the women when he is killed by the police. The audience engagement in the documentary is powerful, and through its subtle criticisms of the consumption of acts of violent from fourth world inhabitants, it creates an unsettling sense of complicity in the creation of *desechables* for its audience.

Chapter Three: Distortions and Cautions: Representing Medellín in the Cinematic Adaptation of *La virgen de los sicarios*

La virgen de los sicarios is an example of many recent Colombian novels which, after achieving commercial success, have been adapted and released as a cinematic text. Indeed, as Juana Suárez asserts, the novel highlights trends in recent Colombian cultural production, in the use of a foreign financial capital to produce an adaptation of a best-selling novel focused upon violence.[352] It is in this way that Barbet Schroeder's cinematic adaptation of Fernando Vallejo's novel is a fitting example for analysis in this thesis. It presents a representation of a local setting - that of the city of Medellín in the final years of the twentieth century - for a global audience. It focuses upon the relationship between the intellectual, Fernando, who has returned to the city after many decades of absence and two *sicarios* – Alexis and Wílmar. Fernando forms an unlikely partnership with each in turn, in which he purchases consumer goods in exchange for the sexual favours of the *sicarios*, who, after the death of Pablo Escobar and the demise of the Medellín cartel, seek alternative means of employment. Their relationship in the novel is regarded by scholars as highly problematic although representative of socioeconomic inequality in the nation.[353] However, the presentation of the three characters, and in particular of Fernando, is a topic of debate amongst scholars analysing the novel. His relationships with the *sicarios* are problematic because of the unequal exchange, but more problematic for scholars is his rhetoric.

Fernando ascribes blame for the high levels of violence within the city to the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*, who, he asserts, have brought violent practices from the countryside to the city. In addition, he claims, upon arrival in the city, they adapted their modus operandi and switched from killing by machete to using guns: 'Las armas de fuego han proliferado y yo digo que eso es progreso, porque es mejor morir de un tiro en el corazón que de un machetazo en la cabeza'.[354] His rhetoric resembles the discourse of the civilisation and barbarism binary, and he clearly states that violence within the city is the fault of those who have migrated from the

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[352] Juana Suarez, 'Adicciones y adaptaciones: cine, literatura y violencia en Colombia', *Romance Quarterly*, 57 (2010), 300-312 (p. 302).
[353] See, for example, Diana Lucía Sarabia A., who argues that the relationship indicates the survival techniques of the *sicarios* in the changing context of Medellín. 'El carnaval en la representación del sicario y el intelectual en *La virgen de los sicarios*', *Revista de estudios colombianos,* 31(2007), 30-42, (p. 34).
[354] Vallejo, p. 20.

countryside.[355] He advocates the social cleansing of the *barrios marginales* of Medellín, and in particular directs his venomous comments towards pregnant women and mothers. For scholars, there appears to be a disconnect in the novel between the exploitative relationship, which is generally accepted to be an ironic replication of socioeconomic inequality, and Fernando's rhetoric which, due to the strength of his assertions, is less easily justified in the same way.

Fernando is the character most closely aligned with the ideal reader because of his status as a *letrado*, an intellectual and Colombian national who has travelled outside of the country.[356] He is a representative of the first world, and stands in opposition to the fourth world inhabitant. Indeed, in the novel Fernando speaks directly to the reader who is a fellow first world inhabitant, although not one who is familiar with the city of Medellín. He involves him/her in a conversation about his problematic ramblings about the fourth world inhabitants of Medellín, as noted by Lidia Santos.[357] Despite his vitriolic assertions regarding fourth world inhabitants, his establishment of relationships with the *sicarios* is contradictory because they are the embodiment of the very fourth world inhabitants whom he purports to despise. For scholars it is his status as the reader's representative that is the cause of strongest concern. As Jean Franco argues, it is difficult to feel allegiance with this character; he is not our 'ally', instead he is 'the most obscene character of the novel'.[358] Within the novel it is difficult to find cues which signify that Fernando's rhetoric is to be read as ironic and this is the cause of such disquiet, as Rory O'Bryen illustrates:

> what remains unclear about Vallejo's […] invitation to the naive, "touristic" reader to see Colombia's political conflict as the symptom of deep-seated tribalism – is whether it parodies the superficiality of international media coverage of Colombia's situation, or whether it in fact serves as a more sinister legitimization of violence.[359]

O'Bryen sums up the debates within scholarship surrounding Vallejo's novel, and highlights a prominent concern within the nation's cultural production regarding the representation of violence in Colombia by the international media. Fernando's rhetoric mimics the tone of international media coverage of conflict in Colombia according to O'Bryen, although I would argue that there are greater consistencies parallels with the general global representation of fourth world inhabitants rather than

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[355] The link to civilisation and barbarism lies in the assertion that violence has migrated with uncivilised countryside-dwellers to the city. The association of the countryside with barbaric practices that threatened the city is one of the founding principals of the civilisation and barbarism dichotomy. See, for example, Sarmiento's *Facundo*, which constructed myths of barbarism surrounding the plains of nineteenth-century Argentina.

[356] The idea of the *letrado* is a well-known concept in Latin America, as articulated by Ángel Rama, *La ciudad letrada* (Hanover: Eds del Norte, 1984).

[357] Lidia Santos, 'Entre dios y los sicarios: las "nuevas guerras" en la narrativa contemporánea de Colombia y Brazil', *Revista iberoamericana,* 74: 223 (2008), 559-571 (p. 562).

[358] Jean Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City* (Cambridge [Mass]: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 225.

[359] O'Bryen (2008), p. 74.

violence in Colombia specifically. Fernando speaks of uncivilised inhabitants on the edge of the city who come to attack its first world inhabitants, and of women who reproduce violent offspring far too quickly for his liking. He speaks of the fourth world inhabitants as a threat to the city, rather than violence itself. As described in the introduction to this thesis, the situation which Fernando's rhetoric may or may not replicate is not international media coverage of Colombia's 'situation' specifically, but the increasingly homogenised global representation of the fourth world inhabitant in ever more diverse locations. Returning to scholarly analysis of Vallejo's novel, the uncertainty surrounding the purpose of Fernando's rhetoric remains unresolved.[360] In this chapter, I argue that it is in the cinematic adaptation that a more definitive response can be reached regarding his rhetoric.

Despite the extensive scholarly comment on the novel, there has been much less focus on the film *La virgen de los sicarios.* My discussion illustrates that despite the extent to which the novel has been examined, there is cause to give fresh analysis to the cinematic version. Adaptation is recognised as a highly underexplored field in which the cinematic is often overlooked as an inferior product in comparison to the literary 'original'.[361] However, Linda Hutcheon asserts that 'adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication', and thus it deserves analysis as a separate cultural product.[362]

Cinematic adaptations are, as I described above, a trend in Colombian cultural production of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This trend has caused concern regarding the focus placed upon representations of violence, driven in particular by the understanding that cinematic texts are more widely consumed than written texts.[363] However, I argue that these cultural products are not simple presentations of mindless violence, but complex explorations of how blame is attributed to the fourth world inhabitants of Medellín. The visual element of the cinematic adaptation provides an alternative medium through which to present the theme of violence and to convey the filmmaker's criticisms regarding its representation in comparison with literature which generally is reliant upon the written word. It is my contention that the cinematic version of *La virgen de los sicarios* conveys a clear criticism of the typical presentation of the fourth world inhabitant in

[360] For further details on the different readings of the novel based upon Fernando's rhetoric, see Gabriela Polit Dueñas, 'Sicarios, delirantes y los efectos del narcotráfico en la literatura colombiana', *Hispanic Review*, 74:2 (2006), 119-142 (p. 124).

[361] Sally Faulkner argues that 'fidelity criticism [...] assumes the superiority of literature, and thus a hierarchy between the arts.' Sally Faulkner, *Literary Adaptations in Spanish Cinema* (London: Tamesis, 2004), p. 3.

[362] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 7. For more on adaptation see, Sally Faulkner, 'Introduction', in *Literary Adaptations in Spanish Cinema* (London: Tamesis, 2004), pp. 1-14; and, Robert Stam, 'Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation', in *Literature and Film*, ed. by Robert Stam & Alessandra Raengo (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 1-52.

[363] For more, see Juana Suárez's article, which focuses on issues surrounding the high numbers of Colombian adaptations in recent years.

relation to violence in Colombia through its use of the mise-en-scene. Schroeder's film gives a more clear engagement with discourses surrounding the representation of violence in the city, and in particular, media discourse. Recycling O'Bryen's terminology, rather than legitimizing the symbolic violence which his protagonist conveys - that political conflict is caused by tribalism, and that this view is legitimate – the film 'parodies the superficiality of […] media coverage' of Medellín's fourth world inhabitants and their role in the city's violence. This is achieved through deliberate cinematic framing that contextualises Fernando's disparaging remarks.

Schroeder makes use of the natural scenery of the city and frames his shots carefully to create a visual encoding of distortion and caution, through which he is able to communicate with his audience.[364] Verbally, Fernando's rhetoric resembles that of the novel, however, this visual encoding conveys a specific interpretation of that rhetoric through an engagement with the audience which is highly critical of views such as those expressed by the protagonist. Fernando is the representative of the first world inhabitant in the audience, and the focus of the film is the fourth world inhabitant's representation for consumption by the first world. The visual encoding of distortion and caution is used to provoke the audience members to consider the way in which information regarding the fourth world inhabitant, and his connection to violence in the city of Medellín, is presented. The distortions, conveyed through the use of a variety of reflective, sometimes opaque, surfaces such as mirrors and windows, hide realities and accentuate selective framing, and in this way highlighting to the audience the manner in which information about fourth world inhabitants is constructed before its communication to the first world inhabitants.[365] The cautionary encoding, captured in the natural scenery of the city and the costumes of the characters, is conveyed through a running trope of black and yellow; colours which together are recognised globally as signs of potential danger.[366] I argue that the way in which these colours are captured, and in particular the scenes in which they are most prominent, serve to remind the audience to exercise caution in their consumption of acts of violence represented as the fault of the fourth world inhabitant. The visual tropes of caution and distortion read together with Fernando's rhetoric highlight the hidden structural violence behind the representation of the fourth world inhabitant.

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[364] These terms are of course significant throughout the thesis, referring to the distortion created by media reports, paratextual images, and the presentation of fourth world actors. The thesis calls for caution in the consumption of such cultural products, and draws attention to the efforts by those who construct cultural products to ask the first world consumer to exercise caution in their belief in shallow, surface-level representations.

[365] This sense of distortion has clear links to Bourdieu's concerns regarding the presentation of the French *banlieues*, as well as the media practices highlighted by Macek in relation to the US inner city space.

[366] See, for example, S. David Leonard, 'Does Color of Warnings Affect Risk Perception?', *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, 23:5-6 (1999), 499-504. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

In addition to the different interpretation of Fernando's rhetoric, in this analysis of the cinematic adaptation of *La virgen de los sicarios* I consider the film from a different perspective to many of those scholars who have discussed the novel and its adapation for the screen. The generally agreed reading of *La virgen de los sicarios* focuses upon its projection of the Colombian nation's links to the global narcotics trade and the resultant violence within the city of Medellín. For example, Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste reads Schroeder's film in this way, and concludes that the film fails to have transnational reach because it focuses only on the local context. He argues that Schroeder fails to reference that it is the consumption of narcotics by European and North American consumers that fuels the violence the film portrays.[367] Although I agree with his comments, I argue for a different perspective when analysing the film. Rather than focus upon the wider context of global narcotics, I centre my analysis on the consumption of the *sicario* and his actions in the context of the growing homogenisation of the representation of the fourth world inhabitant.[368] The *sicario* in this film is a representative of the fourth world space, and I argue that the film throughout, in its combination of visual encoding of caution and distortion and the problematic rhetoric of the first world representative Fernando, criticises the typical representation of fourth world inhabitants of Medellín as violent actors. In this way, I argue, the film's primary theme is not violence in late-twentieth-century Medellín, but the representation of the city's inhabitants.

In this way, the most controversial issues in the novel are re-presented and explored in different ways in the film because of the visual rather than written presentation of the text. In this chapter I first explore the visual encoding of distortion, followed by that of caution, in order to discuss Fernando's rhetoric. I analyse the paratextual image on the film's DVD cover, which emphasises the consumption of the *sicario*. Throughout this analysis I highlight the active engagement of the director with his audience through the problematic character of Fernando, and end with reflections on my reading of the latter's rhetoric within this cultural product. In contrast to previous analyses, I argue that the film is a reflection on the stereotypical representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a protagonist of violence in the city of Medellín, which functions to hide the real structural problems under which its inhabitants live. Essential to this interpretation of the film's interaction with the standard representation of the fourth world inhabitant is that Schroeder's film was

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[367] L'Hoeste, p. 550.
[368] Other scholars interpret the film in relation to the novel in a similar way to L'Hoeste. For example, Jorgelina Corbatta argues that the city of Medellín 'tiene un papel protagónico' in the novel and reads the *sicario* as a new group within the city. Herrero Olaizola reads the novel in the context of the growing global market for narratives representing Colombia's drug trafficking.

manufactured as a product for the national and international markets.[369] Therefore the film invites global audiences to reflect on their consumption of fourth world inhabitants through its local focus on the city of Medellín.

Distortions

Reflective, opaque surfaces, such as windows and mirrors, are used throughout the cinematic adaptation to highlight and to criticise the skewed representation of violence in the city of Medellín. In particular, this technique criticises the representation of the inhabitants of the mythical space of Medallo as the authors of senseless violence, which is due to the marked absence of context. The use of reflective surfaces functions to invite audiences to reflect on his/her place in the network society in which violence perpetrated by fourth world inhabitants, as well as the violence in the Colombian nation, is an object for global consumption. It seeks to provoke those watching to look for the context, for those scenes hidden behind the distortions. The images conveyed via reflective surfaces such as windows and mirrors are representations of reality but in the way they are shown serve to hide and distort aspects of this reality. This technique is suggestive of media practices that focus primarily on manifestations of violence in the city attributed to, and authored by, its fourth world inhabitants. As I will now illustrate with reference to a number of scenes from the film, reflective surfaces work to produce a visual metaphor of the hegemonic representation of the city's fourth world inhabitants, highlighting their lack of depth, and the way in which they occlude other causes of violence as well as the socioeconomic conditions faced by the majority of fourth world inhabitants who are not authors of violence in the city.

The opening shots of *La virgen de los sicarios* illustrate the different ways in which reflective surfaces convey a sense of distortion. The opening credits roll against a black background, before fading to reveal a reflection of Fernando walking towards his friend's apartment in the ground-floor windows of the building. In this way, the protagonist is portrayed through a reflection; he is both filmed by a crew and viewed by a spectator as a reflection. The significance of this is plural. He is from the onset identified as a representation – a representative of the first world audience watching the film. His reflection obscures another scene which the audience cannot see. The director chooses not to show what is behind the glass in order to highlight

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[369] For more on Schroeder's film as a product for the international market, see, Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste, 'From Rodrigo to Rosario: Birth & Rise of the *Sicaresca*', *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos,* 42 (2008), 543-557.

to the audience from the onset that this film focuses not only on the visible but the invisible, and the mechanisms used to make such scenes invisible.

In this opening sequence, Fernando's reflection masks another view of what is behind the glass, and it also gives a double representation of a single scene. The camera tracks Fernando as he walks past the building, and as he approaches the end of the windows, it pans out to reveal two representations of him. He continues to be visible as a reflection in the window, but is now also given a more conventional representation in a wide-angled shot that pans as Fernando progresses on his journey down the street. This short opening sequence, in addition to introducing the audience to the protagonist, illustrates that a single event can be portrayed in more than one way in order to hide its true meaning and what is happening elsewhere. The audience at this point cannot see what is behind the glass because they instead see two representations of Fernando. In this way, the shots introduce the notion of distortion within the film. The sequence suggests that comprehensive representations of the city and its inhabitants are obscured by the double representation of particular inhabitants. Although in this case it is Fernando who is the focus of attention, this is a reference to the focus upon the fourth world inhabitant in general as a violent actor, which occludes a more comprehensive view of the peripheral space.

This distortion technique and its underlying aim to focus on the violent actor is highlighted later in the film. The director noticeably cuts between a scene of violence to that of the non-violent 'Other', which is hidden behind a darkened window. In this scene, Fernando and Alexis are riding the metro and have been involved in an altercation with other passengers, resulting in Alexis carrying out a double murder. As chaos is portrayed in the aftermath of Alexis's actions, the camera suddenly cuts to a peaceful scene, in which the train on which they are travelling is shown arriving at the next station from the point of view of a person on the platform. Passengers wait quietly, unaware of the violent scene hidden behind the darkened glass. They are captured, like Fernando in the opening sequence, as reflections in the train's windows, rather than in a direct shot. The doors are then shown to open, and the chaos of the hidden scene within the metro merges with the normality of the peaceful station, as Alexis and Fernando flee the scene of the crime. Although the use of a reflective surface in this sequence is short in duration, its significance in illustrating the distortion technique is paramount. Violent action becomes the 'Other' scene, and thus reveals another representation of the city which Schroeder could have depicted. Unlike the opening scene, where the Other scene behind the window next to which Fernando was walking was hidden, this scene is made visible to the audience. The

cut is unexpected – the cinematic convention that audiences expect is to continue showing the aftermath of the violent event. Behind each side of the surface lies a hidden reality, and the director, in juxtaposing the peaceful scene and the chaotic one, provokes the audience to consider which of the two realities he/she has come to see in watching the film.

Returning to the film's opening scene, its imagery portrays another form of distortion through depth cues. Bordwell and Thompson point out that usually the 'mise-en-scene functions to suggest a three-dimensional space' through the volume of objects and the composition of planes.[370] Volume is suggested through shading, shape and movement, which in the following scene is altered because of the use of a reflected image. Colour is important in creating depth, and therefore verisimilitude. Planes, which which are layers of space occupied by persons or objects, also create a sense of depth by creating the appearance of multiple layers.[371] I argue that in the use of reflective surfaces, some scenes are lacking in the expected levels of depth cues. As Fernando walks to the door, he is next to a busy road along which a number of taxis and buses are travelling in the opposite direction. The buses, like Fernando, are portrayed in the window of the building next to which he is walking. There is a clear sense of distortion in this reflection; the windows convey a sense of illusion, that this is not quite reality, that what we are seeing is superficial. The superficiality is, as with Fernando's presentation, associated with the sense that these images are not real representations, but reflections. The reflection of the buses conveys more strongly than that of Fernando the sense of distortion because of their distance from the surface in which they are reflected. For example, despite the multiple lanes of buses passing Fernando, the reflection of them is limited to a single pane of glass. This creates a single plane through which the image is conveyed, rather than the multiple layers whereby Fernando walking would constitute one plane, then another for each bus and car. Instead, there is a single plane, in the form of a reflection. In addition, the colours are muted, and so the scene lacks depth adnt therefore veracity. In this way, the scene lacks an appearance of depth because the depth cues which would be expected in a direct representation are lacking. The colour scheme appears faded and rather dark. There are no bright colours to create the sense of depth which would make the scene appear more realistic. Indeed, the reflection of a scene of such depth on a single windowpane results in a compressed representation of its depth. The only sense of three-dimensionality is in the presence of the different moving objects in the scene - Fernando as he walks, and the buses

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[370] David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* 5th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1997), p. 192.
[371] Bordwell & Thompson, p. 193.

that pass him. The buses are not shown in a more conventional shot, only as a reflection, and so, in this way, the shot suggests that the representation of violence in the city of Medellín lacks depth, in that it reduces to a surface level the representations of violent actors from the city's fourth world spaces. Indeed, throughout the film, the fourth world space is only visible close up in one scene.[372] This in itself suggests a lack of depth in the representation of the fourth world, whose inhabitants are shown perpetrating spectacular and unprovoked violent attacks, but their backgrounds are not analysed.

The reflective surfaces first illustrated in the opening scene are a running trope throughout the film. At various occasions the viewer is shown a character or situation via the reflection in a mirror or window. In each case, the function is to highlight to the spectator that the representation of Medellín's fourth world violent actors, which he or she consumes by watching the film, is a distorted picture. This distortion is achieved through manipulation, which in the film takes the form of deliberately obscure camera angles which focus on particular events. The discussion in the introduction to this thesis noted Bourdieu's concerns regarding the way in which the *banlieue* is represented in the French media. He argues that journalists, who construct many of the images and myths relating to these peripheral spaces, 'select very specific aspects of the inner city [*banlieue*]' in order to portray 'the particular way they see things.' He continues, 'Journalists have special "glasses" through which they see certain things and not Others'.[373] These 'glasses', and the way in which journalists 'see' events in a particular way, result directly in the distorted picture of reality which media representations often portray. I argue that in *La virgen de los sicarios* Schroeder uses reflective surfaces to illustrate these 'glasses' and provoke the audience to contemplate the way in which fourth world actors are presented to them as perpetrators of violence. This sense is most evident, I argue, in Schroeder's combination of reflective surfaces and unconventional camera angles to manipulate the audience into focusing on specific aspects of scenes.

One of the clearest examples of this manipulation takes place in the *cuarto de mariposas*. After having been introduced by Fernando's friend, Alexis and Fernando enter the room with the intention that the latter can pay for the sexual services of the former.[374] This is the first of many scenes which allude to the consumption of the

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[372] This scene is the one in which Fernando visits the family of Alexis after he has been killed. In this scene, it seems the reality of life for those in the fourth world is too much to bear, and Fernando flees after just a few minutes speaking with his lover's mother.
[373] Bourdieu, p. 19.
[374] c. 6 minutes.

sicario.[375] The room is filled with clocks, yet there is also a mirror in on the wall, which is used by the director as a device to capture the sexual encounter.[376] After the initial shots of the scene, in which Alexis and Fernando become acquainted and then begin to undress, the light fades while the focus of the shot transfers to the mirror on the wall. The mirror reflects the image of Alexis and Fernando in various stages of their passionate embrace. The relevance of this focus on the sexual encounter is plural, as I will explain. Before the camera fades to this selective representation, the spectator is shown much of the room and its contents. However, the sexual encounter focuses only on one small area of the room – the bed. In order to capture this specific part of the room as a reflection in the mirror, the camera is placed at a particularly unusual angle, and at a distance from the mirror itself. In this way, the manipulation of the camera angle allows the focus on the sexual encounter. Lighting in this scene is also essential in creating the sense of distortion. The room is in darkness, and the two characters are difficult to see. The scene is then reflected in the mirror and filmed by the camera at the diagonal angle. The sense of distortion is two-fold; the camera angle and lack of lighting create a sense of deliberate distortion, while the fact that the sexual act is portrayed through its representation in the mirror reproduces the same issues in relation to the reflective surfaces incorporated into the opening scene.

The distortion created in this scene works as an extended criticism of practices used to focus on violent fourth world actors of Medellín. The symbolic value of the sexual encounter in this scene lies in its allusion to the same fascination which surrounds the fourth world violent actor in Colombia. Indeed, it is my contention that the significance of the sexual encounter in the scene, although a spectacle in itself, lies in the characters taking part. Alexis, as the young attractive *sicario*, is the object of desire. The camera focuses on his actions as he carries out a sex act for a fee. Although in this scene Alexis is not carrying out an assassination, the focus of the camera directs the attention of the audience to him. Thus Alexis as the violent actor remains the focus of this scene, despite his non-violent role in this case. The unconventional camera angle and the fact that he is seen in the mirror serves to emphasise the constructed and deliberate focus placed upon the violent actor.

Reflective surfaces in the film function to invite the spectator to engage with his/her own expectations and demands with regard to the distorted representation of

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[375] I will discuss the consumption of the *sicario* as a cultural product further in this chapter. Geoffrey Kantaris and Alonso Salazar have discussed at some length the consumption of the *sicario* as a *desechable*, a disposable product, like many of the consumer goods seen in the film. Kantaris (2008).
[376] For a discussion of the significance of the clocks, all of which have stopped, in relation to the portrayal of the Colombian nation, see O'Bryen (2008), p. 69.

the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. So far, reflective surfaces have been shown to impede the spectator's view of the 'Other' scene, which also has the effect of creating two representations of the same scene. The camera work used to create these reflections also suggests that distortion is deliberate and must be acknowledged by the spectator, who is also the consumer. Together, these techniques suggest that the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor masks other representations, which I argue are the more mundane realities of life in the peripheral spaces of the city. Indeed, the reflective surfaces function as structural violence, as they divert attention away from the real socioeconomic problems that are rarely represented, and in the film are visited only once in its entire duration. I end this section with a discussion of the way in which Schroeder employs reflective surfaces to create distortions through incomplete images and false impressions. The analysis will then move on to consider the visual encoding of caution in the film's mise-en-scène.

The manipulation of images is a prevalent technique in this film. As indicators of distortion, reflective surfaces allude to the many problems in representing violent actors in Colombia in a global context in which the fourth world inhabitant is increasingly associated with destructive behaviours. Schroeder uses existing surfaces within the city to present his interpretation of a distorted reality. For examples, in one scene he uses the wing mirror of the many taxis shown to pass through the city. The use of a reflective image on a vehicle, a surface which travels, is significant in that it metaphorically portrays the movement of representations of the fourth world throughout the city. The taxi driver's mirror illustrates a minute and partial version of events, which reflects the manner in which life in the fourth world is represented in the city. Alexis and Fernando have fled from a taxi after the driver began to verbally attack the writer, and as they leave, he jumps out of the taxi ready to physicqally assault Fernando. As the driver continues to attack Fernando, Alexis takes out his gun and kills him.[377] The frame in this shot is dominated by the image of Alexis holding his gun, however the wing mirror of the taxi captures a glimpse of Alexis's arm with which he is holding his gun. The distortion occurs in that the reflection in the mirror shows only part of his forearm, and the gun is not visible. This therefore creates two very different versions of the same scene. In the wider shot, violence dominates the frame – Alexis points his gun at the taxi driver and murders him. However, the Other scene, visible only in the wing mirror, is a partial reflection of reality in which the violent act is not evident, nor is the violent actor identifiable.

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[377] C. 39 minutes.

The purpose for Schroeder, I argue, is to simply highlight the distortion of national and global representations of violence in the city. The focus upon the violent actor from the fourth world is only a partial representation, and the audience should seek out the wider picture suggested by the way in which the shooting of the taxi driver is framed using the small mirror.

The final way in which Schroeder uses reflective surfaces to distort the presentation of the city and his characters is by creating a false reality. This technique is used in the scene set in a previously hidden second reception room in Fernando's apartment that features the second *sicario* Wílmar. The camera is placed behind the head of Fernando, who in the frame is shown speaking from the bathroom to Wílmar, who is apparently located in this second reception room. Previous to this scene, the apartment has been portrayed on multiple occasions, and this room seems to have appeared from nowhere. The spectator watches Fernando speak to Wílmar through a doorway, as the *sicario* removes his jacket and puts down his gun. However, as the scene continues and the focus of the camera extends, it becomes clear that the extra room is just an illusion. The camera is pointed towards a full-length mirror opposite the bathroom door. The door through which Fernando speaks to Wílmar in the second room is just a reflection of Fernando in the doorway to the bathroom. Wílmar's actions are a reflection in the mirror, so rather than being in a room which is diagonally opposite to the bathroom, Wílmar is in the room adjacent to the bathroom. In this way the scene functions to again engage the audience, to invite reflection upon the manipulation of images to create a reality which does not exist. While distortions can impede the view of an-Other reality, they can also construct an alternative reality which is not true to life. With the *sicario* again at the centre of this scene, it is evident that the director's allusions to distortions relate to the presentation of the fourth world violent actor. I now move on to the second section of this chapter – the visual encoding of caution in the film. This, I argue, is closely linked to the sense of distortion in its communicative function with the audience. After illustrating some examples of this encoding in action, I move on to consider the implications of Fernando's rhetoric in relation to the tropes of caution and distortion.

Cautions

The distortions caused in the film by the use of reflective surfaces are accompanied by a colour code of caution which is also used to encourage the spectator to engage with and question the representation of Medellín and the *sicario*. This particular form

of visual encoding is a running trope throughout the film, signifying the perpetual danger faced by its characters. For the audience, for whom the perception of the city's fourth world inhabitants is mediated heavily by the overwhelming representation of violent actors, the colour scheme invites his/her reflection on the underlying, less visible causes of this violence. In this section, I focus on the structural, symbolic violence of the neo-liberal system upon which the network society stands, in which the *sicario* and the physical violence which he perpetrates are a cultural commodity. Costume is a key element in this discussion, both as an indicator of caution, and of the symbolic violence occluded by the distortions created by cultural representations of Colombia. As I go on to explain later in this section, while Wílmar's jacket, in its visual encoding engages directly with the audience, La Plaga's various t-shirts suggest a two-way cultural exchange with the Western world, in which signs and symbols work in a system of flows, signifying diverse meanings in different settings and for various potential audiences. The easy consumption of the *sicario* is signified by the similarities in clothing worn by Alexis and Wílmar, while Fernando's choice of plain and unadorned attire is also indicative of a different form of consumer culture: that of another human as opposed to material goods. In this way, costume plays a central role in *La virgen de los sicarios*, highlighting the myths surrounding the city, and provoking questions about the expectations and demands of the viewing public.

In this film, the director chooses to use the yellow and black colour scheme of caution to foreshadow an upcoming danger. The combination of the colours yellow and black is used to form a code which in many parts of the world signifies danger or at least appeals for caution.[378] To convey this sense, the colours are most often used together in a triangle shape to advise caution, as well as in adjacent stripes to convey caution in relation to an imminent danger.[379] As I go on to argue, the yellow and black encoding of caution relates to a *potential* danger that can be avoided if care is taken. In this way, the colour scheme functions for the purpose of audience engagement. In scenes in which the colour scheme is clearly visible, the audience is asked to consider the dangers that the characters cannot see. The danger is related to the distorted representation of violence in Colombia. The spectator is thus asked to exercise caution in his/her consumption of these images of violence.

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[378] Many academic studies have focused on the different colour schemes used to signify danger to the consumers of domestic products, as well as drivers on the road. Most agree that the use of yellow, red or amber signs is most likely to catch a person's attention and convey a message of caution and/or danger. For more information see, Alphonse Chapanis, 'Hazards Associated With Three Signal Words & Four Colours on Warning Signs', *Ergonomics*, 37:2 (1994), 265-75; Curt C. Braun & N. Clayton Silver, 'Interaction of Signal Word and Color on Warning Labels: Differences in Perceived Hazard and Behavioural Compliance', *Ergonomics*, 38:11 (1995), 2207-2220; S. David Leonard, 'Does Color of Warnings Affect Risk Perception?', *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, 23:5-6 (1999), 499-504.
[379] Examples include the tape used to prevent access by the public to areas that are temporarily dangerous.

Although throughout the film lampposts partially display this encoding of danger and caution, it is the scenes in which a character is killed that this visual encoding is most clearly visible to the spectator. For example, after spotting *el punkero*, a neighbour of and a source of irritation to Fernando, Alexis promptly and casually follows and assassinates him at point-blank range in the busy suburban Medellín street. Captured within the foreground of the shot immediately preceding the shooting is a post which prominently displays its yellow and black colour scheme. This post is captured within the same frame as *el punkero* – the former in the foreground and to the left of the shot, and the latter to the centre, located further towards the background. Alexis's victim passes the post before the *sicario* pulls out his gun. In this way, he is shown before and after the point at which he passes the cautionary sign, when the danger could have been avoided by Fernando's intervention. Instead, no intervention is made, and the young man is killed. This note of caution is, I argue, intended for the spectator, as the inhabitant of the first world. Fernando, as the consumer of Alexis's sexual services, represents the most extreme example of the consumptive practices of the neo-liberal system, and a different course of action in his interaction with Alexis, one in which he did not bemoan the noise made by his neighbour's music, could have prevented the murder. Indeed, within the street, the act could have been prevented had Fernando assessed the situation adequately and acted. This criticism is thus directed at the consuming audience. Rather than to consume the actions of fourth world violent actors, the city's first world inhabitants could have taken a stance against global poverty, starting with the city which they inhabit. Instead, the demand for representations of violence from the fourth world only fuels the myths surrounding the space and its inhabitants.

Fernando's relationships with the *sicarios* are problematic for a number of reasons. As has been noted previously, Alexis is paid for his sexual services in cash, while both *sicarios* are also rewarded with commodities from Fernando throughout the film. The allusions to exploitation are undeniable in many aspects of the relationship. However, in relation to Fernando's alignment with the audience, his gradual de-sensitisation to the *sicarios'* violent acts is crucial. Geoffrey Kantaris comments that the film is a 'study in the dehumanizing effects of violence', in which the increasingly frequent scenes of violence and assassination are almost banal.[380] Indeed, he states that one of Schroeder's intentions was to create 'a progressive anaesthesia towards violence'.[381] This sense of anaesthesia is foreshadowed in one

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[380] Geoffrey Kantaris, *Violent Visions: Representation of Violence in Contemporary Latin American Urban Cinema*, 2002 <http://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/culture/violence/violence5.html#item1829> [Accessed 13 Sept 2012].
[381] Barbet Schroeder, cited in Kantaris (2008), p. 461.

of the first scenes of the film by the visual encoding of caution. Fernando, having invited Alexis into his apartment, leaves to escape the noise of his CD player. However, once outside, Fernando is witness to the attempted theft of a car, and the resultant murder of the car owner. He looks on in shock as the victim is shot in front of him. As the camera cuts to show Fernando's face as the car owner falls to the ground, another post, marked with yellow and black, is clear to see in the background of the shot. Again, the character cannot see the colours, as his back is turned, however for the spectator this is a warning in relation to the gradual desensitisation to violence. While the audience will, like Fernando, become accustomed to the murders depicted throughout the film, he/she is invited to reflect on their desensitisation to distorted portrayals of the fourth world inhabitants of the city.

In addition to the desensitisation of the audience in relation to the representation of violence, the alignment between Fernando and the audience functions to question the commodification of the *sicario* as a figure. The similarity between the two *sicarios*, the relative ease with which Fernando replaces Alexis with Wílmar, and the then cyclical nature of the events which follow suggest a disturbing trend in which the *sicario* has become an easily replaceable consumer product, a *desechable*.[382] Because Wílmar is the second *sicario* to be consumed (sexually) by Fernando, he is the character who is most associated with the issue of consumption, and the visual encoding signifying caution.

Wílmar in particular is used in the film to identify the *sicario* as a commodity who is consumed by the first world inhabitant. This juxtaposition is underlined in the scene in which Wílmar and Fernando sit in a café, and both characters reveal to one another the things they would most like to gain in their respective lifetimes. Much has been written about this scene, both in the cinematic adaptation and in the novel, as Wílmar writes a lengthy list of items, all of which are branded products,[383] from clothing to electrical goods, and a motorbike to carry out his assassinations.[384] However, little, if anything, has been said of Fernando's reply when Wílmar asks him the same question. He writes down a one-word answer, and that is 'Wílmar'. In this way, the *sicario* is reduced to the same status as a pair of Paco Rabanne jeans, or a Whirlpool fridge. He is a product to be consumed; in Fernando's case, he will be

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[382] For more on the *sicario* as a *desechable*, see Kantaris (2008), Kantaris (2002) and Jauregui & Suárez.

[383] For example, Sarabia notes in relation to the novel that Wílmar's response when he asked what he wants from life illustrates the complexity of the situation faced by *sicarios* in which consumerism is the purpose of life (pp. 32-3).

[384] Indeed, this scene is also critical of consumer culture per se. In an earlier scene in the same setting, Fernando sits at the table while the president of Colombia speaks on the television above him, detailing an increase in education spending. The two parallel scenes imply that national funds that have indirectly taught Wílmar to read and write have, ironically, merely enabled him to outline his desires for consumption, rather than enter the employment market.

consumed for sexual pleasure, whereas for the viewer, he is a figure of fascination and a form of entertainment. The neo-liberal system, in which human lives are transformed into consumer products, is under critique in this scene, as are those who participate in this consumption. The juxtaposition is highlighted in the following scene, in which the two figures enter Fernando's apartment with the consumer goods which they expressed desire for – Fernando enters with Wílmar, who in turn carries many shopping bags full of the branded items of clothing he desired.[385] This theme of consumption is one of the film's most ardent criticisms of contemporary society.

Wílmar, and the danger with which his consumption by Fernando is associated, is conveyed through the same visual encoding of caution described in the mise-en-scene. Wílmar, after shopping with Fernando, is depicted wearing a new jacket, which is predominantly yellow and black. The use of this visual encoding in the character's costume links him to the appeal for caution which is directed at the spectator in relation to his commodification. However, the jacket has further significance, as illustrated in the scene in which he commits his first on-screen murder. As he escapes the scene, leaving Fernando looking over the body, the camera follows Wílmar from behind. The camera tracks him as he runs away from Fernando's point of view, revealing the words 'dramatic performer' on the back of his jacket. The words suggest that Wílmar, in his role as a *sicario*, is playing a pre-designed role which, as suggested by the language the words are written in, was constructed and demanded in the English-speaking world. In addition to the cultural myths, the *sicario* performs the role which has been imposed upon Colombians by global neo-liberal policies. One could argue that the roles played by Alexis and Wílmar, as *sicarios*, were set out in previous Colombian cultural products, such as *No nacimos pa'semilla* and *Rodrigo D: no futuro*.[386] The colour scheme of the jacket, and the black blocks juxtaposed with the yellow blocks between the two words, function as a caution to the first world viewer that the roles played by the *sicario* are not natural, and should not be portrayed, nor consumed as such.

Costume

This message of caution is conveyed via the costume of the characters throughout the film. I now consider further the choice of costume within the mise-en-scene and

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[385] A further comparison between the two *sicarios* and their engagement with Fernando illustrates the rich intellectual's desire for the body over traditional consumer products. With both of the boys Fernando orders 'quítate la ropa'. This illustrates a clear difference between clothing and the human body - Fernando wants to consume the body as opposed to clothing. In contrast, Alexis and Wílmar value their material goods much more highly than their own bodies.

[386] Salazar, 1990; *Rodrigo D: no futuro*. Dir. Víctor Gaviria. Focine, 1989.

its role in the engagement the director seeks with his audience. I begin with the costume choices for the secondary character La Plaga, before reflecting on Fernando's costume and its meanings. I then move on to consider the interpretation and meaning of Fernando's rhetoric within the cinematic adaptation.

The clothing worn by the secondary character La Plaga, who is a friend of Alexis, links the *sicario* as a character most clearly to the growing homogenisation of the fourth world inhabitant. As a character he is important because he is introduced to the viewer before Fernando is acquainted with Alexis. In this scene, La Plaga wears a black t-shirt bearing the photograph and name of Tupac, the American rapper.[387] He wears another t-shirt emblazoned with the rapper's face and name in later scene in the film.[388] As stated in the introduction to this thesis, North American rappers who are incorporated into mass consumption are represented as removed from their political motivations. Tupac is one of these rappers who was closely linked to the hip-hop culture political movement. Because of his incorporation into the mainstream genre of rap music, his political dimension is less well-known, and the rapper is most known for his death in 1996, which is linked in popular mythology to his involvement in gang warfare.[389] In this way, Tupac and the *sicario* are aligned because both ran the risk of death in their everyday life. The gang rivalry with which Tupac is associated is notorious among those who follow North American Hip-Hop, and is known as the East-West Coast rivalry, which has resulted in the assassinations of a number of famous stars.[390] In this way, La Plaga as a *sicario* is identified as belonging to the homogenised representation of the fourth world outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Tupac's music and heritage is linked to the mass culture representation of rappers as super consumers and violent actors.

However, the filmmaker's use of Tupac on the t-shirt is significant in the context of the wider Latin American setting. The rapper's political associations have clear links to Latin American indigenous culture. Tupac chose his stage name to resemble that of the indigenous rebellion leader of the colonial period, Tupac Amaru.[391] The rebellion focused on the effects of colonial policies on the lives of the indigenous populations, in which systemic violence was directed at indigenous and

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[387] C. 3 minutes.
[388] C. 35 minutes.
[389] Michael O. West, William G. Martin & Fanon Che Wilkins (eds) *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2009).
[390] For more on Tupac and the association between violent death and hip hop stars, see James Braxton Peterson, 'The Revenge of Emmett Till: Impudent Aesthetics and the Swagger Narratives of Hip Hop Culture', *African American Review*, 45:4 (2012), 617-31.
[391] More recently, in the twentieth century, a number of revolutionary left-wing groups have been established under the name of Tupac Amaru, fighting for various causes, although all have fought against the systemic violence of capitalism and the neo-liberal reforms of the advanced capitalist state, issues which are raised and critiqued within this film.

other racial groups.[392] In the context of the film the use of this figure as iconography suggests most clearly a link between the increasing homogenisation of the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a form of structural violence, whilst also emphasising the need to rebel against this. The first step in changing this pattern of consuming the myth of the fourth world inhabitant is to appeal to consumers to re-think their consumptive practices. In this way, I argue that La Plaga's costume communicates a call to the audience to interrogate their own habits in this respect.

La Plaga's costume also includes other references to North American and/or global culture linked to the workings of the network society to which he and the fourth world inhabitants around him do not have access. In an early scene in the film, in which he meets Alexis and is introduced to Fernando as a friend of the former, he is captured in the frame wearing a sweatshirt emblazoned with the image of an American dollar bill.[393] On another occasion towards the end of the film after Alexis has been killed he wears a vest top depicting the word *weekend.*[394] The contrast between these two images, I argue, conveys an important message from the director to his audience regarding the *sicario* and his consumption. On the surface, these references to a culture of which La Plaga is not a part emphasise his misplaced admiration for a society in which he will never participate, however, a closer analysis prompted by the visual encoding of distortion and caution highlights deeper meanings to both clothing choices.

The first example, in which La Plaga wears the dollar bill sweatshirt, suggests his admiration for the consumer society driven and exemplified by the US first world inhabitant. The dollar bill jumper situates La Plaga's role as that of consumer within the film. However, in the context of the analysis of the representation of the fourth world inhabitant within a global context, the dollar bill points to the increasing homogenisation of that representation. Like in the example of the visibility of Tupac on La Plaga's clothing, the dollar bill emphasises the easy way in which the fourth world inhabitant is dismissed globally as a consumer. He carries out acts of crime and delinquency in order to gain access to goods which he has not earned the economic capital to purchase. The placement of such a sweatshirt in the early stages of the film alerts the audience to the criticism of such a reading of the fourth world inhabitant, in this case the *sicario* of late-twentieth-century Medellín.

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[392] For a brief overview of the uprising and its causes see John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions: 1808-1826* (New York: Norton, 1986).
[393] c. 23mins.
[394] C. 86 mins.

The weekend vest top, by contrast, appears towards the end of the film, after Alexis has been killed. I argue that, like the dollar bill sweatshirt, its inclusion in this key scene is highly significant in the director's communication with the audience. The reference to the weekend on the t-shirt provides a contrast between the first and fourth world inhabitant. The concept of the weekend appears lost on a teenager who throughout the film is seen loitering on the streets with no concept of a working week. However, the word does resonate with the first world audience. For the first worls inhabitant the weekend signifies free time and the opportunity to pursue leisure opportunities using the money that has been earned during the week. In including this misplaced image on the clothing of the *sicario*, the director highlights to the audience the double standard in which the first world inhabitant accesses all of the advantages of the network society, including representations of those inhabitants excluded from it, whilst the fourth world inhabitant does not work or consume such representations.

The timing of this scene is also important in the communication between the director and his audience. The vest top becomes visible as the camera tracks along the busy street and focuses upon the words emblazoned across it. It is in this scene that Fernando is informed by La Plaga that Wílmar, his new lover, is in fact the *sicario* who carried out the assassination of Alexis. In this way, in the scene La Plaga conveys vital knowledge to Fernando which causes him to question the life which he currently lives. I argue that the function of the 'weekend' vest top is to provoke a similar level of reflection in the audience regarding their leisurely consumption of representations of the fourth world actor.

Fernando's very simple, plain clothes, mean that on a visual level the spectator can easily differentiate the character from the young men with whom he wanders the city. His clothing is clearly of a high quality, but the colours are bland, with the effect of him fading into the background. He wears a loosely fitting beige suit with a casual white shirt, with no evidence of designer labels, unlike those of his his fourth world companions. The affluent Fernando is not concerned with branded material goods, while the *sicarios* desire clothes as consumer products which they cannot afford. Fernando, with his access to education and travel, does not need such items. He has cultural capital, rather than branded material capital.[395] Wílmar comments on Fernando's lack of clothing – they enter the bedroom and his open wardrobe appears almost empty. It serves to highlight the lack of interest Fernando has with material consumer habits, yet emphasises his more sinister consumer habit,

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[395] For more on definitions of cultural capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1986).

in which he consumes human beings for sexual gratification. He stands in front of the wardrobe, orders Wílmar to remove his clothes, and they promptly fall onto the bed. The scene is immediately followed by a dream in which Fernando remembers his first encounter with Alexis in the *cuarto de mariposas*. It serves to remind the viewer of the similarities between the way in which Wílmar and Alexis are consumed, and as a cue to consider the similar ways in which the audience, in viewing this film, are consuming the *sicarios* as violent actors.

Returning to the lack of contents of Fernando's wardrobe, both *sicarios* remark upon the appearance of the apartment as a whole, which is devoid of material goods. As the narrative progresses however, the apartment is slowly filled with consumer products. For example, when Alexis arrives, Fernando's bookshelves are empty; however, as he spends more time with the two young men the shelves fill with empty coca cola bottles and crisp wrappers. The branded items serve to signify that both the *sicario* and Fernando are consumers, but of different items. The barren nature of Fernando's apartment serves to invite the viewer to consider which is the real evil – the lust for leisure clothes which drive *sicarios* to kill one another, or the exploitation of the bodies of those with few other alternatives in life. The consumerism which Fernando claims to be 'above', the lust for branded clothing items, is in fact an integral part of his life. He consumes the bodies of young men as part of his lifestyle. By extension, the film highlights the extent to which the lifestyle of the first world that he represents involves the consumption of the lives of the *sicario* through the viewing of cultural products such as this film.

Fernando

I have argued throughout this chapter that Fernando as a character, and his rhetoric, can only be understood in the film once the tropes of distortions and cautions are better understood. The distortions signified by reflective surfaces and the cautionary visual encoding expressed by the use of specific colours in most key scenes in the film are communications between the director and his first world audience. In the cinematic adaptation of *La virgen de los sicarios*, Fernando does not speak directly to the audience as he does in the novel. Instead, the mise-en-scene sends cues which provoke the audience to reflect on their place in the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. I argue that the distortions and cautions within the film invite the spectator to consider the systemic violence which is obscured by such

distortions in typical representations. This systemic violence is, I argue, the focus of Fernando's rhetoric.

It is clear in the film that Fernando's role as the representative of the fourth world is conveyed more actively to the audience in order to provoke reflections upon consumptive practices relating to the fourth world inhabitant. Fernando's rhetoric is still important in the film, but the overwhelming sense is that it is his relationships with the *sicarios* which holds the impact the director wishes to convey. This, I argue, is illustrated in the way in which his vitriolic rants are portrayed on screen. When speaking, Fernando's problematic rhetoric is accompanied by action on the part of the *sicario*. For example, in the scene in which Alexis kills *el punkero*, Fernando is complaining about poverty, and asserts that it must be eradicated by purging the population. At this point, Alexis sees his neighbour, and shoots him from behind at point-blank range. In the scene on the metro in which Alexis kills two men, Fernando is complaining about the poor vocabulary and grammar used by two lower-class men on the metro, as well as children standing on seats. His words are disrupted when Alexis suddenly shoots the two men in question from behind Fernando. The intervention by the director in bringing Alexis to the forefront of the scene, rather than the first world inhabitant's symbolic violence conveyed in language (as in the novel), highlights to the audience that the focus on the fourth world inhabitant as violent actor is misplaced. Instead, the director suggests that there is a collective responsibility for the problems associated with the late capitalist society in its current format.

As I illustrated in the discussion of the visual encoding of caution, Fernando, in addition to paying for sex in various monetary exchanges, instigates a number of murders, however he protests his innocence in each case and transfers responsibility to the individual *sicarios.* There is no notion of collective responsibility between his own actions and those of Alexis and Wílmar, and it is in this lack of collective responsibility that, I argue, Schroeder links Fernando's actions and rhetoric to the structural violence that underpins the network society in its current state. The consumption of the *sicario'*s actions is part of this societal structural violence, because it directs the consumer away from acting upon the socioeconomic inequalities which cause such divisions in society and create the opportunity for violence to flourish.

The masking of structural violence is alluded to in the reaction from Fernando to Alexis's actions despite his own role in the killing. As I asserted earlier in this chapter, instead of intervening to calm the *sicario*, Fernando waits until the assassination has been perpetrated and berates him. The hypocrisy of Fernando in

these situations is clear, and provides another cue for the spectator to contemplate his/her own role in the perpetuation of violence in the fourth world space. Although there is a role to be played by the state, the individual spectators too have a share of the responsibility in consuming these representations of violent actors. For example, after the murder of *el punkero*, Fernando chastises Alexis for his actions, despite his previous rhetoric in which he gave a number of indications that he would support such measures. He has complained about poverty in the city and suggested that a mass cull of people from the city would solve the problem. He complains incessantly about the nuisance *el punkero* in particular has caused him, and in this way, Alexis enacts the scenario which Fernando has advocated.[396]

It is interesting to note in relation to this argument that throughout the film neither of the *sicarios* is shown to carry out a murder paid for by an individual. Alexis and Wílmar kill others based on their relationships with them – they kill other *sicarios* from rival groups, while also carrying out murders which they believe will improve the life of their rich benefactor Fernando. In this way, the director again communicates with the audience, linking the violence of the fourth world inhabitant to the first world inhabitant. It is not an invisible, sinister character who orchestrates the assassinations carried out by *sicarios*, but the culture in which these young men live. Because of the practices of the first world in consuming these mythical representations of violent actors, young men in Medellín's *barrios marginales* continue to play up to the myth. There is no intervention made by first world inhabitants to get behind the structural violence and create conditions in which these inhabitants of the same city may have a more meaningful relationship with each other.

This sense that Fernando's 'relationships' are nothing more than an allusion to the way in which the action of the *sicario* is consumed in the wider global system is indicated by their shambolic nature. The director appeals to the global audience and their knowledge of cinematic conventions related to Hollywood to emphasise this. Schroeder uses a number of Hollywood clichés juxtaposed with the rhetoric of violent Medellín to undermine any sense of romance between Fernando and Alexis (or Wílmar). One such scene situates Fernando and Alexis on the apartment's balcony at night, with the city of Medellín providing the backdrop. As in other scenes similar to this within the film, the tiny lights of the city replicate the twinkling appearance of

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[396] In addition to its links to structural violence at a societal level, I argue that this scene is also indicative of the shared responsibility of global governments in their actions towards other nations. While politicians worldwide, and in particular in the USA, criticise the inability of the Colombian state to control violence, and foreign armies help to develop strategies in order to 'combat' it, civilian populations are consuming the stories of violence through media outlets in the form of news, and other cultural products such as literature and film. It is this double standard which, I believe, is also represented in Fernando's chastising of the *sicarios.*

stars, creating a romantic feel in the mise-en-scene. The camera tracks around the balcony, allowing a panoramic view of the city behind them. As the two men speak, fireworks explode behind them. This scene replicates the archetypal Hollywood romance scene. The balcony is a consistent trope of romance which invokes images of a Romeo and Juliet-style tale of forbidden, undying love. The twinkling lights of the city convey a similar sense of romance, which is capped by the image of fireworks in the distance. According to the codes set out in Hollywood films, Fernando and Alexis should then fall into a passionate embrace. However, the audio that accompanies the scene undermines all allusions to romance. Fernando is complaining about fourth world inhabitants 'invading his part of the city' when he is interrupted by fireworks. Alexis gives further information in this scene, and reveals that this is a celebration that signifies the safe arrival of a shipment of cocaine in the USA. Schroeder deliberately undermines the 'romance' in the relationship and illustrates that it is an unequal exchange, rather than a conventional relationship as I explain below.[397]

Much of the scholarly attention upon Fernando in relation to the novel concerns his status as an intellectual. In contrast, the film, I argue, shows the *sicario* to be of value in his knowledge of the fourth world. This knowledge is needed by the first world inhabitant in order to understand that space and to be able to consume the actions of its inhabitants. The key difference between the novel and its cinematic adaptation then is that in the latter Fernando is not the purveyor of all knowledge: he, like Salazar in *No nacimos pa'semilla*, needs information from the fourth world inhabitant in order to understand the space. The beginning of the film sees an exchange of information between the *sicario* - Alexis – and Fernando. He supplies information about his way of life, his neighbourhood, and his language. As they meet for the first time, and move from the hallway to the *cuarto de mariposas*, Alexis explains the meanings of *parlache* words such as *fierro* and *cascar*. In the previous scene, he has introduced Fernando and the viewer to the 'Other' names of the city – Medallo and Metrallo.

The scene conveys the sense that Fernando needs this information in order to understand the world which he now enters, in which in Medellín, the fourth world violent actor is the main representative. However, despite the specialist knowledge held by the *sicario*, he is soon taken out of his position of authority after his

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[397] The balcony scene's juxtaposition of the typically romantic with the violent also emphasises the primary themes of the cinema industries of Hollywood and Colombia, romance and violence respectively. Romance is one of the characteristic themes which attracts viewers to Hollywood cinema, while realist depictions of urban violence are referenced throughout the film as the principal focus of Colombian cinema. For more on Hollywood genres, see Paul Watson 'Critical Approaches to Hollywood Cinema: Authorship, Genre & Stars', in *An Introduction to Film Studies* 3rd ed., edited by Jill Nemes (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 151-168. On the other hand, violence has become a primary theme in Colombian cinema, something which Schroeder alludes to in the composition of this scene.

knowledge is transferred. His place outside of the network society, as an inhabitant of one of the 'black holes', means that in order to have his story heard, he must find a first world inhabitant through which to convey his knowledge and story. Schroeder illustrates how this failure in the system to allow the fourth world inhabitant to represent himself results in the projection of such myths as conveyed throughout the film. This sense is apparent in both of the scenes described above, in which the audience see information given voluntarily to Fernando, who then takes it and gives each term an explanation. He does this in order to take ownership of this information; in effect taking it from the fourth world inhabitant and translating it into a language more palatable to his first world counterpart.[398] For example, in the scene in which Fernando and Alexis are first acquainted, outside of the room and sitting on the couch, Fernando responds to Alexis's use of the word Metrallo with the explanation, 'como metralleta'. In the following scene, set in the *cuarto de mariposa*, while Alexis tells Fernando more about his life, he undresses, leaving himself completely naked, apart from his gun, which he uses to cover his genitals as he crosses the screen, walking towards the bed. The effect of this scene is to convey to the audience that the fourth world inhabitant has given all that he can, and therefore has nothing else to give except for his body and the only thing which protects him from being consumed completely: his reputation for violence. Alexis's loss of his source of power – his knowledge – is conveyed through his undressing. From this point forward in the film he is subordinate to Fernando, who then at the end of the film leaves the city to write a novel after the two *sicarios* have been killed. He takes with him the knowledge of *sicarios* that will allow him to write an innovative novel, and capitalise on the lives of Alexis and Wílmar. It is in this way that Schroeder achieves another scathing critique of first world consumption of fourth world inhabitants as violent actors through the character of Fernando.

Fernando's 'relationships' throughout the film are shown to be based not on love but on lust and consumerism.[399] One of the criticisms most frequently levelled at this film as alluded to earlier, is its depiction of the consumption of human lives and Fernando's character is essential to this. Fernando pays the young men for their services, acting as a benefactor in return for their company and sexual favours. As part of this exchange, the *sicario* receives consumer goods to which he would otherwise not have access. Although each party agrees to this arrangement, there is

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[398] The glossary in Salazar's *No nacimos pa'semilla* also evidences this practice in relation to the dialect *parlache*, as discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis.
[399] I place the term relationship between inverted commas because I do not believe that Fernando's encounters with the *sicarios* resemble a relationship in the conventional sense, whether homosexual or heterosexual. There is very little evidence of love. There is simply a commercial exchange taking place.

a moral sense of exploitation anchored to the relationships because of this unequal exchange between an older man and two fourth world youths. Fernando, at the end of the film is able to leave the city of Medellín, with enough experiences to write a new novel, whereas the two *sicarios* are dead.[400] Indeed, Fernando is established as a writer at the beginning of the film, and as such, his escape from Medellín implies that he will use his experiences to create the novel upon which the film is based. In this way, the film directly links the consumption of the *sicario* as a living fourth world inhabitant to the consumption of cultural products in which he is represented as a violent actor. The structural violence of consuming his acts of violence hampers the efforts to overcome the differences created by the network society, by eradicating these black holes known as fourth world spaces.

Fernando represents the first world consumer; having consumed the services of both youths to exhaustion he leaves the city. He first consumes the services of Alexis, then later moves on to those of Wílmar, becoming more desensitised to violence as he progresses in his consumption. This desensitisation, I argue, relates not to the violence portrayed in the film, but to the distortions connected to the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. I argue that the clearest example of this is in the period between Alexis's death and Fernando's meeting of Wílmar, a new *sicario* to consume.

The reaction of Fernando to Alexis's death is one of grief. The film illustrates him in various spaces, grieving, feeling empty, before eventually moving on to consume his next *sicario*, Wílmar. This sequence of events has been highlighted by a number of scholars to convey the nature of the term *desechable*, which has been applied to the use of the *sicario* by the various persons contracting their services. However, I argue that the portrayal of Fernando's actions, and the sequence in which they are shown, are part of the broader attempt to engage larger audience engagement in relation to the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant. Throughout the film up to this point, Fernando's relationship with Alexis has been shown to progress within the first world spaces of the city. The fourth world spaces of Medallo have been visible yet distant, most obviously in the aerial shots taken from Fernando's balcony. In the sequence of events following Alexis' death, Fernando ventures into the fourth world space to visit his 'lover's' home, mother and siblings. I argue that the following scenes in which he appears to be grieving for Alexis are in fact his reflection upon the consumptive practices of the first world inhabitants in relation to the fourth world. After seeing the conditions in which Alexis' mother lives,

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[400] Sarabia has much to say regarding this unfair exchange between Fernando and the fourth world inhabitants. See p. 37 in particular.

and in which he grew up, he is in turmoil, doubting his beliefs. Indeed, in these scenes it is interesting to note that the usually vitriolic Fernando has very little to say. The scenes are absent of dialogue. Fernando appears to wander the city, the first world spaces he shared with Alexis. However, he does not act to help the dead boy's mother, nor does he find a solution to his grief. Instead, he is shown meeting Wílmar and starting a new relationship with him.

Rather than reflecting only the consumption of the *sicario*, I argue that this sequence of events instead is focused upon the audience's engagement with the fourth world inhabitant. Fernando, through visiting the fourth world space, has finally confronted the reality faced by the inhabitants the *sicario* has come to represent. He feels lost and helpless, and he is thrown into a crisis regarding his own beliefs. However, rather than choose to take action to change the situation, he eventually resolves to return to his consumption of the second *sicario*. This, I argue, is Schroeder's attempt to engage the audience to confront their own behaviours in relation to the fourth world actors. They are aware of the conditions in which the fourth world inhabitants live, but rather than confront these, or act to make the lives of these inhabitants better, they choose to return to consuming the violent actions of a small minority of the space's inhabitants. In this way, Schroeder warns his audience to act upon the reflections provoked by the visual encoding of caution and distortion in the film rather than return to their practice of consuming violent actors.

The criticism of the consumption of human lives is, I argue, the essence of Fernando's relationships with the two *sicarios*. The 'relationships' between Fernando and the two *sicarios* are, like Fernando's 'fascist' rhetoric, a clear point of debate; a debate to which I wish to add. Many critics, who on the whole focus on the novel, commend the depiction of homosexual relationships, although some view their presentation as problematic because of their exploitative nature.[401] However, as noted above there is little scholarly comment relating to their presentation in the film. Treating the film as an adaptation rather than a replica of the novel, I argue that any attempt to explain the relationships must take into account the themes discussed above: the criticisms of the consumption of the *sicario* as a cultural product as part of the network society and the cautions against this tendency.

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[401] For example, José Manuel Camacho Delgado rather simplistically sees in the novel a complete break with Boom literature, via the predominance of homosexual relationships, which challenge the patriarchal masculinity of los Buendía (p. 232). Sarabia argues that in a novel which focuses on the conventionally hypermasculine codes of the *sicario*, the homosexual relationship seems misplaced (p. 34). Gabriela Polit Dueñas (2006, p. 132) and Santos (2008, pp. 560-1) comment that Fernando's seemingly fascist rhetoric seems out of place because, as a gay man, he would profit socially from liberal values and therefore would be expected to espouse them. These examples illustrate that the relationships between Fernando and the *sicarios* are a point of debate within scholarship in relation to the novel.

Upon first meeting Alexis, Fernando tells the young assassin of his travels to Europe, about Spain, and on other occasions he makes further allusions to the travelling which he has undertaken. His opening dialogue in the film reveals how long he has been absent from the city: 'como treinta años' he remarks to the friend who introduces him to Alexis, establishing the character as a representative of the global first world space, not only of the Colombian elite. He is integrated into the network society, travelling easily between nations and taking advantage of the networks of contacts he has in the different places he visits. In this way, the relationships between the *sicario* and Fernando are representative of the consumption of the fourth world male adolescent. Fourth world inhabitants, as I have argued throughout this thesis, are increasingly consumed by the first world audience as a homogenised representation as a violent actor. Therefore, the homosexual relationship in this film is a symbolic representation of the cultural exchange illustrated in the film rather than a meaningful addition to the development of a gay genre.

Paratexts

The consumption of the increasingly homogenised anonymous fourth world inhabitant is exemplified by the DVD cover/movie poster that accompanies the film. This paratext focuses solely on the *sicario* as an anonymous violent actor. He stands with his head bowed in prayer, yet somewhat contradictorily holding a gun which both props up his face yet obscures many of his features. The boy in the image is the actor who plays Alexis – Fernando's first sexual partner in the movie – and he wears a plain white vest that emphasises the darker colour of his skin. In this way the paratext functions to attract an audience drawn to violent action films. The gun references violence, whilst the emphasis on the dark skin of the actor, as well as his implied religious attachement to violence, illustrates his Otherness. The image has an interesting similarity to the book sleeve image of *Leopardo al sol* in which a teenage boy embraces his lover whilst also wearing a white vest top. The clear difference here is that the *sicario* is attached to his weapon rather than a woman. This, I argue, is due to the difference in focus in terms of violent actors between the two cultural products. The *sicario*, as the focus of the film, is easily captured in the paratext for the film, whereas because the novel focuses on the charismatic drug baron, is unable to convey an easy image that encapsulates the content of the novel. The *sicario* is much more easily consumed as a simplified, homogenous fourth world actor, and this paratext illustrates that.

Conclusions

Distortion in the film works to engage the spectator, to ask that the spectator look at the ways in which violence in Colombia is represented, and this technique functions in a way that hides the systemic violence which drives the more spectacular physical form. The visual encoding of the film invokes a sense of caution on the part of the spectator, in which an understanding of the workings of the neo-liberal system is encouraged. In this context, Fernando's words can be interpreted as part of the systemic violence. Fernando is a problematic character because of his status as an educated, travelled man, an identity which is closely aligned to the identity of the spectator. In this way, the film invites the audience to focus on their part in the network society in which systemic violence drives physical violence and contributes to the commodification of human beings.

As the character with which the audience has most in common, Fernando's actions and rhetoric are very problematic. His rhetoric, in which he denounces fourth world women as baby-making machines, 'que se reproducen más' and, by extension breed violence, highlights the violence of the neo-liberal system. However, unlike in the novel, Fernando's rhetoric is often overshadowed by the violent actors, and thus rather than focus on the specifics of his rhetoric, which has been dissected in numerous articles in relation to the novel, I chose to focus on the way in which, in the film, Fernando's relationships with the *sicarios* convey cues for the audience to reflect upon their role in the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant as violent actor.

Fernando's words in the film must be interpreted not as a personal attack on the fourth world inhabitant, but an invitation for the spectator to reflect upon his words in the context of the network society in which the *sicario* has value because his life can be consumed as a commodity. In this light, his comments are interesting from a gender perspective and especially when considering that he makes disparaging remarks about the fourth world space. Contradictorily, he values the male *sicarios* because they offer him sexual services which he can therefore consume. In contrast, he chastises women from the same fourth world space based on their reproductive capacity, and labels the parents and grandparents of the space's children barbarian invaders of the civilised city. In this way, Fernando's rhetoric in the film replicates the violence of the network society in its consumptive practices. It consumes narratives of lives of young violent men in a voyeuristic manner, yet eschews women. This will be explored further in the following chapter.

I suggest that Fernando's associations with Alexis and Wílmar reflect the way in which Colombian violence, and its violent actors, are consumed by a global public. The film has, as I have described, encouraged the audience to engage with the way in which violence in Colombia is both represented and consumed, and indicated that Fernando's consumption of the *sicarios* has many similarities to the consumption of cultural products that focus on violent inhabitants of the fourth world space. Fernando's fetish for the bodies of the *sicarios* and his desire for physical relationships with them, is symptomatic of the global lust for the actions of the *sicarios*, and emphasises, admittedly crudely, the associated lust for dead bodies, given the occupations of these young men. I end this chapter with this thought, as I now move on to discuss the most recently released cultural product under analysis in this thesis – Margarita Mártinez and Scott Dalton's documentary *La Sierra*. I argue that the most vital element of this documentary is the portrayal of young fourth world inhabitants in life and in death. The consumption of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor is a consumption of death, and the documentary illustrates how the first world inhabitant is able to deal with the depiction of death by allowing the fourth world inhabitant to remain anonymous. *La Sierra,* I argue, explores how in removing the anonymity of these characters, by bestowing upon them a past and an alternative future, our consumption of such characters can be affected. The fact that the characters are in fact real people only heightens the sense of loss when the protagonist Edison is killed part way through the filming of the documentary, which conveys a very strong sense of engagement with the audience, advocating that the consumptive practices associated with the fourth world inhabitant come to an end.

Chapter Four: Consuming Lives and Consuming Deaths in *La Sierra*

The final chapter of this thesis analyses the most recent of the four cultural products – Scott Dalton and Margarita Martinez's documentary *La Sierra*. It was filmed during 2003 and released in 2005, and follows the lives of three fourth world inhabitants - Edison, Cielo and Jesús - in the eponymous *barrio*, situated on the periphery of the city of Medellín. It is particularly powerful in its presentations of these narratives, each of which represents a different experience of life in the *barrios marginales* and is made more powerful by the knowledge that unlike the fictional film, *La virgen de los sicarios*, 'documentaries address *the* world in which we live, rather than *a* world imagined by the filmmaker'.[402] In this way, the stories are narrated through a series of testimonies by each of the protagonists, which emphasises the strong sense of factuality and truth. However, as I go on to argue throughout this final chapter, documentary as a cinematic mode is subject to the same techniques as fictional films.[403] In this documentary, I argue, the filmmakers frame their shots carefully, incorporating the mise-en-scene into a reflexive engagement with the audience. That is not to say that the material has been fabricated, simply that the locations for shots and the camera's positioning and movements are carefully selected to convey an ongoing sense of dialogue with the audience through visual citation, as I go on to argue as the chapter progresses. The testimonies are devised through a series of interviews between filmmakers and subjects, in which only the subjects are visible. The interweaving of these testimonies give a sense of life in La Sierra for young people, yet the juxtaposition of the interview scenes also reveal much about the filmmakers' own attempts to communicate with the eventual audience.

Academic comment upon *La Sierra* has a tendency to focus upon the political situation of violence in the city, as Deborah Martin's thoughts illustrate: 'It is too local, too specific to offer any totalising interpretation of the political context'.[404] This focus on the political context of violence makes it difficult to understand the potential global reach of the film as anything but an exploration of highly localised concerns. However, taking my approach of analysing attempts at engaging with the audience and focusing upon the increasing homogenisation in the representation of the fourth

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[402] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. ix.
[403] Nichols lists scripting, staging, re-enactments and performance among the techniques which are shared between documentary and fictional film practices (p. ix).
[404] Deborah Martin, 'Paraíso terrenal, mujeres bellas, gente cordial: Gender Performances and Narratives of Modernity in *La Sierra*', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 28: 3 (2009), 381-393 (p. 382).

world inhabitant allows this engagement with its more global reach. That is not to say that there are not important political issues represented in the documentary, but that my approach gives a different interpretation. The documentary, I argue, explores local conditions as they relate to global concerns and in particular the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant. Indeed, the documentary was produced for global consumption despite its local specificity. Unlike the previous cultural products analysed in this thesis, which were first released to a Colombian audience before being translated and distributed globally, *La Sierra* was released as a documentary targeted at a first world audience, largely the US market, playing at various international film festivals,[405] and was shown on the US television series *Independent Lens*, which focuses on independent films and documentaries.[406] After its limited release, the documentary was distributed on DVD both by Icarus Films and First Run Features, as part of *The Human Rights Watch Collection*. Although filmed in a very local setting, the documentary as a cultural product is very much global.[407] Like all other cultural products explored in this thesis, the documentary establishes a strong engagement with its audience from the start, inviting these first world spectators to reflect on their practices relating to the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. The filmmakers utilise diverse documentary modes to represent the *barrio* of La Sierra in different ways, contrasting the image of the fourth world usually consumed by the first world with a much more in depth and interactive mode of filming. The overarching purpose of this, I argue, is to highlight the structural violence behind these consumptive practices.

As I explore in this chapter, the most effective manner of achieving this audience engagement is in the contrasting of two dead bodies during the documentary. The narrative within the documentary progresses through the testimonies of the three protagonists and other members of the community to reach its culmination in Edison's murder. This appears to be the central event within the narrative, and changes the tone in the testimonies of the remaining two protagonists, who look to the future and the possibilities these open up. I argue that although the testimonies play a central role in the narrative development, it is the imagery in the documentary which is most striking. It is my contention that the visual presentation of two bodies is the aspect of the film which demonstrates the structural violence of the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. One of the dead bodies portrayed – that of Edison – has been accompanied by a narrative, whereas the first

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[405] For a full list of film festivals, see the documentary's official website <http://www.lasierrafilm.com> [Accessed 19 May 2012].

[406] Anonymous, *About Us*< http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/about/> [Accessed 19 May 2012].

[407] Martin (2009), p. 382.

body presented is not afforded a narrative, nor a name – he is a *desechable*. It is in this contrast between a narrative and its absence that the filmmakers provoke the audience to interrogate their own viewing practices in relation to the fourth world inhabitant. In my analysis of these contrasting presentations, I utilise theories developed by Judith Butler and Susan Sontag to explore the presentation of both Edison's narrative, and of the bodies of the two fourth world inhabitants, to articulate the practices exercised by the filmmakers to engage its audience.

La Sierra attempts to question the consumptive practices of its audience relating to the fourth world using the local context of Medellín's *barrios marginales*. I illustrate how it highlights the aspects of life that the fourth world sees, and those which are hidden. Unlike in other cultural products, there is a stark focus upon gender representations and how the visibility afforded to men and women at different stages of their lives varies significantly. In order to fully analyse this engagement, this discussion incorporates an analysis of both the documentary as film text and its marketing paratext. The paratext, I argue, contrasts markedly with the encoding of the film text, and so I provide a full analysis of the paratext and the links made to other cultural products and contexts. I argue that this contrast, whether deliberate or coincidental, only strengthens this engagement with the audience and provokes reflection upon their viewing choices relating to the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant.

Necessarily, the analysis incorporates documentary and narrative theory, a discussion of first/fourth world relations, and engages with contemporary discussions on the ethics of representing the Other. I begin with an exploration of the documentary modes used to establish the strong sense of audience engagement. This involves an analysis of the documentary's opening scenes, before I go on to discuss the significance of the portrayal of the two dead bodies. I then explore further the representation of the three protagonists, ending the analysis of the documentary text with reflections upon the contrasting visibility of gender. I end the chapter with the paratextual analysis, before concluding.

Continuous Audience Engagement

La Sierra combines a number of the traditional documentary modes outlined by theorist Bill Nichols and these are utilised to foster audience engagement.[408] This is achieved through a contrast between the opening scenes, which employ an

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[408] Nichols (2010).

observational mode with little information, and a more participatory and interactive mode. The former replicates the representation typically afforded to the fourth world space, whilst the latter advocates a new presentation of the space and its inhabitants, as explored throughout the remainder of the film. This technique fosters an engagement with its audience throughout, provoking them to contemplate their own consumptive practices. The audiences are able to both react to and be informed by its subjects and subject matter, encouraging an active engagement with the complex networks of violence, both physical and structural, which continues to afflict many inhabitants of fourth world spaces in Colombia and the wider world. I now explore how the audience is first engaged in the film, through an exploration of the opening scenes. This pattern of audience engagement gives strength to this innovative documentary as one which tackles the representation and consumption of violence of the fourth world in Medellín.

The opening sequences, lasting 345 seconds, establish the portrayal of the city of Medellín in a nutshell. It can be the home of violence, of *desechables* and conflict, but it is also a vibrant city. The filmmakers in this way foreshadow the contrasts of life in La Sierra that their filming will illustrate. It follows a year in the life of three protagonists, through periods of joy and hardship. Observation and reflection are key to the opening scenes, and function to communicate with the audience, to foster a shared sense of responsibility for the events portrayed on screen. As the documentary continues, this sense increases. In addition, the participatory mode allows the filmmakers to give young people in La Sierra a voice which contradicts that of their representation according to myth. The filmmakers utilise a variety of techniques to engage with its audience to provoke reflection on their own role in the consumption of fourth world violence in Medellín. The documentary communicates with its audience to criticise the consumption of Colombian violence, and implicates the audience as complicit in its prolongation. While there is not space to analyse each aspect of the film, in this chapter I explore the representation of death and of gender, in order to highlight the filmmakers' criticism of first world consumption of violence in the marginal *barrios* of Medellín.

In summary, the documentary opens with a long, aerial shot, framing an area of greenery in which lies a dead body. The following sequence focuses on that body, and on the audience which has gathered on the other side of a body of water to see the spectacle (whether this is the presence of a body or a film crew is unclear). The audience within the documentary, shown half way through the sequence of shots, represents the audiences who will watch the documentary. They watch without intervening, simply consuming the scenes that unfold in front of them. At the time of

viewing, these people gathered within the film represent the person watching, a reflection of the film audience. Peering from over the river, courtesy of the framing of the shot, it appears that they are gazing into the jungle to see this discarded body. The scene foreshadows the scenes of death that will be witnessed later by the audience watching the documentary.

The camera cuts back to the abandoned body to portray the grieving relatives cradling it. There is no direct engagement with the camera from any of the people filmed in the sequence, there is little dialogue, other than cries of grief, and the filmmakers do not intervene nor make their presence felt. The partner of the dead boy cries out '¿por qué me lo quitaron?' before she is led away by friends.[409]

The camera cuts to a man who he is behind bars in a dark room. It is unclear initially as to why he is behind bars, but it becomes clear that this is some form of shop. His place of work is not important to the scene, nor to the documentary as a whole, only his status as an inhabitant of La Sierra. He provides the most immediate answer to the young woman's question – young men kill each other because they belong to another area. They carry on killing each other in this way, in a battle over territory. The words are spoken as part of an interview, and as such the location of the interview will have been selected by the filmmakers. As the employment of the individual is of no consequence, the dark setting behind bars functions as a visual shorthand for confinement, both physically in terms of the location of those in La Sierra, but also in terms of this man's opinions regarding the violence committed by and against young men. His tone changes, becomes more reflective, as he repeats a number of times: 'son muchachos', before concluding, 'estamos en las manos de muchachos armados. Eso es todo problema. ¡Estamos en manos de muchachos armados!' He pauses before adding that life has no worth. His attempts at extended analysis into the causes of such violence have largely failed. Analysis of violence is confined to such simple explanations, as indicated by the imagery in this scene. This is the level of analysis typically afforded to violence in the fourth world space. A person is shown dead, female relatives grieve and an older member of the community comments on the situation. The portrayal of the event then stops, and the filmmakers move on.

The man's words are then seemingly contradicted by the following montage of images, which aim to encompass the experience of life in this marginal *barrio* of Medellín. Jaunty vallenato soundtracks accompany the ten different images, of which three show evidence of the presence of violence within the *barrio* – two gunmen in

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[409] 1 min 20secs

uniform on a street corner, a long shot of a gunman purchasing fruit from the local store, and two children walking past a graffitied wall announcing the presence of the Bloque Metro paramilitary group. The montage highlights that life in La Sierra is not as violent as it may first seem. The juxtaposition of these three sequences allows the filmmakers to establish a problem which the documentary then seeks to address: attitudes which consider the fourth world violent inhabitant of Medellín as an object of consumption are as much of a problem as the violence itself.

The montage gives a picture of life in La Sierra before moving to the city centre. The opening shot shows two women dancing outside one home, the camera showing the city down below in the background. A woman hangs out her washing, then the camera cuts to two men sitting on a street corner, in camouflage and holding large guns. Two scruffy dogs run past them. There is a close up of a plastic table, where a man is dealing cards, using bottle tops as chips. There are then shots of older men drinking in a cantina, and two young girls laughing and skipping as an older man turns the skipping rope for them. A bus travels past the camera, with a teenage boy on a bike holding onto the back, being pulled along. A long shot depicts a man selling fruit from a few shelves in a dilapidated building. A very young girl looks through the fruit, while an adolescent male, carrying a gun, purchases fruit from the vendor. Young boys play in a burnt-out bus with smashed windows. Two young girls walk past a concrete wall, decorated with graffiti in the form of the name of the paramilitary operating in La Sierra, 'Bloque Metro'. The montage then fades to another black background. These shots function as establishing shots, and indicate the documentary's close association with narrative cinema. In relation to the narrative, the sequence highlights that despite the presence of violence, people take part in normal, everyday activities which take place all around the globe. It seems that young men are always seen to be carrying weapons, but there are many other inhabitants within the *barrio*, and they are not engaged in violent activity. In this way, the filmmakers illustrate from the outset that the audience should look beyond the guns and spectacular violence of young men.

The final sequence of the opening of the film involves the filmmakers. Up until this point, the film uses the observational mode that was first outlined by Bill Murray.[410] The participants are followed and the results are relayed to the audience through the film. However, in this scene, the opening shot is one of the city centre, the part which is inhabited by the filmmakers, rather than those in *La Sierra*. The crane shot frames colonial buildings and busy streets, yet the focus of the shot is the

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[410] Murray, pp. 172-178.

city's Metro, a clear sign of modernity which is used in other narratives based in the same city.[411] As the train exits a station and travels into the foreground of the shot, the words 'Downtown Medellín' fade into the frame.[412] This is the central city and the home of the first world inhabitant within Colombia. What follows is a similar montage to that shown of *La Sierra*, but using fewer shots, and with a distinct absence of men carrying guns. The shot then transfers to a bucket of roses, perhaps an allusion to the highly respected film of Víctor Gaviria, *La vendedora de rosas*.[413] However, the hands rearranging the roses belong to a man, a street vendor. The scene cuts to a couple in a square, leaning against a Botero statue, then to another street vendor selling a model of the pink panther, made of balloons. A taxi then pulls up alongside the camera, and the cameraman gets in, asking to be taken to La Sierra*.

In the taxi, the driver claims that you can turn a corner and 'encuentres muchachos asesinados, taxistas asesinados, familias asesinadas. Cosas no muy agradables, para lo que se cierran los ojos.' There is a cut, the camera focuses on him changing gear, then panning up to focus on photos of his family. He continues 'la parte linda - la gente. La gente que te enseña. La gente que te cuenta sus historias. Para mí lo mejor es la gente.' His words advance the objectives of the filmmakers: they wish to tell the stories of the people of La Sierra. The taxi driver's words foreshadow the events in the documentary – the filmmakers follow the people of La Sierra, in particular three inhabitants. Edison is killed, and upon turning a corner one night, the filmmakers find him lying dead in the road. It is unclear whether this encounter with the taxi driver took place before or after the murder, yet the editing implies that it is the former. The way in which the conversation is edited and recounted also highlights a contradiction that the documentary works to undermine. He first speaks of dead bodies, dead families, and then changes the topic of conversation to 'la gente'. In this switch, he reveals an attitude which has underpinned the reporting of Colombian violence. He suggests that the dead have no story, while the living do. As the documentary seeks to illustrate, it is not only the living who have a story, but the dead too. As the story of Edison highlights, often, only in exploring the life of the dead can we discover the story of the living.

The driver's comments are paradoxical because he spends much of the journey warning the filmmakers of the dangers of the area, yet he then refers to the

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[411] The metro is the setting for a key scene in Barbet Schroeder's film *La virgen de los sicarios* (2000), as analysed in the Chapter Three of this thesis. The metro is symbolic of Medellín's modernity and capitalist success story. But it actually belies a) stark socio-economic contrasts in Medellín, with the hyper-modern metro versus extreme poverty in the *comunas* and b) alleged financing of the metro by Pablo Escobar, the very source of the violent conflict that the 'modern, success-story' image of Medellín would disavow.
[412] As this film was produced for and distributed in the North American market, the English-language intertitles are not translations from original Spanish as would be expected in other films produced in Colombia.
[413] *La vendedora de rosas.* Dir. Víctor Gaviria. Colombia, 1998. 110 mins.

people and their stories as the most attractive aspect of La Sierra. In this way, he illustrates, whether consciously or unconsciously, the contradiction inherent in the dislike and discouragement of violence, in comparison with the consumption of the stories generated by this violence. Because of this, I argue, the taxi driver represents the first world inhabitants and their consumptive practices relating to violence. This sense is also conveyed in the way in which the taxi driver is filmed and represented. The camera is notably in the back of the taxi with the filmmakers, and the taxi driver is filmed peering at his passengers through his rear-view mirror throughout the sequence.[414] The filmmakers actively choose to film this way in order to replicate the film's engagement with its audience. The driver's words reflect the activity of those in the audience, yet he is also being watched at two levels. He is watched within the documentary by the filmmakers who speak to him via the mirror. However, he is also watched by the audience when the film is screened. In this way, he establishes the reflection which the filmmakers wish the audience to apply to their own viewing practices. In his rhetoric he is the representative of the audience, yet he is also watched by the very people he represents. This technique raises questions with regard to the audience early in the documentary, before the narratives of the three protagonists are introduced. Why have the individual audience members come to watch this film? Viewing through a mirror suggests a covert way of seeing, suggesting voyeurism: do the audiences too not realise the voyeurism involved in such an exercise?[415]

This sense is underlined at the end of the scene. After the driver departs from La Sierra, leaving the filmmakers in the location of their work for the next year, the scene is closed with an intertitle that declares that the documentary is the story of three young people. This provides a link between the visual citation of the audience in the form of the taxi driver and the narratives on offer within the film text. The subject of the documentary is the stories of three young people because the audience demands narratives about this violent space. However, the personal stories of three individuals contrast sharply with the usual representations of this space, as portrayed in the opening shots, in which the *desechable* is portrayed without a story. It emphasises that this is not a documentary about violence, but one which humanises these fourth world inhabitants to remove their *desechable* status. The effect of such an intertitle after the exchange with the taxi driver is to prompt the audience to reflect upon their reasons for choosing to consume this film.

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[414] The moment at which the filmmakers get into the taxi, and the camera has yet to do so is the only exception to this pattern.
[415] Of course, voyeurism is central to the cinematic experience, as Mulvey illustrates. Her 1975 article is now a classic piece of film scholarship.

The taxi journey also establishes, from the onset of the documentary, the different sectors of the city, which as set out in the introduction of this thesis are labelled Medellín and Medallo. The journey from the central city that is taken by the filmmakers while filming is also taken by the audience. They too must travel, and this sense of moving from one part of the city to another, is important. The distinctions between 'downtown' or 'modern', developed Medellín and the peripheral, 'barbaric' and underdeveloped mythical space of Medallo are portrayed visually throughout the documentary, yet the filmmakers also opt to highlight the physical distance, or lack thereof, between the two areas. The length of their conversation with the taxi driver emphasises that there is little distance between first and fourth world spaces in Medellín, and this is the case in many of the world's cities. This small but significant spatial divide is indicated by the physical journey taken by the filmmakers and the driver, while the driver's words suggest a moral divide.

Visual Citations

The sense of distance that is conveyed in the filmmakers' taxi journey from the central city to the *barrios marginales* highlights the divide between opposing mythical spaces within the city – Medellín and Medallo. I now focus upon the way in which that distance is conveyed, and how the filmmakers invite the audience to begin to consider the fourth world space of Medallo to be a part of the city of Medellín, and therefore break that division. This is achieved through a technique of visual citation, in which the central city, and therefore the first world audience, is visible within the frame of the shot. The visibility of the central city in the frame conveys to the audience who can see themselves in the frame that they are closer to the reality of life in the *barrios marginales* than they may wish to recognise. This technique of visual citation is important throughout this discussion, as its application is not always consistent. For example, it differs significantly in the portrayal of men and women, as I go on to explore later in the chapter. In this way, the audience is provoked to contemplate the aspects of life in the fourth world space of which they are conscious, and those of which they are not.

The narrative of the film follows the lives of Edison, Jesús and Cielo, and at times their voices are superimposed over these images. The camera then cuts back to the interview in which the witness uttered these words. Interviews are widely recognised by documentary theorists as the most artificial aspects of documentary because the answers given by participants can be directed, whilst the setting can

also be carefully stage-managed.[416] I focus on this latter aspect, because the mise-en-scene captured within the frame in each interview is significant, as I now discuss. In *La Sierra*, the subjects are shown being interviewed, and the camera often cross cuts to other images whilst the audio continues to play over the new scene. I argue that the locations of the interviews with Edison, Jesús and Cielo are of interest in terms of their communication with the first world audience. I begin with Edison and Jesús, allowing a subsequent discussion of the different ways in which Cielo's interviews are framed and the implications of this in terms of the filmmakers' dialogue with the first world audience in the final sections of this chapter.

Edison is the first of the protagonists to be introduced on screen, and is the focus of the narrative. His story is told in his own words, with the aid of a number of interviews, interspersed throughout the documentary, in which his words are used to comment on the images displayed. His interviews take place both indoors and in outside spaces, differentiating between his public role and his family life. He is first shown indoors, relating his experience of prison. The scene cuts to images of him in balaclava, hiding ammunition among the greenery, while carrying a large gun. This establishes Edison as a violent actor and his location among the greenery invokes the civilisation and barbarism binary. Edison's role in the violence of the jungle referenced in the intertitle is portrayed in this scene. The interview continues, and Edison speaks as the images continue to show him in his role as warrior. He recounts his first experiences with a gun as something akin to a rite of passage. The scene then cuts to a shot of Edison posed on the edge of a grassy precipice, looking at the camera. In the background is the city, in the distance. Edison's back is turned on the city, the implication being that the city is watching him. Edison is fulfilling the myth of the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor, and the first world thus consumes his actions.

Edison's dialogue continues, and the camera cuts to another interview. It takes place on a rooftop, again overlooking the city. Edison looks at the camera, again, his back turned on the city which the audience can see in the background. In this scene, Edison's clothing suggests a conversation with the first world, but through the lens of the camera, rather than direct contact with the city that can be seen in the background. He wears a red T-shirt with blue trim and yellow shorts – these are the colours of the Colombian national flag. The T-shirt bears the logo 'Chicago'. During this interview, and while the frame remains focused on this scene, Edison speaks about the desire to use guns: 'cuando desde, de la adolescencia, no quiere como

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[416] See, for example, Nichols, p. 177 & p. 194.

todo lo fuerte, haya que tiene un fierro yo quiero como ser de ese grupo yo quiero cogerlo yo quiero disparar'. The choice to place Edison in a frame which includes the view of the city coincides with the trope of civilisation and barbarism. Edison speaks about his association with violence – his barbarism – while the civilised world watches from behind. He speaks to the camera, performing his role as violent actor for the entertainment of the first world viewer.

While Edison faces away from the city and speaks about violence, the camera remains focused on both. The implication is that the first world watches the fourth world in order to consume its distant, exotic, barbaric violence. This is reinforced in another interview with Edison which takes place during the short period of peace in which two opposing paramilitaries have joined forces. In this sequence, Edison still carries his walkie-talkie, and is captured on camera overlooking the hills of Medellín. However, in these scenes the central city is not visible, only other peripheral *barrios*. In the interview scenes, Edison is inside a destroyed building, standing next to a hole in the wall which functions as a window. The window functions as a frame through which the camera can see the view down the hill. However, the centre of the city is obscured by the wall against which Edison is standing. The implication is that in times of peace, Edison as a fourth world inhabitant is of no interest to the first world audience. He also speaks of his hopes and dreams – his alternative life as a civil engineer, and his regret at leaving school too early. This also draws attention to the fact that throughout he documentary there is no focus on the young men who do successfully undertake such roles. In this way the filmmakers suggest that the first world audience is not interested in these alternative realities in which the fourth world inhabitant is not a consumable violent actor. In order to highlight the invisibility of the city centre, after the interview ends, a view of the central city is included before the narrative moves on to Cielo working in the centre.

The presence of greenery in the frame, and the location of the interviews at the very edge of La Sierra, which is on the very edge of the city, links the young men to the notion that violence is barbarism, encroaching upon the civilised city. The jungle mentioned in the documentary's intertitle is reproduced in these images, and the two young men sit on the precipice of the civilised city, bringing with them their barbaric, jungle ways. The first world consumes the actions of the barbaric Other, while at the same time distancing itself from his actions.

The implication that the first world only pays attention to displays of barbarism is also portrayed in the framing of Jesús's interview. He is filmed outside, within the greenery, in a spot which overlooks the city, including its centre. He is first seen

snorting cocaine, and in each shot of his interview he seems high on some form of drugs, slurring his speech and making involuntary movements. He speaks of respect, the fact that he is one of the good guys, before the camera cuts to the interview itself, when he begins to speak about how he became involved in the war. The camera zooms out to a long shot, revealing the full surroundings chosen for his interviews. His immediate surroundings are trees and bushes, and the hill, as discussed, overlooks the city panorama. He asserts that wars will continue indefinitely in this part of the city, and boys will continue to fight until they die. As he mentions death, the camera cuts to another scene. Other sequences follow Jesús as he explains the injuries he sustained when a grenade exploded in his hand, but in these scenes the central city is not visible. In this way, Jesús functions in this documentary to highlight the attractive aspects of war which the first world seeks to consume and those which it does not see. When the central city is visible to the audience in the background of the shot, aspects of Jesús's life which are deemed to be of interest to the first world audience, and foregrounded in the paratext discussed earlier, are discussed. When the less glamorous effects, such as the loss of his hands, are discussed and viewed, the central city is no longer visible. In this way, the film communicates with its audience by showing their gaze and its absences.

Immediately following the scene in which Cielo visits her partner Carlos in prison, the film cuts to a view of the city in the distance, taken from La Sierra. As the camera zooms out, a man holding a gun comes into focus. It then cuts to a tattoo on the man's arm, 'Dios y madre', before panning down his arm to focus on the gun which he is holding. He then points the gun into the air, looks into the camera, simulates firing, and shouts 'Rambo!', before turning to his friends and laughing. Martin mentions this reference to the well-known Hollywood action figure as the 'talking back' of the Latin American periphery to the US.[417] The literal talking back takes place as part of a performance by the particular individual who utters the words, yet I also argue that the filmmaker 'talks back' through the imagery used in the scene. The backdrop of the city is the focus at the beginning of this sequence, reinforcing the distance of this peripheral *barrio*, and its inhabitants, from the centre, underlining the binary division between the first world audience and the fourth world setting and participants. The camera focuses on the location of the audience, therefore allowing the documentary itself to engage with the audience as much as the man who shouts Rambo.

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[417] Martin, p. 389.

Although the film closes with a look to the future for each of the protagonists – Cielo's new boyfriend and job, and the monthly meeting held in Edison's memory - it is the final shot of Jesús which portrays reflexivity. The shot takes place on the hilltop in which he gave his interview, but with an important reversal. He now sits on the same hilltop, holding his son, but rather than looking at the camera, at the audience, he looks towards the central city. He addresses the city rather than the camera, in a symbolic rejection of the persona he has displayed throughout the film. In this shot he asks for his son to communicate to the first world not through a performance of violence, but through other means.

Death vs Body

As described in the discussion above, the film opens with the image of an anonymous dead boy, discarded at the side of a road – a *desechable*. There is a marked contrast with the portrayal of the body of the protagonist Edison, who was shot and killed part way through filming. This is a key element within the film, from a narrative as well as production perspective. The body shown in the opening shots is not that of Edison, as the filmmakers could have chosen to portray if they had simply wanted to show a dead body, and so in this section of the chapter I explore the reasons why it is more effective in terms of audience engagement with prevailing myths regarding the fourth world inhabitant that it is not. I explore the myths which the contrasting portrayal of each body engages with. I utilise Judith Butler's theory of grievability to explore how the filmmakers humanise the fourth world violent actor, and follow Susan Sontag's thoughts on the presentation of corpses to highlight differences in the presentation of these two dead bodies. I argue that this is a powerful attempt to engage with an audience looking to consume the fourth world violent actor.

Before analysing the manner in which the bodies are presented, I explore Bill Nichols's thoughts on the power of documentary in particular in conveying scenes of death. He argues that documentary film, in contrast to fictional features, holds much power in its portrayal of corpses:

> […] such a sight, in close-up, carries an impact […] that is quite different from staged deaths in fictional films […]. The representation may be similar, but the emotional impact of close-up images of the dead and dying changes considerably when we know that there is no point at which the director can say 'Cut!' and lives can be resumed.[418]

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[418] Nichols, p. 38.

Death is indeed powerful in this documentary, especially if we consider Edison alone, and the emotional impact of the sight of dead bodies is important in the engagement with the audience. Due to the frequency of death in this film, and because of the lingering shots of dead bodies – real casualties of this conflict but also of the first world's inaction – it is not a narrative that is easily consumed and then forgotten. I argue, however, that the emotional impact is very different for each of the bodies. Indeed, taken in the context of the four bodies seen throughout the documentary, which include a glimpse of another *desechable* and an older woman caught in the crossfire, a hierarchy emerges in which some deaths are more powerful than others. As Judith Butler has suggested in relation to media portrayals of death in the current 'War on Terror', some deaths are more grievable than others, which is illustrated in this documentary by the emotional impact of the powerful images of the deceased.[419] I argue, like other scholars in relation to different contexts, that Butler's theory written in relation to the West's 'War on Terror' can be extended to people of the Fourth World.[420] I illustrate this through a theoretical discussion of the work of Susan Sontag and Butler on the issue of the representation of the death of 'Others'.

Judith Butler's recent work on ethics and representation has considered the way in which the 'Other' is represented, with a focus on death and remembering.[421] Although focusing on the post-9/11 context, her work can be transferred to context of the fourth world and the representation of its inhabitants as violent actors. She describes a form of structural violence ingrained in media practices relating to the reporting of death. In sum, she argues that only those who contribute to the sense of the 'nation' are represented fully, and therefore grieved upon death. In order to construct her argument, she focuses upon obituaries as tools of nation building. She notes that some deaths are explored fully, with obituaries dedicated to the lives of single individuals, whereas in other cases, deaths are reported in the form of data. She thus posits the question as to what qualifies as a grievable life. Through a discussion of those typically mourned publicly at times of war, in comparison to those ignored, Butler suggests an ideology at work which 'derealizes' the lives of some members of society, those construed to be Other. This is applicable not only to foreign policy, where Butler claims it is most common, but also within the nation, in terms of defining those who are considered citizens. I argue that the fourth world

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[419] See Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2004), and Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009).
[420] See, for example, Lorraine Leu, 'Spaces of Remembrance & Representation in the City: José Padilha's *Onibus 174*', *Luso-Brazilian Review,* 45:2 (2008), 177-89, in relation to the Brazilian context.
[421] Butler (2004).

inhabitants, like those represented in *La Sierra*, constitute those who do not qualify as having lived a 'grievable life'.

Butler explains her terms well. The difference between grievable lives and those which are not is defined in terms of those who contribute to the nation and its values (the former), and those who fall outside of that category (the latter). She explains how those not afforded an obituary – those who are defined by their contribution to data – are not recognised because:

> specific lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living. If certain lives do not qualify as lives or are, from the start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived, nor lost in the full sense.[422]

The lives of the inhabitants of La Sierra, and other peripheral *barrios*, are not recognised as living because most inhabitants are portrayed either in their death, as in the anonymous young man at the beginning of *La Sierra*, or through their association with death, through extreme violence. Loss of life in such peripheral *barrios* is not grieved publicly, but is instead used to illustrate larger cycles of violence and death. In short, it is recognised that people die, but their life stories and contributions to society are not made public.

The way in which the two bodies, that of Edison and the anonymous young man, are portrayed in *La Sierra* convey this sense of dehumanising, through the focus on the face. Susan Sontag's recent theory is relevant to this discussion. She focuses not upon the narratives which afford lives a representation, but on the difference in the ways that the faces of dead bodies are captured (or not) by the camera. Her theory relates to war photography, but given the context of violence in Colombia, and the focus in this thesis upon the framing of shots within film, I argue that it is transferable to the documentary. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, she suggests that the Other is signified in war photography by the visibility of the victim's face, whereas those considered to be 'us' have their identities hidden. She states:

> The frankest representations of war, and of disaster-injured bodies, are of those who seem most foreign, therefore least likely to be known. With subjects closer to home, the photographer is expected to be more discreet.[423]

I argue that this is visible in *La Sierra* in the juxtaposing views of Edison's and the *desechable*'s bodies, as I go on to discuss below. Before I continue with the analysis, I make a few final reflections upon Butler and Sontag's theories and their application to this film text. I argue that, taken together, their ideas suggest that in his portrayal, the mythical fourth world violent actor is derealised because we can see his or her

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[422] Butler (2009), p. 1.
[423] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 55.

face in death. Those considered to be human, to have a liveable life and grievable death, will not be afforded the indignity of having their faces displayed in death. *La Sierra,* in its depiction of dead bodies, creates a juxtaposition by which the filmmakers provoke the audience to consider the differences in the portrayal of the two bodies, in order to consider their own consumptive practices.

La Sierra claims to represent all aspects of life in the *barrio* of the same name, and one of those aspects is death. Although images of the dead do not fill the documentary, there are a number of scenes in which the camera focuses on discarded bodies, and all are marked with gunshot wounds. Indeed, the fact that these bodies are depicted as discarded reinforces the sense that the *desechable* does exist – human lives come to an end and the evidence of this – the body, is left for all to see. This is striking for the first world audience, for whom death is less likely to be something with which they interact on a daily basis. Within the documentary, these bodies are shown to be of combatants and of innocent bystanders who have been caught in the cross fire. In addition to the *desechable* in *La Sierra*'s opening sequence, two other unknown bodies are shown: one of a young man, and another, over half way through the film, of an older woman. She has been shot in the street, and in the narrative is presented the morning after exchanges of gunfire were captured on film by the filmmakers. Based on the images shown, it seems that the woman has been fatally shot in the side of her chest.[424] Unlike in the case of the second unnamed dead body, here the camera remains focused on the body, and the editing means that the audience's attention is fixed upon her until she is lifted onto a stretcher and carried away.[425] The contrast between the presentation of the body of the woman and that of the second discarded young man is again, I argue, an attempt to engage with the audience to provoke reflection. The young man is focused upon for less than a few seconds, because he is an archetypal *desechable.* However, the way in which the woman's body has also been left in the street signifies that she too is a *desechable*. The audience here are confronted with an image which is not expected. The warfare within the fourth world space also kills innocent women. In this lingering shot, I argue, the filmmakers allow time for the audience to process the contrasts between the two bodies, and to assess their own interpretations of each death. Who is the *desechable?* Are they both *desechables?* These are questions which also resonate with the presentation of the body in the opening sequence and that of Edison, as I now explore.

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[424] C. 52mins.
[425] Within this sequence the camera also cuts to the body of a male lying in the water and covered by reeds. It is not included in this analysis because the shot lasts only a second, and the body is so well camouflaged that it is difficult to see on first viewing.

The presentation of the first body in the opening shots of the documentary is, I argue, indicative of the typical media reporting of deaths in fourth world spaces such as La Sierra. Dead bodies exemplify or reinforce the raw data relating to extremely high levels of violence, or confirm the occurrence of a particularly spectacular violent event. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the body shown in the opening sequence is that of a young man, and is used to confirm the statistic that 'In the past decade, over 35,000 people have been killed in Colombia's bloody civil conflict'. These are the words with which the documentary opens, displayed on a black screen, in bold, white font. This intertitle is replaced by more text, which states that conflict has moved from the jungles to urban centres, such as Medellín, and that urban gangs align themselves either with the guerrilla of paramilitaries. Finally, the intertitle focuses on the conflict in La Sierra, and records the date at the beginning of filming as January 2003. The text fades, although the screen remains black. The filmmakers make use of a sound bridge to connect these statistics to the space of the fourth world, to which they will visually introduce the audience after the black screen fades. The function of this sound bridge is to emphasise that these statistics relate to the fourth world space which is revealed in the shot to which the sound belongs. Specifically, this particular area of the fourth world is the *barrio* of La Sierra, and the sound is revealed to be running water, which when the shot fades to reveal a green space, has resonance with a jungle scene.

The first shot is an aerial one, and captured in the frame are masses of greenery, but which at closer inspection are ensconced between concrete surfaces. Within the greenery lies a blood-stained body. The limbs are clearly broken, and the congealed, bloodstained T-shirt indicates that the person is dead. In contrast to the water which runs behind the body, in the upper extreme of the shot, the body remains still. This deliberate framing by the filmmakers with a wide-angle lens ensures that the body is shown to be within the greenery. I argue that the purpose of this is to indicate that violence has migrated from the rural space to the city. Its resemblance to a jungle space is significant in its clear allusions to the civilisation and barbarism dichotomy, of which domestic audience members will be aware and make the link.

The jungle is a powerful example of barbarism because it is a space which cannot be tamed by the advances of civilised society. The body's placement in this space is important because it suggests that the *desechable* is linked to barbarism, and cannot be tamed by the city, represented by the concrete which has failed to tame the greenery in this area. The concrete/greenery distinction in this frame also represents the mythical encroachment of the barbaric countryside upon the civilised

city. This body, in its placement within the documentary - immediately proceeding the statistics of death – highlights that this has resulted from one of the 'more than 35,000' deaths caused by violence in the past decade, and as a representative of that death rate, links violence in this space with barbarism.

In the next shot the camera focuses on the face and torso, in a medium shot. The body is that of a young man. He lies with his mouth open, his hands covering his wound. This is the position in which we presume he died. Flies cover his face and fly in and out of his mouth. The implication that he has been abandoned strengthens the sense that he is the archetypal *desechable*. There is a lack of audio – the only sound heard in this shot is background noise. The next shot, however, cuts to a diegetic 'audience', on the other side of the water, gazing at the body. As explained earlier, there are children, men and women, and all look across the river towards the body, their gaze captured by the camera.

The shot cuts back from the audience at the other side of the river to the body, this time from a different angle, still high, but at the side of the river. Framed in this shot is a young girl, at a similar height to the camera, watching the scene below her, as two young women cradle the body of the deceased. The camera zooms to a close up, we see the young man's face, and part of each of the two young women. The shots allow the filmmakers to introduce the audience to the secondary theme in this film – the young women left behind after the death of their 'husbands'.[426] The camera remains behind the women, zoomed from the high angle indicating distance from these women. These are shots in observational mode – only background noise is present, and the camera remains at a distance. The impression is one of watching from a distance. There continues to be no sound other than background noise for a full minute, until a woman breaks down in tears. This is the first human sound heard by the audience, and is one of grief.

The sound of the woman crying is another use of a sound bridge. The camera cuts, and the young woman is shown in the street, held up by two others, weeping with grief and surrounded by people who do not grieve in the same way. Presumably, they are the audience who were earlier filmed watching the scene unfold from the other side of the water. The camera follows her as she struggles along the street, flanked by two older women. She cries out. The camera seems to get in her way, obtrusive in such a moment of grief. This cuts to a sideways shot, in which the young woman is framed in the centre of the shot, resting her head upon the shoulder of one

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[426] Many of the young women use the word 'marido' to describe their relationship with Edison, despite him having numerous girlfriends and children to different women. In addition, Cielo speaks about the father of her child, stating that she was 'widowed' at 15, despite not being married. For more on gender relations in the film, see Martin (2009).

of her companions, and repeatedly asking '¿por qué?' The camera moves towards her face, passing closely to the friend whose shoulder she is not resting upon. She cries out, the camera focused on her face, 'el papá de mis hijos. ¿Por qué me lo quitaron?', after which her companions attempt to take her away from the camera. She cries on the shoulder of another friend, before being led away. The camera, now stationary, follows her from behind. Its positioning in this scene is intrusive. The young woman's grief is paraded on screen, making uncomfortable viewing.

Whilst this short sequence is significant in its replication of the typical portrayal of the death of the fourth world inhabitant, what I argue is most significant is its juxtaposition with the death of Edison. What is most notable in this sequence, I argue, is the lack of dialogue. The impression is that the audience is intruding upon the grief of the boy's family members. Within his community, his life is grievable, but to the first world, it is not. He has no story therefore, in the sense articulated by Butler, his life cannot be apprehended as one worth grieving.

The opening scene certainly portrays Sontag's assertion that '[t]he more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying'.[427] The presentation of the *desechable* in the opening sequence conveys the sense that the mythical space of Medallo is indeed one which is distant from the first world space of central Medellín. The anonymous young man's face is visible in every scene in which his body is also seen, and in one shot the focus is on his face as the camera zooms to capture this part of his body only. He is a *desechable*, and he is only shown discarded at the side of the river. The woman shot dead in the street, shown later in the film, is also shown only as a *desechable* and her face is also visible, though less so than that of the anonymous youth. In each case the life cannot be grieved because there is no story, and so the face carries no meaning for the audience. It can therefore be shown, illustrating that the fourth world space is perceived to be distant because of the disengaged way in which death is presented in Medellín's peripheral *barrios*.

As I explained earlier in this chapter, this is an expository sequence, constructed by the filmmakers to create a contrast with the more participatory methods used to film the remainder of the documentary, which work to engage the audience to re-think their consumptive practices. The intrusion upon grief in these scenes therefore contrasts with the grief expressed upon Edison's death, in addition to the presentation of his body, as I now explore.

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[427] Sontag, p. 63.

Edison's death, whether predictable, inevitable, or a complete shock, is the most powerful element of this documentary. This is the point at which the filmmakers communicate to the audience most strongly that this is the reality of violence in Colombia. The audience has followed Edison's journey, and watched his conversations with the filmmakers in which he speaks of his hopes and dreams. They have listened to Edison's point of view, consumed his violence, been entertained by his escapades. However, as Nichols states, the impact of seeing his dead body lying in the street, discarded like other anonymous corpses throughout the film, is thought-provoking, especially in comparison to the other anonymous bodies portrayed previously.[428] Unlike the other images of corpses within the documentary, this is the body of a person with whom the audience has had a connection, whether positive or negative. It is this connection, and the way in which it is shown in contrast to the lack of emotion or empathy generated by the sight of the young man at the beginning of the film, which illustrate a critique on the part of the documentary filmmakers.

Edison is killed three quarters of the way through the film. He is killed by policemen who, having identified him as a paramilitary leader, have shot both him and his friend dead, leaving the bodies in the street. The body is displayed discarded in the street, with the feet of policemen and other bystanders nearby. There are no grieving women on the scene because the event has happened so recently, but the presentation of the body conveys that sense of grieving alone. Despite having been filmed in the minutes preceding his death, the camera no longer focuses on Edison's face. In death, he is afforded the dignity denied to the *desechable* of the opening sequence. Two different camera angles are used to capture Edison's body, and the presence of a shaky, hand-held camera suggests that the filmmaker had full access to the events. It is not coincidental, given that more than one shot is used to portray his body, that his face is not shown. He has, according to Sontag and Butler's theories, been humanised to the extent that his dignity is preserved in the immediate aftermath of his death.

Edison's face is seen later in the film, when his many girlfriends and relatives visit him in the hours before his funeral. However, in these scenes, his face is viewed through a glass screen, and having been prepared for the funeral, he is in a more dignified position than he had been left in on the street. His face is not shown in death through battle as described by Sontag, only as he is laid to rest. The inclusion of the funeral is also significant. Edison's story is followed from life through death and

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[428] Nichols, p. 38.

through the grieving process, unlike that of the *desechable*. He has a grievable death because the audience, and filmmakers, have been able to tell his story, to meet those who form part of his life.

The anonymous bodies are representative of the images the first world inhabitant (the audience) is accustomed to seeing in relation to the fourth world. Including the body of the anonymous youth at the beginning highlights how common these killings are, and in following Edison's story, the documentary humanises those who are killed, giving them a story, and allowing their deaths to be grievable. Edison's story is representative of those 35,000 killed in the previous decade, and in giving him a voice, the filmmakers communicate to the audience that the way in which the Fourth World is typically consumed is unjust. Edison is just one of 35,000. There are 34,999 others who have a story which has not been heard. In this way, Edison's example humanises the fourth world violent actor, transforming him from an anonymous mythical figure into an individual with dreams and an alternative future.

The documentary opens and closes with the theme of death. The *desechable* opens the film, and the aftermath of Edison's death dominates its ending. According to Martin, the narrative's opening and closing with scenes of death and grieving women endows an impression of circularity, in the sense that despite a peace agreement being reached part way through the narrative, violence continues to plague La Sierra.[429] However, while the narrative may have a sense of circularity, I argue that the strongest sense of circularity is that of the journey taken by the audience during the screening. The body screened at the beginning of the film remains anonymous and unknown to the audience, as do the grieving women. In contrast, Edison and the women grieving at the end of the narrative are known to the audience. The audience know the story of many of the young girls, and know their connection to the deceased. They have witnessed Edison's story throughout the year of filming, and have witnessed his death. In this way, the circularity is not a straightforward one in the sense articulated by Martin. The audience has progressed in its understanding, its comprehension of the life behind the dead body. Edison has a grievable life, whilst the *desechable*'s life cannot be grieved. The filmmakers suggest that young men will no longer be *desechables* if we pay attention to their full life stories, not just their violent actions.

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[429] Martin, p. 388.

Women and their roles

The juxtaposition of the dead bodies within the documentary is undoubtedly a powerful tool for provoking reflection from the audience regarding their role in the consumption of myths regarding the fourth world inhabitant. However, this is not the only original element within the film that is powerful in its engagement with that consumption. The filmmakers also comment upon the practices surrounding the representation of gender in relation to the fourth world inhabitant. Their portrayal of women, and in particular the young women of the community, illustrates myths regarding this sector of the population. They also choose to highlight the problems that remain hidden as a consequence of the acceptance of these myths. The filmmakers convey this by the contrasting levels of prominence given to women's voices at different points during the film and to their lives as individuals, as well as varying their visibility throughout. The filmmakers use the production of the documentary, as well as the narratives of its protagonists, to provoke the audience to reflect upon the place of women in their consumption of the fourth world space and its inhabitants. In order to illustrate this, I first focus upon the many girlfriends of Edison, before considering Cielo's role and her narrative as an exception to the typical portrayal of young women of the fourth world.

Deborah Martin has paid particular attention to the depiction of gender in *La Sierra*.[430] She argues that one of the underlying questions within the film's narrative is 'what do women want'? The portrayal suggests women are attracted to men of action, and most importantly, money, yet many women involved with Edison deny this. Most women interviewed in the film reject this assertion in relation to their own actions yet perpetuate the myth by directing it towards other women.[431] She asserts that 'female subjects both sanction and reject masculine violence, meaning that the difficulty in denying the attraction of (masculine) violence is played out in the film through female desire'.[432] This is an important point which when added to the focus in this chapter upon the filmmakers' attempts to engage with their first world audience illustrates that the question regarding desire is directed at the first world inhabitants. The question posited by Martin thus becomes 'what do the audience want?'. They are asked to question whether it is a simple replication of stereotypes that they would like to see, or if they would like to learn about the full extent of issues in the fourth world which have led some of its inhabitants to turn to violence and illicit activity.

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[430] Martin (2008).
[431] Martin (2008), pp. 390-91.
[432] Martin (2008), p. 392.

Gender, as portrayed by the participants, is shown to problematic because of the ambivalent rejection and attraction of masculine violence and the warrior model. However, it is my contention that the depiction of gender in this documentary is radical in its provocations to its target first world audience. Women are portrayed as the passive dupes highlighted by early feminist scholars as those who pervade in classic Hollywood models.[433] However, in this film, the passivity of women is a provocation to the audience to consider the women behind the alluring, masculine, warrior figures featured in the documentary's publicity paratexts.

Women in *La Sierra* play a supporting role. Although Cielo, the young mother and 'widow', is one of three protagonists, she is an exception in the portrayal of women in this documentary. Cielo's time on screen is dedicated to her relationships with men; the hardships caused by their absence and the impact of new relationships upon her life. However, Cielo's narrative is also a break with convention because of its focus upon all aspects of the life of a young widowed mother. In order to discuss adequately Cielo's exceptionality, I first focus upon the other young women in the film who are portrayed – the many girlfriends of protagonist Edison. I explore how the representation of these young women changes as the narrative of the film develops, revealing a scathing critique of the focus on young male violent actors in Medellín's *barrios marginales*, and, by extension, global fourth world inhabitants.

The documentary's fifth chapter, entitled 'The Women', explores the life of four young women connected to Edison. They range in age from 14 to 16 and all are either pregnant, or already have a child with him. More than half of this chapter (approximately 4 minutes 20 seconds of the 7.5 minute chapter) is dedicated to establishing Edison as a man who is sexually in demand. As Martin asserts, the audience's attraction to masculine violence is highlighted through feminine desire. In her testimony, Edison's 'main woman' – Geidy - focuses more on other women than upon her own relationship with Edison, and her testimony is juxtaposed with that of Jazmín, her sixteen-year-old former best friend, who is also pregnant with Edison's child. The juxtaposition of images and testimony is again used in the following scenes. Geidy complains that many women do not respect that her man is 'taken', because they focus on his material worth because of the benefits it will have for them. As she speaks, the picture cuts from a close up of Geidy's face to the exterior, where two women are hanging from Edison's shoulders and kissing his cheeks. In this way, the chapter, although providing an opportunity for young women to express their own desires and thoughts, illustrates that what is most often shown is the

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[433] See early psychoanalytic film theory such as Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen,* 16: 3 (1975), 6-18.

women's sense of competition with others for the most valuable man. This scene in particular establishes the grounds for an important juxtaposition in terms of the young women's representation, which for Geidy changes at the end of the film after Edison has been killed.

The pattern established by Geidy's testimony is replicated throughout the chapter to varying degrees dependent on the girlfriend involved. The chapter is split between four girls, while Edison interjects with his own comments. In total, of the 7 minutes and 30 seconds of this chapter, 4 minutes 40 is dedicated to both screen time and/or testimony of Geidy, Jazmín, Marleny and Yurani. As alluded to above, much of Geidy's testimony relates to the threat posed by other women in relation to her 'husband'. She explains that they have been together for almost four years, and that she was unaware of his warrior status until she had fallen in love and it was 'too late'. In total, in this scene, Geidy is given two minutes of screen time - more than any other girl. This scene is important in exploring the representation of women of the fourth world, as I now explore.

The final girlfriend visible in this chapter is Marleny, who is the mother of two of Edison's children – a newborn and a male toddler. Marleny is situated in the background of the scene – she is in her bedroom and sits on a bed while Edison speaks and plays with his toddler son. Marleny sits, holding her newborn, and looks up at the camera on a number of occasions. Because of her clear discomfort at the intrusion of the camera within her home, and her prolonged silence, her 20 seconds of screen time are very uncomfortable. Marleny's silence is, however, indicative. It highlights a pattern within the documentary in which young women are afforded a voice when discussing their attraction to violent men and emphasising conflicts with other women. They speak whilst pregnant of their hopes and dreams, but as each young woman fulfils her reproductive role, she loses her voice. Marleny is already the mother of two children, and in the chapter she stands out as the only young woman who does not give testimony.[434] Her voice is lost in the patriarchal system in which women are only afforded a voice in relation to the hegemonic male.[435] I argue that the

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[434] It is not only Edison's girlfriends who are portrayed in this way. Jesús - another paramilitary member and protagonist - is filmed sitting with his child and girlfriend. His girlfriend remains silent throughout the scene despite her deliberate placement within the frame.

[435] The role of the mother in Latin America is subject to much discussion. It is often celebrated and venerated in the domestic sphere, yet publically, mothers are often forgotten, or at least remain hidden. The depiction of these young mothers illustrates the representation of fourth world young mothers in the public sphere. See for example, Sylvia Chant with Nikki Craske, *Gender in Latin America* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2003) and Nikki Craske, *Women and Politics in Latin America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999). Evelyn Stevens' foundational article detailing *machismo* and *marianismo* is canonical, but of course not without problems. Patriarchy and its effects on women has been a subject of discussion for many years, and so there is a plethora of material to choose from, however, in particular, I recommend bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004). For more on the damaging effects of patriarchal society on men, see R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005). Indeed, although much of this thesis has analysed the representation

filmmakers deliberately use this technique of showing women in the film, yet denying them a voice, to highlight how first world fascination with young violent actors in fourth world spaces affects young women. As I argue below, using Jazmín as an example, women are largely invisible because we are fascinated by spectacular male violent figures.[436] Women play a supporting role. However, by highlighting the mechanisms in this supporting role, the documentary illustrates that it is the women of La Sierra who are truly extraordinary.

Jazmín is heavily pregnant in the scene in which she is introduced with Edison's other girlfriends. She explains that they met through a friend, and that Edison initiated their relationship. There is a large gap before we hear from Jazmín again, when she appears on camera, rummaging through a box to find a gun which she then hands to Edison before beginning her short testimony. The content of her testimony suggests that Jazmín, like other young women, is only able to speak because of and about her relationship with a violent actor. She explains that she worries about Edison constantly, and worries for the future of her child, before revealing that her own father was also a violent actor. She is however afforded a space and adequate time in which to speak in contrast to Marleny.

Jazmín reappears in later scenes after she has given birth in which she is cradling and feeding her baby. This is a section sandwiched between the testimony of Edison's father, who is a reformed criminal who now works as a carpenter. This sequence, two-thirds of the way through the film, lasts for approximately four and a half minutes. Shots cut between his father working, close up head shots of Edison speaking, and longer shots, which reveal Edison sitting in Jazmín's bedroom. Jazmín sits in the bottom right of the shot breast feeding her child and although she is in the foreground, the camera focuses upon Edison as he narrates stories of his violent escapades. Jazmín and her son, however, remain an obtrusive presence in the frame. The camera remains still whilst Edison continues to speak about his children and his hopes for their futures. Jazmín, having fulfilled her reproductive function, does not speak. In this way the filmmakers suggest to the audience that the only voices heard from the fourth world are those of the male violent actors. In allowing Edison to continue to tell stories of his violent actions whilst the mother of his child remains silent in the foreground, the filmmakers highlight that first world consumer focuses upon narratives of young violent men. In the obtrusive presence of Jazmín in

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of young men, it has not been possible to discuss at length gender representations. This could, however, be an interesting follow on study to this research.

[436] Within this scene one further girlfriend is introduced – Yurani. She is aged fourteen, and is just two-months-pregnant. She is first seen collecting 5000 pesos from Edison to pay for a medical check. In her short testimony she states that her father is angry, and expresses that she hopes she is not in love with Edison, because he lives a dangerous lifestyle. This is the last that is heard from her until the final scenes of the documentary.

the frame, they illustrate that there are other stories to be told. What happens to these women? When do we hear about their experiences of motherhood? Why are these young women suddenly silent? It highlights that the first world consumers is aware of the existence of these women and of their children, but that they choose not to focus their attention upon them.

In this scene there are five separate shots throughout Edison's narrative in which the mother Jazmín and her son are included within the frame. At no point does Jazmín speak, although on occasion her body language compensates for this auditory lack. The subversive power of each of these scenes lies in the juxtaposition of Edison's narrative and the images portrayed. Just as in the shots, Edison's girlfriends play an important role in the narrative, yet these roles are not developed, nor represented in subsequent shots. For example, the first shot begins just after Edison states that his mother is a humble woman. As the picture cuts to Edison in the bedroom with Jazmín, he states that it was difficult for his father because he was in prison when the *barrio* was first founded. Jazmín's presence in the shot compensates for his mother's absence but her silence emphasises the absence of his mother from the documentary. Edison makes no remark on the difficulties faced by his mother, moving to a new community while her husband was imprisoned, unable to provide, only upon his father's suffering and the impact that his own violent activity had upon him. The discourse of women's suffering is literally absent from Edison's account, and highlighted by the young mother's presence. In the fourth shot, lasting just seven seconds, Edison, now remarking on his own life, claims that being a father is a lot of responsibility, yet it also brings him much happiness. The juxtaposition between his words and the images shown reveal Edison's lack of awareness of the responsibility faced by these young women. In the following sequence shot in the same room, he states that he will not be around forever, he could be arrested or killed at any time, and that the responsibility will lie with the mothers. Again, Jazmín sits at the edge of the frame. The act of feeding her son highlights that the responsibility lies mainly with the young mothers, not with Edison. He may provide financial help, but his claims of responsibility are undermined by his acknowledgement that he will leave many young mothers with children to feed and raise as a result of his own actions.

The most revealing of all five of these shots is that in which Edison claims that he wishes all of his children were girls, so that they would have a better chance of survival. However, the scene cuts to a close-up of Jazmín's face. Edison continues to speak, but for seven seconds, the camera focuses on and thus directs the gaze of the audience to Jazmín, who, as Edison laments that although girls have a better

chance of survival, most of his children are sons, looks down at her own son. The camera follows her gaze, focusing on her son, before returning to the room and Edison's narrative. This shot, in its uncharacteristic focus on the young mother, undermines much of Edison's narrative. Responsibility lies with the mothers, and to claim that women have a better life because they live longer is a very reductive perspective. Jazmín's gaze at her son suggests she looks to the future, in which her son too will become a violent actor, and will likely die at a young age. The significance of the camera's focus is multiple. Firstly, this signifies circularity, in that more young men could equate to continuing levels of violence, a never-ending cycle in which successive generations eliminate one another. However, the uncharacteristic close up suggests a focus on women. This shot reveals the suffering of women. Juxtaposed with Edison's claim that he has many sons, this communicates that there is much heartache ahead for these young mothers.

The fleeting focus on the young woman also acts as a reminder that she must be the focus of our attention – she is the extraordinary figure, not the revered young violent actor of the documentary's promotional paratexts, which I will explore in more detail in the final section of this chapter. The implication is that we must allow her to speak by giving her a space through which her voice can be heard. In *La Sierra* the mothers are subalterns, in contrast to fourth world inhabitants as constructed by myth. The fourth world inhabitant, in the eyes of the first world consumer, is a violent actor. Aligning with Spivak's own response to her own famous question, in this case the subaltern cannot speak.[437] The women of the fourth world remain subalterns, whilst young men, whether they are participants in violence or not, are recognised as fourth world inhabitants. Their recognition, however, is due to the increasing homogenisation of the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. In this sense, his girlfriend is visible only to prove Edison's status as a mythical violent actor.

As I discussed above, the second part of this section is dedicated to the narrative of the protagonist Cielo. The representation of the Edison's girlfriends is indicative of the importance of young women and that an increasing recognition of their status as fourth world inhabitants is necessary. Cielo's story, which she recounts in parallel to that of the two male protagonists contrasts markedly to the portrayal of those girlfriends. At the beginning of the film she is already a mother, and the father of her son, a friend of the two male protagonists, is dead. However, she is given a voice, and through this opportunity she highlights the extraordinary strength

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[437] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp.66–111.

of the women left behind in their efforts to raise children whilst scraping together a living. Her narrative highlights the problems faced by women, and the rollercoaster of their existence. She is strong yet she also faces serious hardships that lead to difficult dilemmas, as I now explore.

Cielo is a young mother in La Sierra whose 'husband' was a member of Bloque Metro and was killed when she was 15. Her new boyfriend, another member of the same gang, is in prison. The film follows her as she struggles to juggle her role as mother, provider and girlfriend, and she is the only person from La Sierra seen to leave the *barrio*. Cielo's narrative, like those of the male protagonists Edison and Jesús, is portrayed in her answers during interviews with the filmmakers. However, what is noticeably different in her interviews is that the background to each of the frames in which she is captured speaking does not visually cite the audience. The central city is not visible, and instead, the background incorporates the interior of the *barrio* of La Sierra, rather than the greenery and views of the central city. For example, in one interview her back is turned not against the city, but against the community itself. She is seated on a roof, which conveys the sense that the framing of this scene and her placement within it is carefully managed. Indeed, the careful management of this sequence is suggested when the filmmakers seek to highlight the absence of the central city from her narrative by cutting to a shot of the panorama and the central city part way through her interview. Captured within the frame of Cielo's interview is the local church, a number of brick buildings, and a road on which a number of buses are parked. There is little sign of vegetation, and no trace of the central city. She speaks about her brother's murder and the subsequent threats from the guerrilla which forced the family to flee from their homes and move to the city. The absence of the central city however, suggests that in addition to narratives of women who have reproduced, the first world does not consume narratives of displacement nor of the harsh realities of ongoing guerrilla warfare.

During Cielo's interview, the shot cuts to her son, who is playing at the side of the house. The camera captures the side of the house and vista behind him, similar to that visible in Edison and Jesús's interviews. The city centre is not visible as it is obscured by the house. The implication is that once her son is old enough to leave the care of his mother, he too will become visible to the central city because he will play a similar role to that of Edison and Jesús. This is supported by Cielo's subsequent claim that 'el niño le dice que, que va a matar a los que matan el papá de él'. In this way, the cycle of killing continues, yet the filmmakers also assert that the consumption of such actions will persist. In the juxtaposition of the background images in relation to Cielo and her son, as well as that of the male protagonists

discussed earlier, the filmmakers illustrate that the first world audience only partially sees the realities in areas such as La Sierra. Cielo's issues, as women's issues, are relegated to local concern, whereas the violence of young men, in its recognition by the first world, is a global issue.

Although the cityscape is absent from Cielo's interviews, as the narrative progresses, she is captured in the city itself, in contrast to the male protagonists. She works on buses, selling sweets, in order to provide for her son. Her presence within the city centre is provocative in that it reaffirms the unwillingness of its inhabitants to to listen to her story, as a woman from the fourth world space. While in the city, point of view shots are used, and the camera remains at the same height. We follow Cielo as she purchases sweets and then as she boards a bus and attempts to sell some. While these shots are shown, her testimony is heard – she will not prostitute herself as some in the central city have suggested. The majority of people on the bus return the sweets to her rather than purchase them. This rejection of the sweets as an item to purchase represents the rejection by the inhabitants of the city of her story as a young woman from the *barrios marginales*. Her story, like the sweets, is not an attractive item for consumption by first world inhabitants, and so is rejected.

This sense is compounded by the closing scenes of the documentary, in which Cielo declares that she is going to work in a dancing bar because she can earn a lot of money there each work before returning at weekends to look after her son. Her reluctance to speak more about this and the quantities of money quoted suggests that the 'dancing bar' work will require sexual services. It is in this way that the filmmakers draw the problems of women in the *barrios marginales* to the first world audience who consume entertaining narratives of violence yet ignore the hardships of women. The reaction of the central city's inhabitants who reject her product – sweets – metaphorically represents the first world audience who usually reject the narratives of women of the fourth world space. It is in this way, I argue, that the filmmakers make a direct appeal to their audience to reach out for the stories of young women like Cielo, and to help them. Her assertion that she will go to work in a dancing bar, to have her body consumed by strangers, serves as a warning from the filmmakers to the audience that they must not simply consume the narratives from these women, but seek active engagement with real people to bring real solutions. I now move on to consider the marketing paratext of *La Sierra* to highlight how the audience has been drawn to the film text. I argue that the documentary and the paratext form a marked contrast, and thus suggest that this is a positive outcome in changing first world consumptive practices in consuming the lives of violent fourth world actors.

Paratext

La Sierra's marketing materials include the film poster, and a website which includes images from the film and a transcript of an interview with the co-directors. These materials indicate a film which focuses on extreme violence in a fourth world setting. On the other hand, the documentary itself undermines these very suppositions, criticising the consumption of violence as the product of an increasingly homogenised representation of fourth world inhabitants as violent actors, and its masking of structural violence, whose effects are felt most markedly by the space's least visible inhabitants – mothers.

Marketing paratexts, as I illustrated in the introduction to this thesis, exist outside of the film text. They are designed to promote the film text, but because they are often the only part of the cultural product consumed, it is important to consider how they may be decoded by a potential audience member. Analysed in comparison with the film text itself, the marketing paratexts of *La Sierra* are a skewed representation of the film text. Rather than reproducing the themes and genre of the documentary, the paratexts represent the very cultural processes that the documentary seeks to undermine. I will first analyse the marketing paratext – the DVD cover – before considering how it contrasts with the film text.

Like many cinematic texts, the same image was used for the promotional poster as for the DVD cover. In this way, the image is one of the first encounters the audience has with the documentary, whether viewed publicly at a film festival, or privately at home. As the first, and in some cases final,[438] encounter with the film text, this particular form of paratext must communicate a number of factors in order to convince the audience to view the full-length feature. Indeed, Gray subtitles his section on movie posters: 'The Poster and its Prey', indicating that the purpose of the poster is to *capture* an audience through, he states, its communication of a familiar genre, star intertexts and 'the type of world a would-be audience member is entering'.[439] Film posters use information which we have previously encountered to attract us to the cinematic text in question. As I now explain, this film poster sends a number of messages in order to attract a diverse audience.

The image used to promote the documentary is not, as it appears to be, a simple reproduction of a still from the film. It draws on two stills from the

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[438] Gray asserts that we consume many more paratexts than we do full texts, because we decide whether to view the entire film text based on our decoding of the paratext (p. 26).
[439] Gray, p. 52.

documentary, and distorts both to produce the image in question. There is a simple monochrome colour scheme of red and black in the imagery – the background is red with a number of objects and a single figure discerned through black silhouettes, with white text. The use of such a warm colour foregrounds much of the background, in contradiction with the logic that the background should be unobtrusive.[440] This, coupled with the association of the colour red and with danger and death, suggests that all aspects of life in La Sierra are dangerous, even those which fade into the background.

The main image in the text - that of the lone figure holding a device close to his face - is the first still taken from the documentary. A partially destroyed wall constitutes a substantial segment of the red background, against which a seemingly silhouetted figure (his head at least), dressed in camouflage, is leaning. The combination of the two colours of the limited palette creates an aura of danger, and the clothing worn by the figure, a black balaclava obscuring the facial features, and combat uniform, do not allow easy identification. The positioning of the lone figure resembles that of the posters used by Hollywood action films, which, Gray asserts, habitually 'feature prominently the lone male (or occasionally female) hero looking steely-eyed and ready for action, with weapons in hand and/or muscles bulging'.[441] In this way, the association of death and danger in the background colour with the conventions of the Hollywood action movie results in an encoding of action and danger. In the context of the growing homogenisation of the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as violent actor, this image also indicates that this film will include those fourth world actors. The figure lurking in an urban space, carrying a gun, panders to this myth.

The second still taken from the film to form this collaged image is positioned in the top-right corner. This image, the mirror from the taxi in the opening scenes of the documentary, is largely obscured by white text, although a small crucifix is clearly visible as it falls below the text, and is hanging from the mirror. Ahead of the crucifix is the road in front of the taxi driver. However, the combination of these two images suggests that the figure in the black balaclava is on the road to death. The association of red, the colour of danger, with black, the colour of mourning, strengthens this insinuation. This combination of limited palette and a collage of two stills creates a visual encoding that signifies death, and, as Gray asserts in relation to publicity posters, draws on a genre familiar to the audience at which it is aimed – the Hollywood action movie.

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[440] Bordwell & Thomson, p. 190.
[441] Gray, p. 53.

The encoding of the images draws an audience attracted to action movies, and to the myth of the fourth world violent inhabitant, yet the text printed on the marketing paratext also has a significant role to play, both in strengthening that association with the action genre, but also in attracting other audiences than those who enjoy that genre. The text which is superimposed onto this image includes the film title, details of prizes which the documentary has been awarded, and excerpts from media reviews, all of which give contrasting interpretations of the documentary. Many reinforce the action genre underlined in the paratext's images. The title is capitalised and printed in white, resembling graffiti which, due to the art form's association with hip-hop culture, also suggests an urban location. As discussed in the introduction, graffiti, like wider hip-hop culture, is a form of counter-culture, yet its association with fourth world inhabitants means it is more often decoded as a sign of juvenile delinquency. The subtitle below, 'Urban Warfare in the Barrios of Medellín, Colombia', and the tag line, 'Live fast. Die young' reinforce this dual notion of counter-culture and criminality. Apart from reinforcing the association of the documentary with the action film genre, the two combine to tell a little more of the documentary's narrative – young people engaged in dangerous warfare.

The ambiguity of the title and its tag line continues through the citation of four reviews conducted by US publications. Of the four, three are difficult to decode given their use of a single word: 'courageous', 'amazing' and 'unforgettable'. For example, the notion of courage is abstract – it is unclear whether it refers to filmmakers, participants, the documentary as a whole, or simply the subject matter. That the film is 'amazing', and 'unforgettable' tells the participant little about the content, only the opinion of the reviewer, and reinforces the association with the Hollywood action thriller. However, one review gives contextual detail and a cultural referent against which to compare the documentary. It states: 'Reminiscent of *City of God* – only real.' The link to the popular Brazilian film provides a referent against which the potential audience can assess this film, but asserts the authenticity of the images, that the violence consumed as fiction in *City of God* is reproduced in a depiction of reality. Indeed, the link to the Brazilian film also suggests authenticity, as the fictional film was based on a real account of life in the *favela*, first published as a novel based on the author, Paulo Lins's own experiences in the real-life City of God on the outskirts of the city of Rio de Janeiro. The film also used non-professional actors who had grown up in the *favelas*, creating a reference which links the documentary to the peripheral neighbourhoods of most cities, in particular those of Latin America. In this way, the association with *City of God* situates this documentary within the category of World Cinema, and establishes as a film that focuses on the fourth world inhabitant

as violent actor. Indeed, *City of God*'s own paratext, its DVD cover, includes a review asserting that the film is 'the Brazilian *Goodfellas*', which by implication links *La Sierra* to the Hollywood action genre.[442]

The final items of text of the marketing paratext of *La Sierra* are situated at the top of the DVD cover and refer to the documentary's awards, nominations and affiliation with Human Rights Watch. The film gained a 'Special Mention' at the Sundance Film Festival in the best documentary category, and won the Grand Jury Award for Best Documentary at the Miami Film Festival. The awards indicate the authenticity of the documentary, but also situate it within the independent film category. Although the imagery invokes the Hollywood action genre, these awards assert that the documentary is part of a different branch of the film industry. The presence of the Human Rights Watch logo again suggests authenticity – the mission of the organisation is to protect 'the human rights of people around the world. […and] investigate and expose human rights violations […]'.[443] The violations exposed by the organisation are often hidden, and as such, the presence of the logo suggests that the documentary will reveal as yet unseen material and/or expose unknown realities. Of course, many audiences are drawn to films promoted by this organisation, and these viewers will form part of the audience for the documentary.

The paratext contrasts markedly with the filmmakers' engagement with their audience. Much of the visual encoding suggests a Hollywood action film, through the image of the anonymous violent figure and the content of the written text. The link to another Latin American film capitalises on the demand for 'authentic' and 'realist' depictions of life in Latin American fourth world spaces, as discussed in the introduction. This demand can be linked to the Hollywood action genre, though it can too appeal to those looking to discover 'truths', as is communicated by the presence of the Human Rights Watch logo. Despite the differences in meanings which could be derived from this paratext, one definitive conclusion can be drawn. The documentary is targeted at an English-speaking global audience, and is therefore to be consumed by a first world audience. As I have described above, the filmmakers engage with their audience to consider their consumptive practices. The documentary establishes which actors and which of their behaviours are consumed by the audience, and highlights those which are ignored, or, at least not seen. The paratext, in whichever way it is decoded by the individual spectator, is not a separate entity, but the beginning of the cultural product. The audience begins to decode the documentary before he/she begins to watch the film text. I suggest that no matter

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[442] *City of God*. Dir. Fernando Meirelles. Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2002.
[443] Human Rights Watch, 'About Us'. <http://www.hrw.org/aboutus> [Accessed 13 October 2013].

what the interpretation of the paratext, the audience will question the assumptions with which he/she began to watch the film.

The paratext described above contrasts with the multi-faceted view of life in La Sierra, and as such it is my contention that it functions as a foil which also induces reflection on the part of its audience. The audience member who has been attracted to the text based on the content of the paratext is presented with a different product. Although this is not unusual, I suggest that, given the documentary's engagement with its audience and its focus on the location of that audience, this contrast is a deliberate technique.

Conclusions

La Sierra portrays the consumption of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor in its direct engagement with its first world audience. This, I argue, is achieved in the juxtaposition between marketing paratexts and the film text. Throughout this thesis I have argued that the cultural product's text, whether belonging to the fiction or non-fiction genre, textual or cinematic, is complemented by its paratexts. In relation to *La Sierra*, they provoke the audience to consider their own practices in consuming the fourth world violent actor of Medellín. After the opening sequences of death and grieving, *La Sierra* begins with the assertion from the filmmakers' taxi driver that 'la parte linda - la gente. La gente que te enseña. La gente que te cuenta sus historias. Para mí la mejor es la gente.' The stories of the people of La Sierra are important, and *La Sierra* ensures that a diverse range of stories are told with cinematic techniques that provoke audiences to question their own consumptive practices.

Indeed, the documentary contributes what other cultural products analysed in this thesis have not: an engagement with the gender paradigms at play in the representation of the fourth world space. The focus in the documentary on women in particular, and the contrast of their absence in the paratext, highlights that there are more stories available to hear from the inhabitants of the *barrios marginales*. There is a clear comment implied in the film's presentation of contrasting roles for teenage girls in the *barrios marginales* first as promiscuous teenage girls, who are given much screen time in which to air their views about their relationships with violent actors, and their later transformation into mothers, where they have fulfilled their reproductive function and are not afforded a voice. Women in this documentary are portrayed as forgotten yet worthy subjects of our attention. The visual focus on the central city in the male-centred sequences juxtaposed with its absence in the

narratives of women highlights that the first world audience has a limited vision of the fourth world inhabitant. In relation to the peripheral *barrios* in Medellín, the first world focuses on young men and violence, ignoring the stories of young women and the effects of such violence on the latter's lives. The allusions to structural violence in relation to each of the three protagonists points to the consumption of Medellín's violence as another form of structural violence. In this way, the filmmakers address the first world inhabitant and ask that they consider more than the myths of barbarism and violence that surround the representation of the fourth world space. These aspects of life impede the representation of a diverse range of issues affecting other inhabitants of this space, as illustrated by the invisible, muted women.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the representation of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor, and in particular focused upon the city of Medellín's marginal spaces. It took into account the pre-existing myths regarding the division of the city into two halves: Medellín – the central city – and Medallo – the supposed home space of violent actors. This division was explored through Manuel Castells' concept of the network society and the existence of black holes, which he labels the 'fourth world', of which mythical Medallo is representative. The aim of this thesis was to analyse the presentation of the fourth world space's violent actors in four of the nation's most visible cultural products of the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It took into account not only the text itself, in each case, but also the marketing paratexts that comprise the cultural product. In this way it was able to consider the importance of the audience/readers and their engagement with the cultural products in question.

One of the principal aims of this innovative approach to representations of violence in Colombia was to allow the myth of the *sicario* to be distinguished from that of the drug baron. The latter is a figure who has dominated cultural production in the late twentieth century and, as discussed in Chapter One, has his own mythology. He is a powerful figure, yet with his myth comes individuality. His personal traits, ruthlessness and cunning, are incorporated into the basic characteristics expected of a drug baron. He also has clear ties to the Colombian nation, and in many ways has become a key representative of it. On the other hand, although the *sicario* has also been a focus of cultural production, his myth is very different to that of the drug baron. He exists as a *desechable*, an extreme symptom of consumer society in which a human being can be discarded and forgotten, as graphically illustrated in *La Sierra*'s opening sequence. His myth is tied to this sense of easy replacement, and as such, it thrives on his anonymity, which contrasts markedly with that of the drug baron. The *sicario* continues to be a presence, a feared Other for the first world audience, because he does not have a story. In death he is not grieved, and as such, his myth is transferred to another youth who fits that same myth because of his home in the fourth world space and his participation in violent action. In this way, he has a continual presence as a myth, despite the increasing number of deaths of the individual young men who represent him. This fourth world violent actor came to prominence in the media as the *sicario*, but over the course of time all young men of the fourth world space in Medellín were associated with perpetrating violence and early death.

The ways of representing the fourth world actor were another aspect of the analysis undertaken in this thesis, which considers the different approaches taken by the filmmakers/authors to engage with their audiences in order to change the way in which this space and its actors are consumed. In this way, Smith's concepts of alignment and allegiance were used to indicate different methods used to achieve this. The two cinematic cultural products provided a very interesting contrast with each other since the audience were aligned in one case to a first world actor and, in the other, to a fourth world inhabitant. The result is surprising, in that allegiance is garnered with the fourth world inhabitant rather than the character from the first world, as might have been expected given that the majority of the consuming audience belong to the latter category. Schroeder, in his fiction film *La virgen de los sicarios*, chose to align the audience with the first world actor Fernando, yet then presented him as a character with which the audience are unlikely to feel allegiance because of his abhorrent discourse regarding the fourth world inhabitants of the city. This technique contrasts in an interesting way with that of *La Sierra*, in which the audience is aligned with the fourth world inhabitant and violent actor Edison, and are given the opportunity to develop a sense of allegiance to him, because they are given access to his hopes and dreams of an alternative life free of violence. This allegiance is made more powerful by Edison's death and the journey taken by the audience with his friends and family to mourn this event. In the contrast between these two cultural products, the question of responsibility for the representation and consumption of the violence perpetrated by the fourth world actor is illustrated as more complicated than simply stopping violent actors from perpetrating their attacks. It highlights that attention must be directed towards first world consumptive practices as well as to the lives of the fourth world inhabitants.

The written cultural products too provide interesting examples of audience engagement. In *Leopardo al sol* the narrative voices have a clear alignment with the drug barons, and illustrate that without the fourth world space, the *sicario* does not have a context. The collective voice therefore cannot be aligned with him, and as a consequence cannot feel allegiance to him. In contrast, the narrators' closeness to the drug baron's actions, knowledge of his family life and their respect for his morals mean that they feel allegiance to the characters.[444] This allows the reader to differentiate between the two myths – those of the drug baron and the *sicario*. It also enables the identification of the *sicarios'* essential mythical criteria by isolating them

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[444] In this way, Dalton And Martinez's presentation of Edison in *La Sierra* serves as a model for allowing an audience to feel allegiance to the fourth world violent actor by giving access to all aspects of his life rather than just his role as an assassin.

as missing elements when audiences were not aligned with the fourth world actor as the principal violent actor. His myth is attached to his status as a fourth world inhabitant, and this is missing from Restrepo's novel. The analysis of Salazar's relationship with his reader in *No nacimos pa'semilla* is most interesting in its difference because, in this case, I argue that the effect of the writing style is not what the author intends. Having attempted to write a *testimonio* that would give an insight into the hidden lives of the *sicarios* in the years in which they were first introduced to the global consumer, the author fails to create that sense of alignment. Instead, his own thoughts and feelings overwhelm the short testimonies because his voice gives a sense of cohesion to the overall text, and so the reader is aligned with the first world editor. In this way, there is little opportunity to foster a sense of allegiance with the individuals who give testimony. This methodology of considering audience engagement with the cultural products and their 'characters' has proved most illuminating, and in this way, the thesis makes an original contribution to scholarship in the field of Colombian cultural studies.

In previous scholarly analysis, the fourth world violent actor's existence in the media and in cultural products is tied to the networks of the narcotics industry and thus this thesis the first full exploration of him as a mythical figure linked to the wider global sphere. Although scholars such as Kantaris and O'Bryen have engaged with Manuel Castells's theory of the fourth world when analysing Colombian and Latin American cultural products, they have not tied this to the wider global sphere of cultural production. Nor have scholars attempted to make a comparison of paratexts and texts within the same analysis, and this too forms an original aspect of this thesis, whose conclusions I now summarise.

The paratextual analysis has provided evidence that the myth of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor is closely tied to the *sicario*. The first paratexts explored – those of *Leopardo al sol* - illustrate that the drug baron, in contrast to the *sicario*, is difficult to represent, and so the publishers have chosen to focus on different aspects of the novel instead. This is significant because it highlights the centrality of the *sicario* in the subsequent three cultural products. The paratexts of the film *La virgen de los sicarios* indicate the centrality of the anonymous young violent actor to the myth of the *sicario*, and this is emphasised by the first paratext of *No nacimos pa'semilla*. In the latter, the *sicario's* myth is clearly linked to how he is represented and consumed – a character who appears on the back of a motorbike to carry out the business of death. He was widely feared during the era in which he was most frequently visible in the media, but as the second paratextual image of *No nacimos pa'semilla* suggests, as the twentieth century closed and the *sicarios* were

less visible after the demise of the major drug barons and their war against the state, fear centred more on the fourth world spaces surrounding the city. This is reflected in the imagery of the blurred, and therefore not individually identifiable settlements on the hillsides surrounding the city. It is also illustrated in the final paratext analysed: that of *La Sierra*. This paratext illustrates the fourth world violent actor in the fourth world, and portrays the watching audience through the taxi driver's mirror. It also illustrates the links between this local fourth world violent actor and more global representations, because of the visual encoding that resembles that of Hollywood blockbusters. In this way, the paratexts themselves reveal a trajectory from 1990 to 2005 in which the perception of the fourth world violent inhabitant and his home space was adapted over time to be more closely aligned with a globally homogenised representation rather than a localised focus.

The homogenisation of the representation of a global fourth world inhabitant who is a violent actor is one of the major conclusions of this thesis. The analysis of different contexts in the introduction indicated that there is a growing sense of homogenisation surrounding this space and the presentation of its inhabitants. Primarily, it is the most violent actors, or those who enact the most spectacular actions, who gain the attention of and coverage in the media. In this way, the inner city ghettos of the US and the French *banlieues* are presented as more similar than they actually are. The underlying structural issues in each context are very different, yet their presentation in the media is similar. I argue that the presentation of the Colombian fourth world actor follows suit, as discussed in this thesis.

It is the *sicario's* anonymity which also links him to more global representations of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor. As time progressed between 1990 and 2005, the representation of Medellín's fourth world violent actor more closely corresponded with that of Other fourth world inhabitants in the global setting. In *La Sierra*, Edison was not labelled as a *sicario*, but a violent actor, despite admitting on camera to carrying out killings for money. Instead, he is one of a growing number of young men who have been captured in cultural products living a life dominated by violence in the fourth world space. The death of the unknown young man in the opening scenes of the same documentary closely resembles the reporting of death in Other fourth world spaces, as illustrated by Sontag and Butler in their discussions on this topic. This trend is, I argue, one which must be explored at a local level and tied to the global pattern in order to be better understood. The issue of mourning is an important one, as Dalton and Martinez make clear in *La Sierra*. In order to fully understand the lives of those we fear – the violent fourth world actors –

we must listen to their stories, not only of violent actions, but of day-to-day life in these spaces which are not connected to the network society.

The analysis of the four cultural products has also revealed some aspects of life in the fourth world space of Medellín which are very rarely represented. The violent actor has come to be the representative of this fourth world space. However, as illustrated in the cultural products in question, this practice masks all other aspects of life in the fourth world space. The lives of women, for example, are barely given attention unless they are linked to violent actors. The testimony of Doña Azucena in *No nacimos pa'semilla* is the single female voice in the entire document, whilst in *La Sierra*, the portrayal of young women contrasts with the typical presentation of women as competitive bidders for the affections of violent actors and of silent mothers who have neither a voice nor a role in the popular imagination. The similarities in these two non-fictional representations highlight that in fact women are important yet under-represented fourth world actors. As suggested in Jazmín's experience, women are still subalterns, whilst men are fourth world inhabitants. The distinction can be drawn because violent men, although not able to access the benefits of the network society, are able to circulate within it through their representation in the media and in cultural products. This of course has serious implications for men, but they are at least visible, even if their representation is clearly mythical. In contrast, women, and in particular those who have fulfilled their reproductive function, are forgotten. They are overshadowed by the violent actors of the fourth world. They cannot speak because within the network society there is no space afforded to their representation. In this way, Castells's notion of the fourth world as a series of black holes in the network society can be supplemented by the lack of interest from the first world audience of the network society who consume these representations. Women exist in a black hole of representation, in contrast to their violent male counterparts.

It is this which brings me to my final conclusion. The cultural products analysed in this thesis illustrate that it is not only the fourth world inhabitant as violent actor that has become a consumer product, but the fourth world space itself is now a consumable myth. The fourth world is excluded from the first world space, meaning that its inhabitants are unable to represent themselves, yet it remains ever-present for those who are able to consume its presentation. The myth of the fourth world inhabitant as a violent actor must be dismantled through a re-representation of all aspects of life in these spaces. Those who present the space must allow all of its inhabitants to be seen and to speak. In global markets, the fourth world cannot

continue to be marketed as a space of violence. And the Colombian fourth world space cannot continue to be represented as the home of urban violence.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Colombia's Violent Groups and Organizations

Autodefensa groups formed as a consequence of abuses perpetrated by many of the guerrilla *frentes* operating throughout Colombia, originally conceived of as protection units for small rural communities against the numerous forces plundering their resources, especially guerrillera groups. These forces were often formed spontaneously, and up to 1997, were known locally as milicias. Many of these forces aligned in 1997 to form the AUC (United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia), headed by the Castaño brothers, whose father had been kidnapped and killed by FARC forces.[445] As Luis Alberto Restrepo asserts, the groups are commonly perceived to be State-sponsored, working in collaboration with the army to eliminate guerrilla *frentes* and any of their collaborators.[446] As a consequence of the latter, the operations and methods employed by the *autodefensas* have received much condemnation from human rights groups. There are many accounts which state the *autodefensa* forces have massacred entire communities, accusing them of collaborating with the guerrillas.[447]

The **ELN** (Ejército de Liberación Nacional/National Liberation Army) was originally composed mainly of former university students, working on the principles of Che's *focismo,* assuming that a prerevolutionary situation existed in the country.[448] The group was also linked to Liberation Theology and the teachings of Camilo Torres, a revolutionary priest and one of the founding members of the group; however, he was killed in first combat mission.[449] Despite their efforts to motivate an uprising, the organisation had little effect in its early years, and after State repression of their forces, only 36 members remained by 1976.[450] The focus changed in the following years, the remaining members focusing on small individual groups operating with popular sectors at a local level. In 1983, the organisation reunited at a national level, and enjoyed significant gains in its popularity and recruitment.[451]

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[445] Hylton, p. 73.
[446] Luis Alberto Restrepo M., 'The Equivocal Dimensions of Human Rights in Colombia', in *Violence in Colombia 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace,* ed. by Charles Bergquist et al., (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001), pp. 95-126 (p. 119).
[447] For example, see Simons.
[448] Pearce, p. 171.
[449] Pizarro, p. 399.
[450] Pearce, p. 174.
[451] Ibid.

The **FARC** (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) was formed as a direct result of repression against Communists in 1964.[452] An attack on the hamlet of Marquetalia, under Plan Lazo, American military resources and Colombian troops forced the displacement of numerous families, who joined forces to form a guerrilla column, which two years later would establish itself as the FARC.[453] The organisation is divided into different 'fronts' (*frentes*), which operate in the areas which it controls, working with peasant groups to obtain land rights and fighting for the concerns of the people. Although predominantly a guerrilla group, in 1985, after negotiations with the government of Betancur, the organisation established a civilian arm, named the **Unión Patriótica** (UP).[454] Forrest Hylton describes the organisation as 'a civilian front designed to consolidate a power base within the formal political system prior to laying down arms'.[455] However, despite its status as a non-military movement, by 1995 the group had almost been wiped out. Geoff Simons asserts that at this point the coalition had lost 2500 members to assassination by the right–wing *autodefensa* groups,[456] which took advantage of the civilian status of the movement, and its lack of military training, allowing its members to easily exact revenge on the FARC guerrilla group it so ardently opposed.[457]

The **M-19** (19 April Movement) emerged as a guerrilla organisation almost a decade after the ELN and FARC. In 1974 their existence was announced with the theft of Simón Bolívar's sword from the Museum of Bogotá, although the group had officially formed in 1972.[458] Its late arrival to the public eye was not the only factor which marked the organisation apart from other guerrilla groups. Its ideology was not based on Marxist, left-wing ideals or focused on peasant struggle. Rather, its leaders agreed that the movement would be used as a tool to open the State up to more participation, given the perpetuation of the *Frente Nacional*.[459] The theft of Bolívar's sword was typical of the group's high profile operations, which also included the disastrous storming of the Palace of Justice in 1985.[460] In addition, the organisation made many enemies in some of operations, stealing ammunition and arms from the army in 1979 created a particular determination on the part of the army to avenge

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[452] Hylton, p. 56.
[453] Ibid.
[454] Pizarro, p. 404.
[455] Hylton, p. 72.
[456] Simons, p. 96.
[457] Hylton, p. 72.
[458] Pearce, p. 171; Hylton, p. 71.
[459] Pearce, p. 171.
[460] Upon entering the building, the guerrillas were bombarded by the army, resulting in the death of all those inside. This included many of the country's top judges who were in the building at the time of its attack.

this act.[461] Of particular importance was its kidnap of Martha Nieve Ochoa, whose brothers were members of the Medellín cartel. In retaliation, 223 drug traffickers established the MAS (Death to Kidnappers), a paramilitary death squad which would be responsible for the deaths of many guerrillas,[462] and also was the training ground of the Castaño brothers.[463]
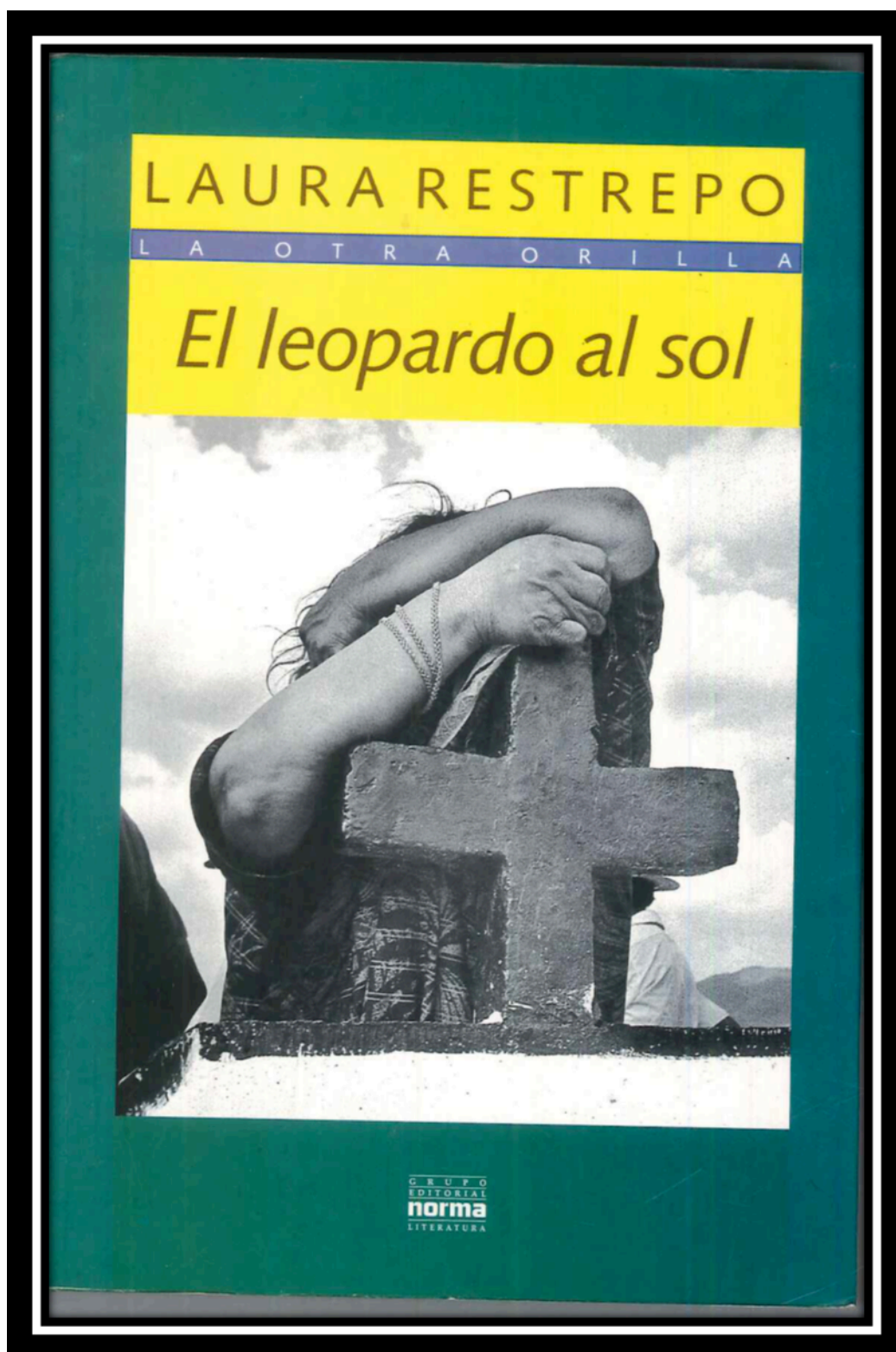
Milicias – see Autodefensas

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[461] Pearce, pp. 171–172.
[462] Simons, p. 55.
[463] Hylton, p. 69.

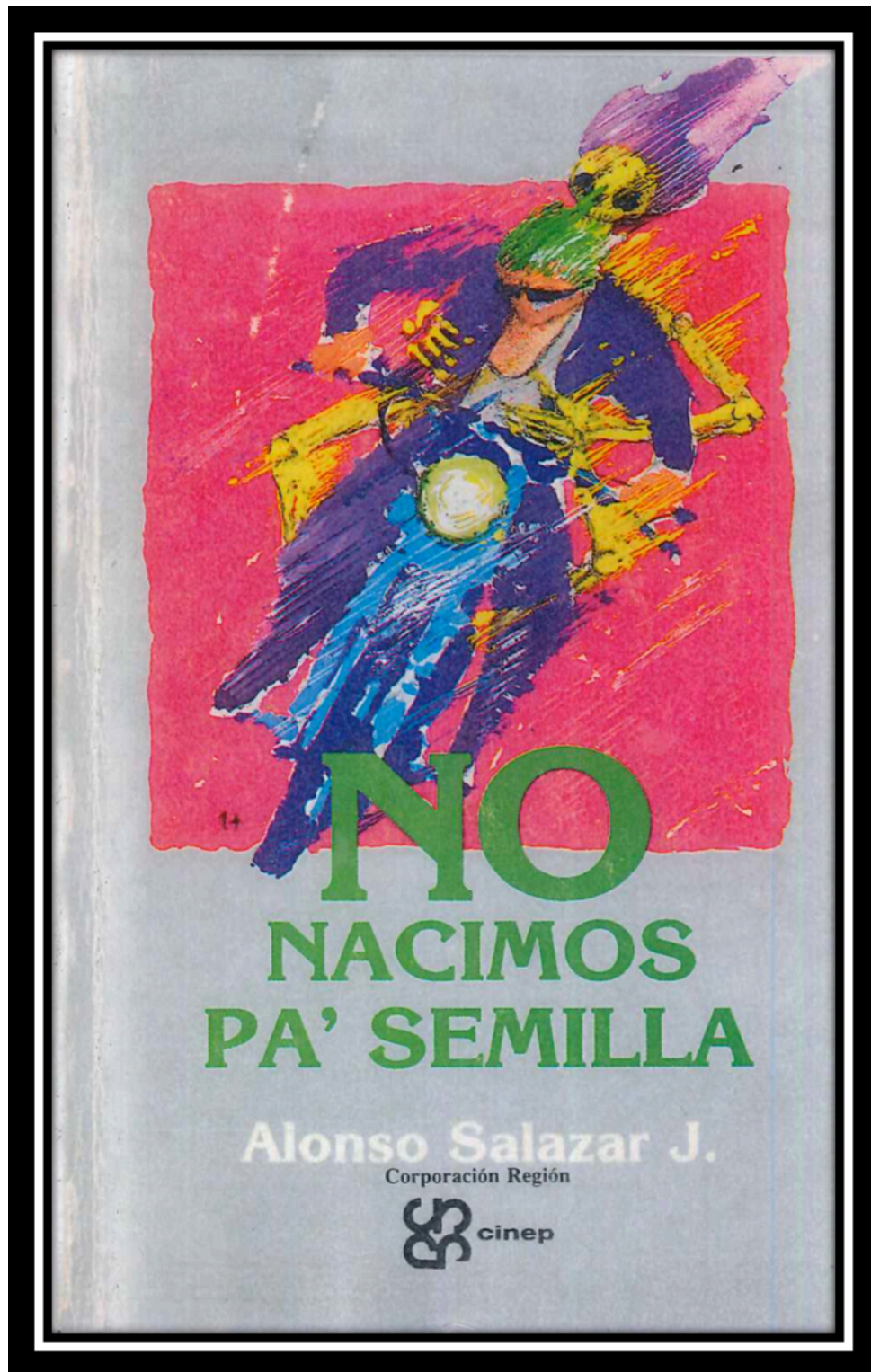# Appendix 2: Paratextual Images of Each Cultural Product

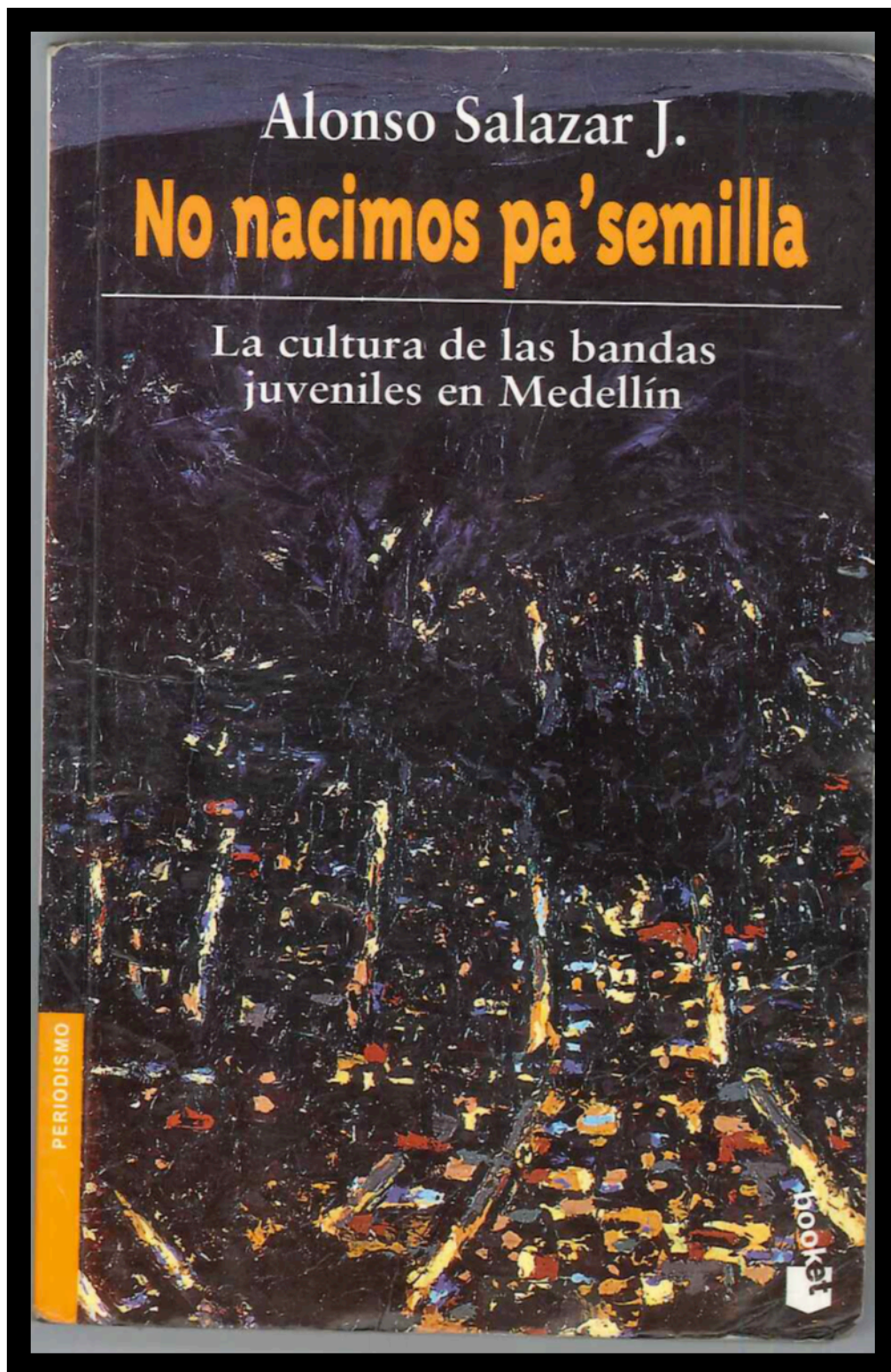**Laura Restrepo *Leopardo al sol* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 1997)**

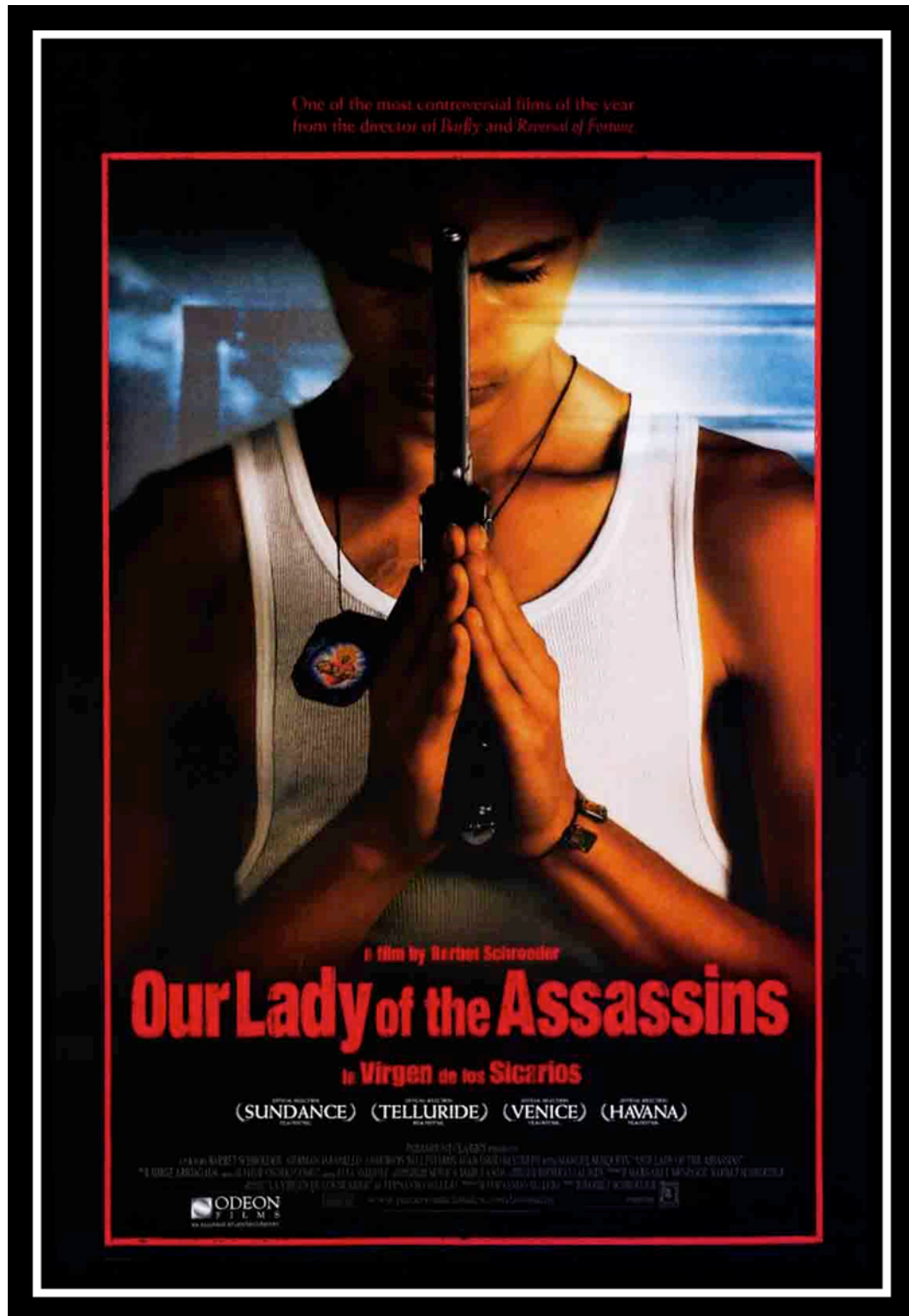**Laura Restrepo *Leopardo al sol* (Bogotá: Rayo, 2005)**
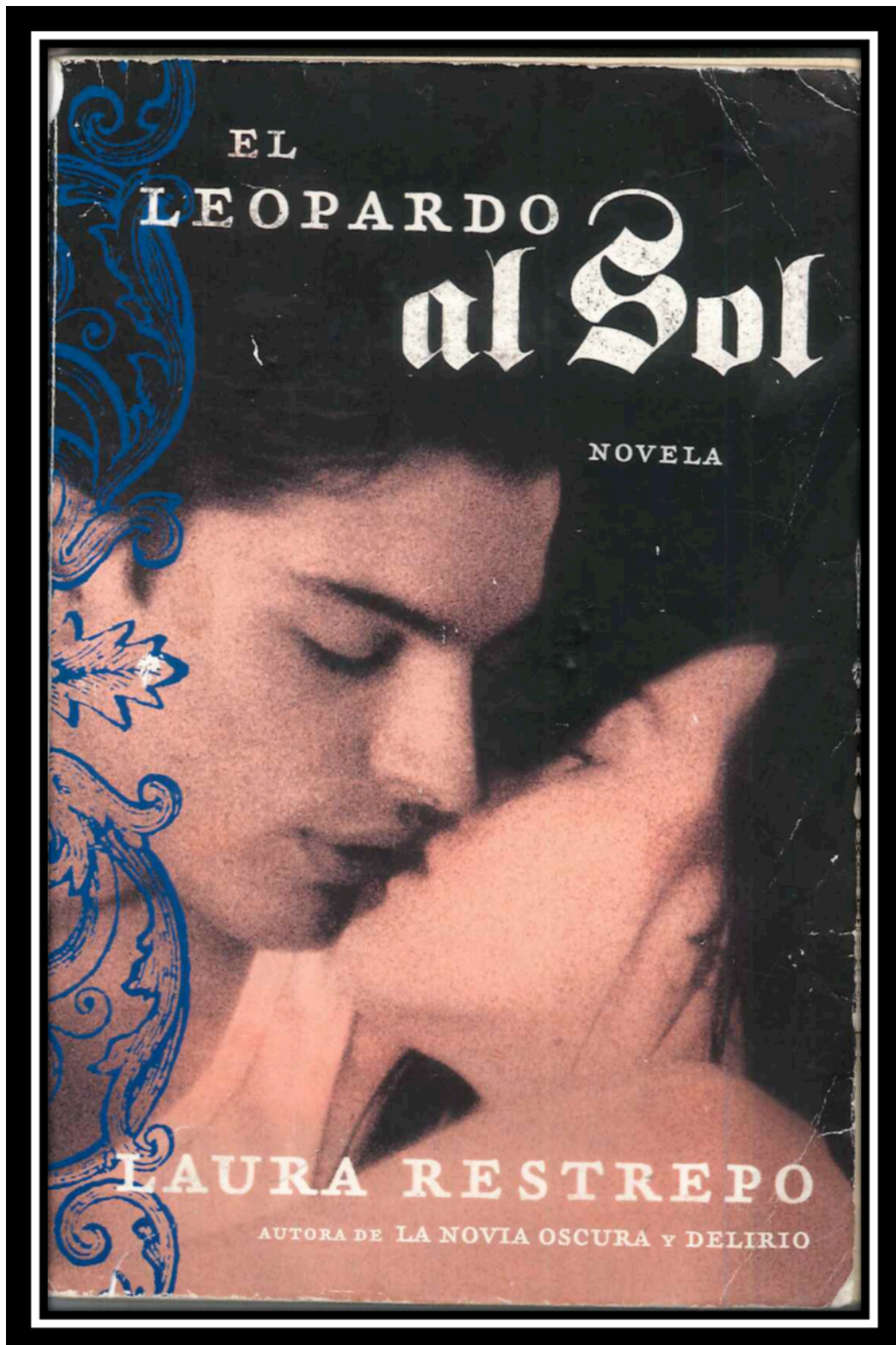
Alonso Salazar, *No nacimos pa'semilla* (Bogotá: CINEP, 1990)

Alonso Salazar, *No nacimos pa'semilla* **(Bogotá: Planeta, 2002)**

La virgen de los sicarios Dir. Barbet Schroeder. Colombia-Spain-France, 1999

La Sierra. Dir. Scott Dalton and Margarita Martinez. Colombia, 2005.