1-1-2017

The Narrative Of The Outsider: Marginalization In The Works Of María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, And Lucía Puenzo

Natalie Nagl
Wayne State University,

**THE NARRATIVE OF THE OUTSIDER: MARGINALIZATION IN THE WORKS OF
MARÍA LUISA BEMBERG, LUCRECIA MARTEL, AND LUCÍA PUENZO**

by

NATALIE NAGL

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2017

MAJOR: SPANISH

Approved By:

_____

Advisor   Date

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge all of the people that supported me throughout the writing of this dissertation- the faculty of the Classical and Modern Languages Department, my committee, and those closest to me in my personal life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Literature and film are two media that allow distancing from sensitive topics, thus demonstrating their strong contribution to consumers: representation. Topics universally present amongst cultures but previously silenced because of their sensitive natures are given a constructive outlet; race, social class, and gender are three examples of social matters represented by the aforementioned mediums. In turn, concrete material is produced with which to create intellectual discussion pertinent in academic and non-academic settings. Through literature and film, I explore how the aforementioned social matters become sensitive. Such sensitivity is brought on by marginalization, therefore addressing why attention needs to be paid to the practice of rejecting another. We choose the noun 'practice' to underscore the participation involved in the interaction with the three determined social constructions. The mere acknowledgement of these constructions grants them power and even more so when there becomes an (in) appropriate way to think about and interact with them. Therefore, we have a split between participants, those who think and act appropriately and those who do not. This is problematic because one side must take the role of enforcement (i.e. marginalizes) and the other of estrangement (i.e. marginalized).

Marginalization justifies the initiation of racial, class, and gender constructs while simultaneously maintaining them; this is accomplished by continuous conflict. The whole of humankind organizes itself into a society per way of established categories. However, the organization achieved is not consistently harmonious, rendering all participants at varying odds with others and/or themselves; these differences can be just as mental as they are physical, and thus marginalization plays out much in the same way. To explore and exemplify the

phenomenon of marginalization, I have selected works[1] from María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo [2]. The representations of the social constructs and resultant marginalizing situations seen in these works reflect how race, social class, and gender have become sensitized in the target Argentine culture; while my selection of Argentina cannot speak directly to the social climate in Latin America and elsewhere in the world, it serves as a microcosm of cultures other than my own. I work with those on the margins of our chosen constructions, all suffering from psychological and physical effects brought on by rejection of their differences. The differences experienced more often than not result in varying degrees of bullying.

　　We consider the corpus chosen as giving a voice to the outsider. In this study[3] we argue that Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo work with race, social class, and gender as implied rather than forced categories so as to underscore their silent penetration into society. While the ideal is eradication of categorization, the situations presented by our directors liken themselves to case studies showcasing the emergence of marginalization, the challenges when living with it, and the effects in an effort to better understand said constructions' power in society. As a byproduct of the plots, we observe various coping strategies by the way in which the affected parties respond. The corpus for this dissertation simultaneously emphasizes that while there are various triggers for marginalization, the reasons are not necessarily well-founded. In other words, through artistic depiction, race, social class, and gender are presented as flawed classifications because the varied cases that we explore support the inutility of the rigidity presupposed by labels. Several

---

[1] The corpus of work to be utilized in this dissertation will be detailed in Chapter 1.

[2] All three women are directors, originating from their native Argentina; Lucía Puenzo is additionally an author who penned two of the novels on which two of our films, to be discussed, are based.

[3] I have chosen to denote the dissertation as a quasi study in light of the fact that we explore psychological and sociological occurrences and/or patterns; I isolate protagonists/characters/subjects (with these terms being used interchangeably) and situate them along with their situations against our three constructions.

inconsistencies arise when restricting individuals to the characteristics set forth by these societal categories; said more concisely, exercising individuality renders the majority of our characters as unclassifiable. There is a biased undertone in the films in favor of treating the whole person instead of focusing on the fragmented identities they form when trying to appropriately interact with labels. Differences are acknowledged and dealt with in an effort to break the barrier between appropriate and inappropriate in terms of one's race, social class, and/or gender.

I am careful to explain that being different and being accepted are independent grounds for marginalization; the former suggests alienation from others while the latter risks alienation from the self. Expression of individuality is the conscientious choice to differentiate; this is mediated by the individual who chooses how they are viewed via their attitudes and behaviors. However, being accepted is more convoluted since it goes beyond the realm of personal control and enters the public arena where it is subjected to scrutiny; it is in this situation that many of our subjects find themselves, and the social constructs' power takes hold. Our protagonists can alter attitudes and behaviors accordingly, but they fall short of societal standards. For purposes of this work, it is necessary to choose a standard for the three categories against which our subjects are to be analyzed: European heritage, strictly upper or upper-middle class positioning with corresponding conduct, and the self-identification of man or woman are the powerful markers. These distinctions logically imply that not fitting neatly within the mark(s) leads to marginalization; the protagonists fall short by never satisfying the requirements set forth by all three standards, and therein reside the challenges to which we referred. Divergence in one area deems the protagonists unfit for total acceptance both from themselves and society. To preview what is to come in chapters two through four, we trace race, social class, and gender, separately,

as sensitized topics in the lives of various protagonists from the corpus. Our subjects range from being minimally to totally affected by their respective differences.

However, ironically enough, the subjects themselves, though unconventional in terms of their place in society, are more often apt to operate within the world that surrounds them. It is evidenced in the subsequent chapters that they achieve certain genuine satisfaction in simply being that is otherwise elusive to others living in order to fit into society. This supports the claim that individuals can thrive in spite of the supposed categorical imperfections that lead to marginalization. These representations speak to the fact that those same imperfections have potential to become a detail rather than a definition once backed by sufficient exposure. The situations in which our subjects find themselves, on which I elaborate in the pages that follow, are those which have stigmas attached to them at the same time as they are personal for many in the audience. This point recalls the strength of literature and film as a distancing tool from which to objectively explore subjective topics. Therefore, the varying subjects, or the marginalized as we come to consider them, become the voice for change; they drive home the message that nothing is gained in the practice of marginalizing individuals that do not appropriately interact with mentally contrived, socially maintained categories.

In fact, we understand, to the degree that it is convenient for us, that variance is a norm; we consider ourselves as multiplicities made up from generations of genetic influence, not to mention the impact of outside stimuli that reaches us on a daily basis. The celebration of diversity to which our corpus aspires is situated in the mindset that through maximum exposure differences loose their threat by becoming more familiar. In the same way, marginalization lacks a cause for those who practice it. Here I fittingly introduce the sociological ideas of Hannah Arendt being that she discusses "plurality" in *The Human Condition*, defining it as " … the fact

that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world" (7). Essentially each human as a plurality is then introduced into the plurality of society where we are all expected to cohabitate. We dare to say that marginalization stems from trying to find a sameness amongst the pluralities, an unattainable goal given what Arendt says in the following lines: "Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (8). We take away from the previous quote this: it is in our being different that we find the one similarity, as previously mentioned, that binds us together: individuality. This is a significant message in the works of Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo, who have all purposefully chosen plot lines that provoke rather than pacify. Through believable, relatable representations, the works blur the lines between accepted and rejected otherness; these directors tackle issues directly tied to race, gender, and social class by way of subjects and plots, ultimately defining a new normality.

Each subject is intentionally individualistic within our selected narratives, in turn representing what I assert as a diverse range of struggles with ethnic discovery, class association, gender identification, sexual orientation. All of these struggles translate into personal and social acceptance on some level. Not one of them belongs as it were, but what do we mean by belong? Just as marginalization requires participation of one person or several, so does belonging. Yet, belonging is subsequent to acceptance and is more involved. Let us understand this concept of belonging before honing in on an applicable definition of marginalization as the two terms are generally understood as antonyms. This notion of belonging exists from the most grandiose to the most minimal scale. Whether there is discussion of entire countries, communities, or groups that want to belong, it implies that same desire of a single individual. To belong is to seek acceptance from another; it is essentially validation of one's existence since existing relies on

being perceived. Once acceptance has been achieved, belonging implies both an emotional and physical bond. An intimate connection with another sparks an individual's purpose and drive. Since marginalization is in direct contrast to connection, it implies removal. In other words, to sum up what we have been saying about the sliding scale between complete marginalization, acceptance, and complete belonging, is it safe to say that no one is excluded from the desire to belong, albeit to varying extents? There is a certain importance to belonging, one which is often subjective, but it undoubtedly improves the life experience. To address the previous question of want, it is necessary to deal with the other side of the equation. Since we already know what happens when an individual wants to belong, in this dissertation I deal with what occurs when that individual does not or cannot belong, rendering race, social class, and gender as sensitize ideas. Being marginalized denies acceptance, which denies belonging, which denies the fulfillment of the best life. Along this outlined course, amongst the deviations from societal standards, there are inevitably positive outcomes and/or negative consequences with mental and physical impacts. The social dimension, therefore, mandates the psyche in terms of attitudes and behaviors while it constructs the corporeal spaces in which the individual moves.

The social dimension of which we speak, while shared, is not always familiar. We know that it is possible to be foreign without crossing territorial borders; foreignness is felt in one's own culture and country, owing in part to "pluralities". Thus, if I state that marginalization can very well be loosely defined as the state of being an outsider, then we have all experienced it (conscientiously or not). Our differences are constantly causing a shift in our placement in the social dimension depending on context. Our individualized situations, as well as those of our subjects, do not allow us to conceive of a world as free of divisions. The fact is that differences divide the space in which we live because there are always non-tangible, nevertheless completely

understood boundaries. These boundaries are constructed to contain and keep order, a point that we explore later. A common notion that aligns itself with individuality is not to consider ourselves as categorized; that we are unmoved by labels. Nevertheless, just by abstaining from classifying ourselves, we are already participants in the process. We need to acknowledge the existence of labels in order to challenge them. We end up categorized by default with all the other individuals seeking to set themselves apart. It is likely that categories will not cease to exist in the near future, if ever. It becomes a matter of differing just enough, i.e. embracing pluralities, so that one can still fit in and practice their individuality simultaneously.

We often understand categories without the necessity to define them, thus speaking to the strong psychological component engrained in their upkeep. This idea helps us comprehend that while our directors work with race, social class, and gender, it is not necessary to acknowledge the categories outright; instead, existence of stated categories are inherently understood. Viewers take into account all prior knowledge gained by way of experience and/or teachings in order to draw such a conclusion as: this subject does not belong because of said reason, resulting in their marginalization. Much is lost but never gained by way of categorical existence. Few and far between are those who differ in an acceptable way from what society allows, and this truth is thus a new reality to behold; this dissertation has as one of its goals to show how Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo channel this way of thinking and support it through their work.

So it is by way of our ten films and two novels that we gain a look inside the mental and physical worlds of our protagonists, affected by rejection (i.e. marginalization), and forced to confront the pushback resulting from their choices and/or situations. Collectively they are the narrative of the outsiders, their stories modeling non-fictional possibilities rather than fictionalized fantasies. Marginalization is present in both the mental and physical sense,

demonstrating its complex, fickle nature once examined. We see the beginnings of marginalization in the mere possibility of rejection and/or bullying by a third party. The varied reactions in the face of such rejection first affect the psyche by altering the thought process and such alterations can result in behavioral change. The degree to which an individual is marginalized is, in part, decided by them. If they can come to terms with the emotional effects, at the very least the physical renderings are lessened. Therefore, our combined psychoanalytical and sociological analysis is a two-step process in that it must first take into account the mind and then consider the social.

Here it is necessary to justify the usage of a psychological as well as sociological approach, pointing out that the two are indeed compatible and able to contribute to an understanding of the texts. The joining of psychology and sociology in the analysis of literature and film is hardly a new idea, thus we cite a lecture given by Theodor Adorno in order to set the tone: " … those of you who have to concern yourselves with Freud and psychoanalysis in any way will perhaps recall having come across the term 'vital need' … This term refers to the compulsion to make renunciations of direct drive gratification which are then propagated in the whole mechanism of repression and everything else they bring about within the psyche" (111). His reference to the indicated term is made so as to equate all persons by calling attention to the importance of mental health. Abstinence, when practiced in certain situations, can lead to a feeling of having been denied; we infer that it can be detrimental if a need is not met. A so-called 'need' calls to mind numerous options, least of which refer to primitive survival, i.e. food, water, shelter. It is more appropriate to name emotional needs, i.e. bonds, for these are more likely renounced as a result of outlying factors such as fear or rejection. There is not a single instance in which our subjects lack elements of physical survival; rather, they are up against deprivation

of another kind: a lack of belonging. After describing the term in more detail, Adorno integrates the role of society in the life of the individual and viceversa: "Now, it follows that if the concept of the vital need is made concrete in this way as the continuous, self-producing situation of shortage, then so-called psychological processes contain the social moment at their core" (112). It follows that this shortage is produced and internalized as a human drive, inherently connected to the public realm.

This shortage, regardless that it does not intend to be fulfilled, is constantly seeking out temporary resolutions that can only to be achieved in relation to others. Accordingly, it is never entirely fulfilled, thus ensuring an individual the continual will and desire to go forward. Regardless of whether one thinks of shortage in terms of financial, nutritional, or emotional sustenance, its remedy is in direct correlation to at the very least one other person. Thus the reason why marginalization is so detrimental to mental and physical health is that it denies the satisfactory, albeit temporary fulfillment of needs. The need drive cannot function properly if it is not successful in social life. Adorno continues: "This, incidentally, merely confirms that the individual person with whom psychoanalysis concerns itself is an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the social context in which individuals find themselves" (112). This quote harkens back to the idea of "plurality" by Arendt; society functions because it is a plurality of individuals and individuals function because they are plural in their needs/drives/desires. The correspondence of "pluralities" is responsible for interactions, and is successful or not depending on the outcome.

The individual, and their psychological "pluralities", is transferred into the public area. The public area to which we refer is dependent upon multiples because it maintains existence by making itself accessible to more than one party, desire, and social construct or otherwise. I refer to a space shared where participants are not spared from third party observation. Hence, the only

truly private space one has is the mind, able to be analyzed and influenced but never inhabited first-hand by another individual. So, it becomes relevant to consider how the public/social and the private/mental mesh and determine interaction. We take note of how Adorno addresses the influence that social surroundings have "on the individual": "It is not only social in that simply everything which is individual and takes places within the realm of individual psychology can be directly ascribed to society, but rather in that the category of individuation itself, and the specific factors which form individuality, must be interpreted as internalizations of social compulsions, needs and demands" (112). Therefore, we understand that the aforementioned individuality as referred to by Arendt that unifies individuals is ironically formed not solely by personal characteristics, but rather personal observation and interpretation of interpersonal communications. Perhaps that calls for us to rephrase our consideration of the human order of operations to say that while the mental is brought to the social, it has already been subconsciously affected by society beforehand.

To sum up the previous statements: in relation to others we become individual. Also, without the mental stimulus that society offers, there would be no cause of individuality; although it is that same society that determines individual expression. Practicing individuality suddenly puts the subject in a vulnerable role; the outsider is known to occupy the margin because of how they relate to the pressure of society to identify oneself in terms of race, social class, and gender, and whether their identification is appropriate. Even if they choose to abstain from such participation, they risk being ostracized. So, we summarize our connections by citing Adorno as he informs us that society is influenced by the family unit, resulting in the comprehension that marginalization is a confluence of the psychological and social in no particular order. The psychological life is influenced by the social and the social is interpreted

psychologically. "Society extends further into psychoanalysis, of course, in the form of the theory of the so-called 'super-ego' … It is really nothing other than the traditional paternal authority transmitted within the bourgeois liberal family to each individual through the father figure or a father symbol or image. It thus functions as an agency of society" (114). Each individual, from birth, will follow the pattern of being raised and then integrated in society. Mental formation begins and is consistently informed. Hence, marginalization is doubly strong but equally subject to fluctuation in the sense that its causes are potentially planted and continually nurtured based on familial and social situations.

From this point on, let us maintain marginalization as a mental/social product, which requires the practice of individuals to maintain its existence. Fortunately, marginalization situates itself along a continuum where it can perpetuate results ranging from absolute belonging to total alienation. Its origins with relation to our three categories are discussed in the corresponding chapters, but it undoubtedly affects individuals in a variable manner; they are left in a state of flux, transitioning based on context. The chosen corpus exemplifies the points along this continuum and stresses how sensitive race, social class, and gender can become. Marginalization exists, in large part, due to man-made labels and notions. It is subjective in the sense that no two people define nor represent it in the same way. Therefore, we must process marginalization from differing perspectives in terms of the psychoanalytical and the sociological.

From my perspective, regarding the extremity where total alienation is found, Julia Kristeva sums up best the complex nature of being a psychological/sociological outsider in *Strangers to Ourselves*. This alienation of which we speak is compatible with the foreignness she discusses, specifically in beginning lines of her work:

> Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By

> recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself. A symptom that precisely turns 'we' into a problem, perhaps makes it impossible, The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of our difference arises, and he disappears when we acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities. (1)

The self is incapable of being ambiguous regardless of the fact that it is simultaneously singular and plural. As a singular entity the self has an identity, but it becomes plural as it defines itself with respect to others. We observe the parallel between what Arendt and Kristeva propose insofar as society is crucial in shaping the self yet there is no right or wrong way to go about achieving this. Through the acknowledgement of differences, we recognize that marginalizing and being marginalized are reactions. With time, these reactions have the potential to be more intelligently addressed as choices. Actively seeking needs fulfillment, of which we spoke earlier, most importantly that of belonging/acceptance, involves the dissolving of the foreigner both as one considers the self and considers others; this is the new normality proposed by our corpus. Categories are threatened by this awareness of the foreigner.

I argue that understanding one's state of mind is imperative in dealing with the risk of marginalization. The solution seems simple: self affirmation when practiced will translate to interpersonal tolerance. This becomes more complex upon considering the following: more often than not, personal formation becomes so entangled with differences that the feeling of foreignness is difficult to abandon. We see support for this in how we interpret this citation from Kristeva: "'Our consciousness has as little use now as it ever had for the idea of its own mortality'" (185). Our consciousness is obsessed with its mortality (i.e. psychological and social survival) so that it alters itself according to the context. It fixates on the present and decides how to cope adequately. In the face of survival, consciousness is not concerned with staying true to the self because it is preoccupied with how it wants to react.

To escape being psychologically marginalized or marginalizing another is tricky in that in one respect it has to be the confrontation of what an individual has failed to recognize in their self and pushed into the unconscious, thus requiring internal analysis and recognition so that they can proceed accurately instead of complacently. At the same time, such an honest confrontation as this can lead to social marginalization. To quickly exemplify, we mention a hermaphroditic protagonist who struggles to appropriate dual sexual organs, and their decision to remain ambiguous is questioned in the community. In short, the grey area between being true to oneself and giving in to the norm is an area where many of our analyzed subjects struggle. In the face of alienation, we quote Kristeva as saying: "The foreigner is within us. And when we flee from or struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting our own unconscious—that 'improper' facet of our impossible 'own and proper'" (191). Without acceptance of the internal "foreigner" there is little hope to stand up to the social "foreigner". Once the psychological effects of marginalization take hold, it is all but expected that the social realm be influenced.

We have acknowledged the importance of the social, as well as its role in the psychological. I cite this line from Arendt to further elaborate: "No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature's wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings" (22). Although her focus is largely on production, we see how her way of thinking aligns also with Adorno; an individual defines and is defined based on a series of interactions and connections with others as well as with our three proposed social constructions. The term, "individual", losses its relevance if not mentioned or analyzed alongside multiples or "pluralities". Distinction would become null. Thus, psychology and sociology work in tandem to form what we know as the individual, but they bring attention to differences which cast aside that distinctive individual as well. The "testifying", as Arendt has

called it, is done from several perspectives; all the while the individual has their perspective and countless others battering their consciousness. The perpetrator comes from within and then it is society which further exacerbates the already mental issue at hand. As we have maintained, context goes hand in hand with marginalization and how much of a threat exists. In essence, we have determined that being on the outside is, in equal parts, mental and physical; marginalization has everything to do with how differences are internalized. The open-ended question that Kristeva proposes: "The foreigner, as it has often been noted, can only be defined in negative fashion. Negative with respect to what?" (95), is appropriate to include because she is suggesting that being "foreign" in the multiple implications of the word is not automatically negative and/or detrimental and is quite possibly advantageous. To accept foreignness in its varying forms (especially with respect to race, social class, and gender, for our purposes) is to decrease marginalization. And while this abstract, idealistic thought theoretically dehumanizes the presence of marginalization, our corpus puts faces and situations to the notion of being foreign, of being the other, of being on the outside; our analysis of the literary and cinematic works prove that although being situated there is difficult, it is not in vain.

It is fitting to mention here María Luisa Bemberg, the precursor of the three female filmmakers to be discussed, as she addresses the reality of those affected by the marginalizing situations as discussed previously. There is a quote which precedes the film *I don't want to talk about it*: "This tale is dedicated to all people who have the courage to be different in order to be themselves". The act of belonging itself involves risks given that individuality can and is stifled, yet it is frequently viewed as the preferred path, in part because it can ignore the honesty required of consciousness. Besides promoting awareness and acceptance, I speculate that these films cause viewers to consider the 'what if'; what if differences no longer separate and what if

marginalization is not pursued? While the artistic representations may not necessarily celebrate being situated on the outside, they open up the line of communication where it can be discussed without remaining taboo.

First and foremost, the works in the corpus constitute the bulk of the dissertation as there is much material to be analyzed; it is our intention that a close reading and viewing allows for the works to exist independently, highlighted by outside references. Thus, a variety of ideas from academics, theorists, and critics alike serve as a starting point to which we add personal reactions and interpretations to exemplify the existence of marginalization. The final product consists of four chapters whose organization allows the points, ideas, arguments, and analysis to be kept clear and coherent. These preliminary pages have served as an introduction to the project and an explanation of marginalization. The first chapter is where the three filmmakers responsible for the corpus are discussed, along with their specific works. Chapters two through five constitute the area where the origins and outcomes of marginalization in terms of race, gender, and social class within the plots of the corpus are studied. The conclusion is a summary stressing the main connections made between the corpus and the topic of marginalization.

We shall continue building the theoretical frame during the last part of this introduction. Kristeva has and Michel Foucault will set the foreground in our attempt to further define and understand marginalization and its psychological/sociological role. With regards to psychological effects, Sigmund Freud is referenced. It is our intention that the ideas mentioned show some overlap with the two approaches. Cinematic analysis will be introduced via the mentions of Glen Gabbard on the relationship between psychoanalysis and film.

In order to preface the interaction of film and theory, let us cite Otto Rank in *The Double*: "The uniqueness of cinematography in visibly portraying psychological events calls our attention

… to the fact that the interesting and meaningful problems of man's relationship to himself—and the fateful disturbance of this relation—find here an imaginative representation" (7). Film and literature give us a first-hand look at mental and physical processes not otherwise accessible. It is safe to assume that a reason for the public's affinity for the arts is the ability to see showcased that which we cannot or will not vocalize. It offers a safe way to objectively relate to another without being emotionally invested. As we situate this quote within the dissertation, we are particularly interested in the use of the word: "disturbance". It has been said time and again that film and literature are the results of the desire to resolve a problem, personal on behalf of the creator or otherwise. Disturbances fuel change and have the potential to unify. Our subjects are unified in that they experience emotional/social disturbances and our films are unified by the desire of our directors to express a message about said disturbances.

As we stated by way of Kristeva, marginalization first begins with man himself and then becomes compounded with the sociological. With this is mind, mention of Foucault's usage of the image of "Bentham's Panopticon" and the former's interpretation of it are relevant here; we do not deal with the corporeal punishment brought about by the "Panopticon", rather what is important is the psychological power of this concept and how it becomes synonymous with control; even more chilling is the way in which it has been integrated into society, be that by way of beliefs, practices, or institutions. Foucault, while thorough in his descriptions of the "Panopticon", best highlights it as an organizational tool in the following way: "The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power" (203). We do not wish to fixate on the physicality of the "panopticon", but instead on the way in which it operates on those exposed. Per our association, we determine society as the "panopticon", dictating the sentence of

categorization to each individual. The groupings of race, social class, and gender are understood and powerful even if not visibly exercised. He continues: "Our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance … We are neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism" (217). I interpret the surveillance of which Foucault speaks as society's power at work in the form of the pressure forcing the individual to define him or herself according to pre-established paradigms; it confuses the consciousness and subjects it to the awareness of its own "mortality" as we previously discussed. The individual, as Foucault continues, gives in to the threat: "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously on himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (203). We see echoes, here, of Arendt and Kristeva by virtue of the fact that society has, does, and will always exist and hold a substantial amount of power. Foucault gets to the heart of the matter by stressing the importance of considering how individuals react to their positioning. Society sets forth its constructs and corresponding norms, and it is left up to the individual how to maneuver within the system.

It is here where we work with some Freudian ideas. We look to the unconscious, as compared to consciousness, and its subsequent place in the behaviors of our protagonists, careful not to forget Adorno's mention of "vital need". In between consciousness and the unconscious is situated repression, acting as a filter. Before discussing repression and its mediation, let us consider how something arrives to the level of being repressed. This consideration is quite important given that our subjects often repress, or keep out of consciousness, pieces of their identity out of fear of being marginalized; the result is that those "vital needs", pertaining

primarily to emotional satisfaction, run the risk of going unfulfilled. Freud highlights the importance of emotions and the ignorance of such as cause for psychological disruption: "In the first place, if psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every emotional affect, whatever its quality, is transformed by repression into morbid anxiety, then among such cases of anxiety there must be a class in which the anxiety can be shown to come from something repressed which *recurs*" (148). While such anxiety might not manifest itself outright in each film's plot, there is certainly a sense of helplessness laced with urgency; approaching personal and public revelation yet holding back out of fear of the societal "panopticon" is the constant struggle among what is kept conscious and what is not. The protagonists are caught in a delicate balance to please themselves as well as others, which often cannot be achieved in the same manner. This in turn forces a choice, in the form of a reaction or action, in which one alienates either the self or others. As can be inferred from our hypothesis, the majority of the subjects opt for satisfaction, either partially or totally, of self or other(s). This split in the personal and social contributes to their marginalized situation. None of the subjects become anxious overnight, but rather over time, a culmination of denial for months if not years. Thoughts and desires converted into repressions, while not always demonstrated on a physical level, are translated into actions and behaviors influenced subconsciously.

It is worthwhile to mention that Freud, too, acknowledges the utility of artistic representation in "The 'Uncanny'": "The uncanny as it is depicted in *literature*, in stories and imaginative productions, merits in truth a separate discussion. To begin with, it is a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and something more besides, something that cannot be found in real life" (157-8). Here we remember the statement made by Rank which explains the power of film and, by extension, literature.

Typically repressed (i.e. silenced) topics gain consciousness in representations, and the luxury resides in the fact that the psychological/social cycle be analyzed: what an individual is taught from a young age, what they come to believe, how they rectify that belief against society, and the outcome. Freud further states: "The story- teller has this licence among many others, that he can select his world of representation so that it coincides with the realities we are familiar with or departs from them in what particulars he pleases" (158). Within the scope of our corpus, we argue that the majority of the plots are credible, multi-dimensional performances centered on existent social issues that have played out in Argentina, my culture, and likely others by extension. To take this statement one step further, not one of the works from the corpus is driven to an extent where it is improbable that it could occur.

All of the initial drives towards need fulfillment that our protagonists feel are, at first (and often continually), ignored because of their inability to be situated in societal paradigms. When Freud speaks of repression, he explains the existence of impulses; resisting the impulse eventually classifies it as repressed for an unknown period of time. Though the subjects have strong impulses, it is true that they show an equal degree of restraint. This restraint is quite probably owed to the existence of others. Had they been thinking solely of themselves, censorship by way of repression would not be necessary. In the essay "The Unconscious" Freud states: "Psycho-analysis has taught us that the essence of the process of repression lies, not in abrogating or annihilating the ideational presentation of an instinct, but in withholding it from becoming conscious" (98). However, regardless of their restraint, the subjects never seem capable of letting go of their impulses as these continue to gain strength through repression. It is as though if the subjects had heeded their initial desires then they would have saved themselves at least the agony of prolonging the situation. So why intentionally engage in repression? Freud

explains: "Later on, rejection based on judgement (*condemnation*) will be found to be a good weapon against the impulse. Repression is a preliminary phase of condemnation, something between flight and condemnation; it is a concept which could not have been formulated before the time of psycho-analytic research" (84). Arguably, to comprehend the reasoning behind repression requires significant self-awareness. While an individual might not have the ability to pinpoint the root of their desire, impulse, obsession, and so forth, they must be conscientious that an origin exists. Only then can they determine the necessity of the desire, impulse, and/or obsession to be repressed, all based on its potential to cause conflict.

I consider fear (and the realization of "mortality") as ultimately responsible for the repression practiced by our subjects. None of them face the situation outright because the reality and the risks associated with the outcome are too great. Therein we see the distinction between self-awareness (to realize the situation) and self-acceptance (to face the situation); one practice requires analysis while the other calls for action. In an effort of avoidance on both counts, personal and societal, our subjects engage in a number of behaviors during which, if not led further away from their true selves, then they are distanced from others; the results of such behavior follow one or a combination of all three possibilities, the subjects: no longer accept themselves, are not accepted by others, and/or will not allow themselves to be so. Due to potentially evasive behavior or indifference, they would rather deal with marginalization than with the truth. Some even decide to live a lie outright so as to avoid denial or marginalization. The possibilities occur to varying extents, as we see later, depending on the subject.

To conclude with Freud, it is worthy to add that childhood, including the Oedipal and Electra complexes, and family are at the foundation of the individual. Upon further examination of each protagonist, the familial situation plays a significant role in the behavior of each,

constituting the root from which all else proceeded. The subjects do not and cannot escape from the values and/or understandings that were instilled in them from a young age and that continue to have an effect. We can speculate that if they were raised in a different way there might not be a need for repression? They come to learn shame as they are raised. All of the plots can be likened not only to self-discovery and development, but they also incorporate coming of age elements. Family, or at the very least elements of it, is present in every film. When referring to family, primary focus is on the biological unit. However, especially with aging, family shifts its definition to include those with whom an individual associates. The protagonists have been and continue to be influenced by the context in which they find themselves, mostly having to do with family in some part. We develop this angle in line with the three areas to be discussed in the body of the dissertation.

When we discuss maneuvering within the system, i.e. context, we are referring to an individual's position in relation to the societal norms set forth in terms of our three aforementioned criteria: race, social class, and gender. For purposes of this work, it is necessary to understand to what extent an individual can push the margin until they find themselves at the outermost point of seclusion. As we have stated before, marginalization is fluid in nature, always aware of limitations. The use of the word limitations is appropriate as it calls to mind an image which we shall retain throughout this dissertation: that of an area enclosed by boundaries where all the open space beyond is not definable, implying freedom, but at an indeterminate cost. As previously stated, this introduction is essentially an explanation of: the project, objective, and methods, all of which are outlined so as to form a solid ground on which to base discussion of the corpus. Here it is fitting to provide a brief outline of the primary theorists cited thus far, and how they work well together. We revisit Arendt and her ideas by including the following quote:

"Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence. … The impact of the world's reality upon human existence is felt and received as a conditioning force" (9). What Arendt, Foucault, and Kristeva propose coincides in so far as the individual is a product of the system. We clarify that while the individual makes up society, the latter conditions their thoughts and/or behaviors. However, freedom from blame cannot stake a claim here since it is the individual themselves, at least in part, who has facilitated marginalization by buying into, or not, the societal hype surrounding labels. Therefore, to solve the problem of marginalization, we must start with the thought process of the individual since without their consent labels cease to exist. Freudian ideas of individual analysis, including familial aspects, can be considered at the root of the study since anything conceived after consulting his studies must take the individual into account. Being that the directors and their respective works to be analyzed in this dissertation deal with very real, pertinent sociological topics by way of the protagonists and supporting participants in the films and/or literature, their representations subtly comment on the reality of marginalization by unofficially assigning labels to the cast. Both Adorno and Kristeva consider the role of sociology while keeping the role of psychology present in their reasoning. In the films, it is apparent that the directors do their best to avoid acknowledging labels outright, but through internal reasoning, actions, and social relations, categories remain.

Here we cite Glenn Gabbard's introduction to *Psychoanalysis & Film*: "Obviously, when one applies a psychoanalytic lens to the text of a film, one cannot hope for a definitive reading. A more modest goal is to emphasize how clinical psychoanalytic theory can illuminate what appears to be happening on the screen and the manner in which the audience experiences it" (4-5). Since I have conceptualized marginalization in this introduction and its psychological as well

as sociological ties, we move forward and dedicate more time to the discussion of the directors themselves; understanding their backgrounds aids us in comprehending their works. In order to make a smooth transition into the first chapter, it is crucial to mention why film plays such a large role in the dissertation. As stated at the beginning of the current chapter, my goal is to explore a concept present in my culture as well as others, that being the voice of the underrepresented and/or not accepted. Gabbard offers the following supportive quote to the previous statement: "Often the atmosphere or narrative of a film beautifully captures common developmental crises that are vicariously experienced by audience members" (7). Gabbard emphasizes the visual element of film; there is a sense that the audience is free to experience all the emotions that the characters do, without feeling isolated due to the screen and fellow movie-indulgers which accompany them through the mental journey. It is in this way that the directors are so successful in delivering the message of the marginalized; the plots draw us in via total submission of characters to their audience.

We are as vulnerable as the characters in the film because we participate in the intimacy of their minds. Just as Rank praises film for portrayal of humankind's inner world, Gabbard supports film's function in carrying out messages to its viewers, which brings us to another point that Gabbard makes in the subtitled section "The analysis of spectatorship". Films, like literature, are created for others; the consumption of these materials is expected and desired by the creators (9-10). Therefore, our three directors are conveying revelations expected to resonate with an audience, which we have said they achieve by way of cast and plots. To further support this assumption, we cite Gabbard a final time: "This approach of applying psychoanalytic understanding to illuminate the motives of a character has fallen out of favour in recent years among psychoanalytic film critics. Greater emphasis is now placed on the *function* of a character

or the film-maker's overarching purpose rather than the motivations of the character" (12). Thus this dissertation incorporates psychoanalysis in order to analyze, and is rounded out by sociology to understand how the materials encompassing our corpus of work situate themselves in the present. It is now fitting to begin with a profile of each director in our corpus along with a summary of her individual works to be analyzed.

CHAPTER 1 "SITUATING THE CORPUS"

In this first chapter, I want to clearly state my intention not only of presenting an overview of our three Argentine directors of focus and their works but also of establishing a sense of the outside stimuli involved in shaping our corpus. We touch on some of the cinematic and political occurrences in relation to the directors. While we do not elaborate fully on said occurrences, their mention does serve to contextualize our corpus by underscoring how the works developed to the point where our directors had/have the freedom to represent. To begin, I briefly discuss Latin American cinema being that it is an overarching influence on the films we analyze. Then, it is clear that politics play an even greater role, impacting cinema both on a large scale and a more personal level in terms of our corpus, thus the political situation is included intermittently.

We carefully cite Zuzana Pick and Chon Noriega from their respective works so as to later independently consider Argentina. To understand what it meant to be Latin American and in film, Zuzana Pick in *The New Latin American Cinema: A Continental Project*, explains: "The oppositional strategies advocated by filmmakers in Latin America (frequently marginalized from national histories of film) served to define the institutional framework of the New Cinema of Latin America. . . . As Patricia Aufderheide points out, the New Latin American Cinema proposed—with its inception in 1967—a synthesis of cultural nationalism and leftist ideology . . . " (15)[4]. The intent to bring attention to culture and the need for change is clear-cut in this description. Politicized narratives coming out of Argentina were not only marginalized nationally, but geographically as well. To attempt to work through double marginalization, Argentine film comes to carve out a niche for itself

---

[4] Patricia Aufderheide is "a professor with the School of Communication at American University; her work involves film studies" (1).

on an international platform, thanks to María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo, among others. They achieve this niche, as we assert in this dissertation, by commanding the representation of what they want to convey; by way of plot analysis I argue that race, social class, and gender break through figurative and literal silence in the directors' works. Chon Noriega in his introduction to *Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video* alludes very thoughtfully to how distinction can be achieved among countries: "Nations must necessarily posit their uniqueness vis-à-vis other nations, nationalism being a matter of both discourse and geography, with bodies caught in the middle" (XV). He purposefully includes "discourse" and "bodies" as common elements of a global society. Considering nations in terms of Arendt's "pluralities", we comprehend that they are comprised of several individuals, i.e. "bodies". With respect to unification of nations and individuals, "discourse" is an influential resource, bringing attention to the differences (or "uniqueness") amongst them. As we discussed previously, the ideal is for "discourse" to lead to discussion as achieved by our three filmmakers. The primary take away here, from our perspective, is that we, as "bodies", get lost in the political and social events of the world, let alone in our country. Thus, this makes those contexts that much more necessary to discuss. As Pick further states: "Inasmuch as filmmakers realized the importance of promoting their work more widely . . . they also took it upon themselves to define the political objectives of their films and relate these objectives to specific national situations" (18). Race, social class, and gender as categorical units of analysis are more often than not politicized and, in turn, foster sensitivity in dealing with them. This contributes to what we see as a source of inspiration in the works situated under the New Argentina Cinema.

To create an historical backdrop for the films under our consideration, we must work backwards from 'New Argentine Cinema' as the history leading up to this point has certainly been influential in the movement. Despite being at the same time rich as it is complex, our brief overview of Argentine history begins with the lead up to the 70s and what follows, and appropriately so, given that María Luisa Bemberg began production then. At the time, Juan Domingo Perón, a continually prominent, political figure, was still very much at the center of discussion. His rise to power translated into a transitory period of Argentine government[5]. In terms of social change, Perón was known for siding with the working class, and supporting them through various government funded programs. Additionally, he aimed to keep business in country, a show of support for his country, rather than outsource. Lastly, not only did he rely on input from his first and second wives (Evita and María respectively), but his movement also included a sector that allowed women their input in the party's affairs[6].

Despite bringing about change within the country, Perón did not achieve this without using oppressive force. In fact, the sources we use present Perón's time in office as dictatorial, with Lewis stating: "He shifted the focus from the reactionary and secretive concerns of the military officers toward a new era of state-directed reform and development. He moved groups that were once ignored or repressed to the center of a movement he defined as revolutionary. In the wake of his election in June 1946, Perón created a party and a state of near hegemonic power" (99). At the same time that this leader was promoting reformist policies, focusing attention on the working class, his methods to achieve this were detrimental to the freedom of the population. Turbulence and power changing hands throughout the interim years all led back to

[5] We reference: Aldo C. Vacs's chapter, "Argentina", in *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game* and Daniel Lewis in *The History of Argentina*.
[6] The brief mention of Perón and his movement/party's approach is understood and taken from *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*.

this man; "In 1973, Argentina came full circle: Perón once again captured the presidency. When even he proved incapable of halting the country's fall into political violence and economic anarchy, the most extreme wing of the armed forces asserted its authority" (134). This marks a negative period of time in Argentine history, as much for freedom as for the welfare of its citizens. Vacs states:

> In March 1976, the armed forces overthrew Isabel Perón and started the so-called process of national reorganization. . . . The new regime also unleashed a wave of repression that surpassed all previous authoritarian experiences. A brutal system of state terror was institutionalized, with multiple military, paramilitary, and police groups trying to annihilate the opposition. This campaign of extermination, which the military itself called a 'dirty war', was aimed at eliminating not only the armed guerilla groups and their sympathizers but also any kind of dissent. (406)

The post-Perón restrictive period of history coincides with the beginnings of Bemberg's works. For that reason, she is considered the precursor to any movement in place from her time in production to the present. As we come to see, her position in society afforded her certain liberties, but her efforts at this time are not to be overlooked. Upon the end of this period in history, Argentines looked towards a new party to bring hope to the country's future. Vacs goes on to say that: "This majority was inclined to support parties and candidates that offered the highest likelihood of consolidating a stable democracy and rejecting authoritarian deviations" (409). In addition, he names Raúl Alfonsín and Carlos S. Menem as the subsequent choices for change, but not unaffected by the burdens left over from the previous government. Finally, Vacs concludes his outline of Argentine governmental shifts and politics by highlighting the current situation (as of 2006): "Notwithstanding these circumstances favorable to the consolidation of elected governments with neoliberal programs, the stability of the emergent Argentine liberal democracy is still an issue when considering the strength and durability of the commitment to this regime by different domestic groups" (428). The discussion of key historical occurrences is

not in vain because it serves to show from where Argentine film came and where is has since gone. The political atmosphere, as we come to see upon study of the films, not only affects production but also infiltrates the creative process; film and literature allowed for Argentines to oppose governmental policies without the risk of censorship and/or worse physical consequence.

In his explanatory book, *New Argentine Cinema*, Jens Andermann discusses the influence that democracy had on Argentine film. This newfound artistic license translates into the inclination towards psychological and sociological exploration. No longer censored following the governmental shift, initial cinematic (and otherwise) interpretations of recent historical events paved the way for eventual discussion of marginalization as we see among our corpus. In fact, regarding directors deserving of attention for their innovative, daring expressions, María Luisa Bemberg is cited by Andermann: "The two most successful films of the decade – Luis Puenzo's Oscar-winning *La historia oficial (The Official Story,* 1985) and María Luisa Bemberg's *Camila* (1984), the latter attracting over 2 million viewers in Argentina alone – also stand for the dominant approaches to the past in this period"[7] (3). What we ascertain from the previous quote is Argentine society's support of the mentioned films; this is an important aside, that a project situated on the cusp of change garners such widespread approval. This is clearly an indication that Argentina's people were ready to discuss difficult topics[8]; their acceptance thus becomes a direct commentary on the openness demonstrated towards new cinematic contributions but also the utility in doing so, as much in that time period as in the present. To this, contemporary Argentine film can owe its staying power. Gradually, we see a step back from having politics and history at the forefront, driving the plot, in exchange for their presence as

---

[7] It is of interest to mention that this forerunner of the 'New Argentine Cinema' is the father of Lucía Puenzo.
[8] Both noted films deal with the tumultuous political climate in Argentina's history; more of concern to us is that *Camila* depicts the harsh figure of Rosas alongside a strong woman in opposition.

secondary. The primary and more recent concentration shifts to the individual and their relations to the self, others, situations, and surroundings. There is a need to explore, as we have stated before, both the interior and exterior worlds.

Additionally, before I outwardly address the three directors, it is necessary to acknowledge that geography plays a role in the political climate of Argentina. We see geography as pertinent, in part, from Aldo Vacs's introduction to his chapter, where he presents readers with a visual of Argentina's expansive territory, touching on everything from the differentiation in regions and climates to the inhabitants of the country. When one thinks of modern-day Argentina, one probably focuses on one of two visuals: a cosmopolitan city (that is Buenos Aires) and the rural pampas. However, what they must also keep in mind is everything in between. Argentina is home to a diversified racial, class, and gender population throughout its territory and such a reality is reflected in the films that we analyze. To totally remove indication of physical location (i.e. living circumstances) from the plots would be to remove part of the narrative that contributes to the subjects.

What follows is our discussion of María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo along with summaries of their individual body of work to be utilized. The commonality amongst the three directors is the fact that they are associated with New Argentine Cinema; Bemberg is a precursory figure to the movement while Martel and Puenzo were and continue to be active in productions. Beyond providing insights about each director, her intentions behind filmmaking are considered against the historical backdrop. Both film and literature are multi-faceted projects that begin with intention. There is a purpose that motivates the fulfillment of said project, and in the best works, this is recognizable in the final product. When gathering information about these particular filmmakers, it has become clear that each one finds herself in

the role of director because she is driven by a need to convey. Based on the subsequent, cited sources, not one of the women state or even suggest that their end result is to entertain; this assumes that they are emotionally invested in work they believe serves for the greater good of society. Film can be and is synonymous with representative narrative; it means more than words on a script or in a text. Emotions, actions, sounds, and location all work in conjunction with dialogue in order to reach the maximum potential audience. The visual dimension allows for an oral story-telling to take place that can reach people regardless of education, income, and domestic situations. The purpose in presenting my personal and, at times, outside source influenced summaries of each work, is 1) so that one previously unfamiliar with the film(s) can come to understand them; 2) to establish a base interpretation from which to start pinpointing complications of classifications and the resultant challenges related to marginalization.

While Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo all deal with the aforementioned areas of race, social class, and gender, the works tend to collectively incorporate the areas rather than present them in isolated incidents. This is due to the fact that each of the three areas is critical in comprehending the characters' existence as it is shaped by marginalization. Ultimately, knowing that the protagonists and/or subjects are marginalized does not leave them without the need for an identity. As previously alluded to, in many ways, our dissertation source material can be likened to a maturation genre, one in which individuals are (still) struggling with what it means to belong. When we state belong, again we refer to constructing part of a group, whether abstract or concrete. Acceptance is actually secondary as it first requires self-identification with a specific social grouping after which the individual is then typically subjected to approval (or its lack) by the others. Therefore, our subjects are at a crossroads as far as how to deal with their present context and what they anticipate for the future. The resulting unconformity demonstrates how the

productions constituting the dissertation corpus prove that the act of grouping should be reconsidered due to the sensitivity that it causes; labels exist but they do not define. While it is true that negative consequences and struggles take place as a result of marginalization, ultimately each story is also a small victory since survival prevails. Regardless of the adversity faced, a primitive instinct to survive overcomes each subject. Whether that survival is in terms of physical presence or a memory, the message is delivered just the same. This contrast between enduring the challenges and succumbing to a premature demise is not far fetched when considering our plot lines; the cast is not spared from the influence of reality. Subjects either become scarred or die emotionally and/or physically. They are the representation of the after-effects of forceful categorization.

That being said, until their fate is made known to us the film subjects are forced to form an identity both mentally and physically; they do this partly through their thoughts and partly through their interaction with the marginalized situation. It must be stressed again that marginalization is not a static occurrence; rather, it is quite dynamic in that it not only changes its form in relation to the situation, but the person as well. Also, let us keep in mind that each production is to be compared and contrasted against the others as there are overlapping elements in the plots; for this reason, they have been joined together in the dissertation. Not to mention the fact that the overwhelming majority of protagonists are women. Although there is often a strong male presence in the works as well, its existence is contingent upon said women; without the women, the men would cease to exist in their roles since the plots pivot around their female counterparts. It is relevant to add a quote from an interview with Bemberg conducted in the years 1992-3 by Zuzana Pick and Julianne Burton-Carvajal: " … the Sor Juana project fits in with what I set out to do when I began to make movies—to change the very *un*interesting image of women

that film generally conveyed" (78). Such a strong statement from a woman in the industry no doubt emphasized a commonplace occurrence in film before she arrived on the production scene. Said environment undeniably changed due to her contributions as well as the artistic works of those directors who followed, including Martel and Puenzo. The fact that we are dealing with women in a dual fashion, as both the creators and the represented, does require us to clarify two additional points. It is not to say that the same situations do not exist for men; in fact, in certain cases, perhaps men are even further marginalized since they are not encouraged to voice their internal world in the same way as women are permitted[9]. Also, we are conscientious that there are differences among the women (the directors themselves and the characters) as related to the corpus, including in terms of race and class.

All of the above being said let us respond to why we chose Argentina as the cultural microcosm for the dissertation. The intention is two-fold; first, to bring awareness to Latin American genres and cultures and second to show the contents' relevance in the society of the United States. We recall, again, the quote by Noriega suggesting that "bodies" are universal, as are, logically, the situations they confront. Andermann goes on to state the following statistic from his 2011 work: "Overall production figures have steadily risen since 1994, effectively breaking through the ceiling of 100 feature films per year in 1997, now putting Argentina just below France in terms of quantity of cinematographic output" (2). This means that for the United States' market a rise in the presence of Argentine cinema, or at the very least its influences, is possible. The avenue through which the United States becomes familiar with Argentine cinema is not limited to movies alone but can also include directorial presence. On a broader spectrum, issues both psychological and sociological know no geographical boundaries, and perhaps

---

[9] This provokes an interesting commentary which I address in the chapter concerning gender.

exposure to the arts from another country can facilitate discussion, specifically of common struggles across borders.

In relationship to New Argentine Cinema, Andermann adds: "New Argentine Cinema, then, can be thought of as the contingent and heterogeneous outcome over the last decade and a half of the profound changes in film circulation and consumption – boasted by festivals and film journals – with the resultant emergence of new, diversified audiences … " (10). Certainly a parallel can be drawn between Argentine and United States cinema in this fashion; more specifically, the last several years have seen a surge in independent films within the United States and of note is the fact that many such works are enjoying stints in theaters previously dedicated to Blockbuster hit-makers. In selecting a few quotes from *Contemporary American Cinema*, we intend to provide a brief overview of the parallel between the two countries' cinematic histories. We begin with a citation that underscores a transition in American cinema: "Due to the effects of the 1948 Paramount Decree by the US Supreme Court, which required the major studios to divorce their interests in their exhibition holdings, the studios had been forced throughout the 1950s to rethink their strategies for bringing audiences to cinemas and for profiting in other ways. … the exhibition of films had begun to shift in terms of both the method and type of film screened" (3). Despite political influence not being immediately responsible, American cinema and by default the creative process also underwent a substantial shift leading to its current state. A reconsideration of the films that were run in theaters translated, by our interpretation, into experimentation within the cinematic community.

We take the following citation from the chapter titled "The 60s": "Peter Lev has pointed to four strategies that were adopted by the industry: 'the road-show, the traditional first run, the art movie, and the drive in movie'" (3). Through these enumerated strategies, we get a sense that

production was not limited to achieving the approval of a wide audience. Instead, at least four

distinguished styles were permitted, exemplifying how independent films appear early on in

American cinematic chronology. These "art films" allowed for incorporation of cultural analysis

with regards to society and the individual. The book summarizes the situation in the following

way:

> Many independent urban exhibitors found niche markets for foreign films with students
> during the late 1950s and early 1960s, a phenomenon that has been generally recognized
> as a factor in the development of the 'Hollywood Renaissance' of the late 1960s and
> early 1970s. This may have been an influence on young filmmakers such as Martin
> Scorsese or Kathryn Bigelow, and also a factor in building an audience for a more
> downbeat and reflective cinema style, which, as Mark Shiel outlines, seems to have
> enabled certain American fiction films to recognize and illustrate the deeper social and
> political conflicts at play in the United States in the latter half of the 1960s. (3-4)

However, just as in Argentine cinema, the breakthrough and reception of non-traditional themes

was anything but an easy road: "If documentary had trouble with sponsorship during the 1950s,

the avant-garde movement was even more 'underground' as financing for films was virtually

non-existent" (9), though things improved: "By mid-decade, funding grants from arts

programmes such as the newly formed National Endowment of the Arts in 1966 and the Ford

Foundation became available" (9-10). More artistic license was equally advantageous and with

its downfalls; it is true that there was an increase in the productions allowed in theaters, but we

understand from the following quotes that such an increase compromised content/quality. In the

1990s: " … it is no wonder that the image of the decade is that of a Hollywood-dominated

spectacle machine, making extravagant formulaic movies that play well in non-English speaking

foreign markets, at the expense of innovative development in character and storyline" (325). The

"underground" aspect spoken of above added a sense of realism and grit to the productions,

much as the feeling of Argentine productions on the cusp of post-censorship; there is a relatable

draw mixed with fear and vulnerability. Nonetheless, returning to the benefits of artistic film

exposure in the U.S.: "The period has also been particularly marked for the diversity of production from minorities and those hitherto excluded by the conservatism of the established industry, particularly women, black and gay filmmakers" (327). Considering all the industry information given here, one cannot help but see the comparison as well as the contrast between the Argentine film industry and that of the United States.

David William Foster's *Contemporary Argentine Cinema* presents a type of chronology pertaining to the evolution of film in Argentina. In this introduction, he cites Fernando Birri " … a legendary Argentine director who has lived in recent decades in Cuba … " (5): "What kind of cinema does Argentina need? What kind of cinema do the underdeveloped people of Latin America need? A cinema which develops them. A cinema which brings consciousness, which awakens consciousness; which clarifies matters … which defines profiles of national, Latin American identity" (5). It can be argued that the United States never dealt with such a driving force behind cinematic productions. Argentina, in the throes of transformation after installing a new government, saw film as a way to rebuild whereas the United States did not undergo such radical government upheaval. Thus, it allowed for the U.S. to continue in the same creative cycle, but could it be time to make more social issues mainstream? Could it be that the U.S. can look to Argentina for inspiration, as a way to overhaul some of the uniformity seen in production? We mentioned that independent films have slowly made a name for themselves in mainstream theaters, but why has this been such a long journey? Perhaps because films are considered less successful when they do not manage to pull in as much money as the others with which they are competing. Although economics can never be fully removed from the equation, Argentina has managed to create moving films in spite of money matters; in fact, an essential interpretation and rewriting of their culture depended on what they could produce. The word 'Hollywood' may be

synonymous with success but perhaps it is time to consider the best way to forge a new creative path.

We are now aware of surface similarities between the three directors responsible for the corpus of works; however, it is of marked interest to explore how each woman, originating from diverging backgrounds and different generations, came to explore this subtle theme of rejection. Was consumer detection of marginalization purposeful or coincidental within the works? We shall make this deduction after considerable research into their individual backgrounds. It is my belief that the margins with which we deal are intentional because of the new attention they direct(ed) towards social occurrences. To further elaborate, the social occurrences that the directors deal with are no longer just that; instead, race, social class, and gender become sensitive to the point of giving rise to mental and physical alterations. The women needed to carve out an area in which to make a personal mark following the lift on previously imposed restrictions by the political system. The one thing for certain is that upon analysis of the films and hypothesizing over their respective, potential functions, it results as fitting to join these directors into a singular dissertation, a decision that is justified by the conclusion of this project.

María Lusia Bemberg's works serve as an indication of what was to follow in the cinematographic worlds of both Martel and Puenzo. And yet, we can attribute to Bemberg still another triumph as Hugo Salas summarizes in *Senses of Cinema*: "Born in 1922, María Luisa Bemberg became, during the '80s, one of the key figures in Argentine cinema – not only as the most important female director (the first openly feminist) but moreover as one of the few interesting filmmakers during the relatively 'sterile' period between the prolific generation of the '60s (its '70s echoes included) and the so-called 'new Argentine cinema' of the '90s" (1). We

can ascertain that Bemberg began making a name for herself well before the transition in her country's cinema, and Salas explains how:

> Her family was one of the richest in South America, belonging to a traditional class known in Argentine history as 'the oligarchy' … It is obvious that Bemberg's privileged position was a great advantage; most significantly, the alliance between her class and the military regime helped her avoid censorship … Although she received 'observations' from the censors and occasionally experienced conflicts with them, Bemberg's films were finally made and exhibited (treatment not all directors received). (1)

It can be argued that Bemberg used her status in order to broach topics not taken up in years. And while at the beginning of her career cinematic expression continued to be limited, her former and subsequent works served to open up discussions, particularly with regards to acceptance and individuality. In the previously cited interview by Pick and Burton-Carvajal, she goes on to express the following with regards to her first major film to gain notoriety:

> Here is an example of a human being who is totally abandoned, denied the protection of the law, a victim of the abuse of authority, an example as appropriate to our own time as to Camila's. The urge to denounce this abuse of authority is a constant in all my films. … Facism begins at home. It begins in the family, where the father believes himself to be the supreme power and authority and where the woman is relegated to the status of supplicant. (79)

Her motive in creating films aligns with the theoretic framework that was laid out in the first chapter. Power is the sustaining force behind marginalization; the person who holds authority is who dictates interactions, both personal and otherwise. The "panopticon" is maintained through cyclical practices beginning in childhood. The hierarchical structure of the home headed by a father figure or otherwise, is influential in how a child develops intellectually and socially. As Bemberg points out, her point being relevant not just in terms of the dichotomy between men and women, authority originates in the home, subconsciously or not. Undoubtedly in social structures there exists a dominant personality in the form of one individual or more who take subtle (at times) control of the surroundings. Her astute insight is that authority existed prior to the non-

fictional storyline for Camila and it will exist beyond the present. Knowing her desire to call attention to and speak out against the misuse of power is a supportive prelude to our discussion of her films and their depiction of marginalization. It essentially responds to the question of why the thesis topic can pertain to her selected works.

Here it is appropriate to mention that while Salas recognizes a few pertinent points regarding Bemberg's upbringing, the director came from a privileged background and one often wonders how heavily that should be considered. As an article in the Buenos Aires news publication, *La nación*, explains:

> Destino diseñado. La niña del cuento tenía un destino diseñado, había nacido en el seno de una de las familias más poderosas de la Argentina; un ejército de institutrices se ocupó de instruirlos a ella y a sus hermanos Jorge, Eduardo, Fina y Malena. A la joven heredera la encolerizaba el autoritarismo machista tanto como la callada y cómoda resignación de las mujeres de su clase. No estaba dispuesta a negociar su libertad. (López 1)

While we have mentioned that Bemberg's societal position offered her many advantages over others in her field, the necessity for change which is credited as her motivation to produce film leads one to the assumption that her status was nothing more than a detail. In fact, she identifies more with the figuratively voiceless than the powerful class to which she physically belonged. This incoherence between her emotional and physical worlds is evidenced by what the same article is careful to point out: "La directora de cine. Filmó su primera película a los 58 años. Luego, en 1986, filmó Miss Mary, tal vez su película más abiertamente autobiográfica. La que más se aproxima por la época, por el ambiente y por algunos detalles de la anécdota a su propia historia" (1). We note two facts of interest: the first being that it took Bemberg several years of personal reflection to develop as a filmmaker, and second that using autobiographic elements as tinder for indirect criticism of certain societal practices demonstrates an individual more concerned with her work than keeping appearances.

We present Bemberg's following works that are to be included in this dissertation: *Camila, Miss Mary*, *I, the worst of all,* and *I don't want to talk about it*[10]. In these four works alone we notice a wide range of ground-breaking situations proposed. The word situation(s) is used in order to concur with another quote of hers from the cited interview: "What interests me is the human beings, not the meticulous and obsessive reconstruction of facsimiles of their surroundings" (Pick 79). What this tells us is that Bemberg's intention for being part of the industry is her interest in human nature, not strictly audience enjoyment; as Glen Gabbard would support, she purposefully makes choices so that her characters achieve a pre-established goal set by the plot. In fact, at many points in her films there is a level of discomfort that takes place. Topics generally seen as taboo and not a subject for the big screen are tackled in her four films, primarily a breaching of: the sacredness of a priest's vow of chastity, a caretaker's vow to protect the child entrusted to her attention, a nun's vow to divine devotion, and a mother's vow to raise her child. Her cinematic subjects are representing accurate occurrences rather than ideals. The ensuing discomfort relates that Bemberg has accomplished her goal: she has created a commentary on what is possible when authority is imposed and expression stifled. It also demonstrates that conveying a message through artistic depiction is truly her intention, given that the plots have potential to garner disapproval from the audience. The subsequent disapproval translates into impact by way of discussion and eventually action.

Camila traces the consequences of forbidden love between an affluent, well-educated Argentine woman, Camila, and a young Jesuit priest, Father Ladislao. Set in a pre-Perón time frame, the harshness of power and institutions depicted does not go undetected because, in

---

[10] As is the case with all ten films of the dissertation corpus, there is an original title and often one translated to English; here the original, Spanish titles are *Camila (1984), Miss Mary (1986), Yo, la peor de todas (1990), De eso no se habla (1993)*.

certain respects, it mirrors the political climate in which the film was released. The institutions of 'Church and State' join the two characters and during their time together certain sexuality is awoken unlike that which they have experienced before. The sexuality, while most certainly concrete, is fueled as a result of (similar political ideas) and in spite of (religious rules) institutional power. The attraction begins as an emotional one and becomes physical when Ladislao realizes that it has grown stronger than his faith. Unfortunately, we see the previous statement as a foreboding one, knowing that the future only assures that no emotion can overcome power. Not only is their love condemned due to Ladislao's vow of chastity, but we also see they have conflicting humanitarian ideals in comparison with the regime. A future together is one of numerous risks, requiring constant positioning on the societal outside. Camila and Ladislao are two pacifists in a religious, authoritarian atmosphere. Camila's gentleness is contrasted against her father's harshness early on in the film during an opening scene in which she cares for a litter of abandoned kittens, later ordered to be killed upon discovery by her father. This destruction of innocence is a foreshadowing of the cruelties to follow. Her father is a staunch supporter of the government and pledges allegiance to political leader, Rosas, over his own family, a stance which Camila intuits and later tests without success when she is arrested. Both Camila and Ladislao's unconventional approach towards their present situation leaves them vulnerable and at the mercy of others. We see a breaking away of Camila from her upbringing and an inclination towards a life of humility to which Ladislao is already accustomed. Tragically, Camila is abandoned in an emotional sense by both father and lover near the film's end; Ladislao once again turns to his faith and her father honors his loyalty to Rosas by allowing his daughter and her unborn child to be assassinated.

In a departure from her other films we study here, *Miss Mary* takes as its primary language English in order to accurately depict the introduction of a European governess into Argentina in the year 1938. The plot maneuvers between the present year of 1945 in which Mary finds herself residing in Buenos Aires after no longer working with the Argentine family, and her memories of the years leading up to her present. Within the time span between the two referential years, World War II is taking place and Juan Perón steadily gains ground in order to install himself as Argentine president in the near future. Mary, hailing from London, is placed in the home of an affluent Argentine family during a transitional state in the country. It results that the household dynamics are anything but appropriate, and a great deal of shame felt serves to repress the truth about not only the country's situation but the family's as well. The governess becomes somewhat of an exotic figure, attracting male curiosity from those in her presence, especially from the family's younger son, Johnny. Meanwhile, she serves as a dual mother figure to the three children, including the two daughters Teresa and Carolina, which have both been entrusted to her care so that they are raised as proper women. Although all of the children essentially come of age in the film, in contrast with the other plots proposed in the dissertation, attention is paid to Johnny's adolescent years alongside his sisters. Mary becomes care-taker and mark of sexuality simultaneously, two roles which ultimately cause her to be formally fired and permanently separated from the family. Terrie (Teresa) and Carolina behave in such a way as to mimic the role model that is their governess; independent and cultured Mary, unbeknownst to her, shapes the girls' minds in much the same way. This leads to the pre-marital sexual experimentation of Terrie, ending in her being forced to marry the boy with whom she had relations in an effort to preserve family honor. Carolina, with an affinity for acting (about which her father warns Mary on day one), is assumed to suffer from mental illness; though there is little

evidence either way, it is more believable that the root of Carolina's behavior is nothing more than stifled creativity, in this way commenting indirectly on the director's own life. To conclude, Johnny's visit with a prostitute marks his initiation to manhood and, by extension, maturity for all things political. From early on we see his attraction towards Mary, wanting her to view him as a man rather than a child to care for. Mary, at first made uncomfortable by his insinuations, is ambiguous in her feelings towards him until the end. Could it be that this governess is projecting her loneliness and love lost from a young soldier in her past onto Johnny as a surrogate or replacement? The two share a moment and an unspecified amount of time together before Mecha, the matriarch, becomes wise to the situation and promptly dismisses the governess. In conclusion, we are left with a historical view of Argentina in that time period, a loosely biographical depiction of the director's life, and a subtle commentary on racial, social, and gender troubles hidden beneath the surface.

I, the worst of all, the only film without the primary scene as Argentina (a country that, at the time of the protagonist's life, was in its developing stages), follows the life of a strong-willed young nun, Sor Juana, who refuses to accept limitations imposed upon her regardless of the Church or State. Befriended by the viceroy of Spain, his wife, and the lead abbess of the convent (until said leader is replaced), Sor Juana enjoys freedom of expression and protection against the disapproval of the Archbishop or otherwise. We come to find that her sense of freedom is an illusion; she strategically utilizes the guise of religious life so that she might achieve the level of education denied to her gender outside of the convent. The majority of her time is spent among worldly possessions held in her private room, each with the connotation for furthering education. Her contribution to the convent community is her writing; not only does she produce plays but also scholarly works. In keeping form with the Catholic tradition, sexuality is replaced by

spiritual devotion, much like we expect in Father Ladislao. However, in the same form as *Camila*, this undergoes a shift when Sor Juana develops more interest in politics and the ambiguous friendship she maintains with the wife of the viceroy. Although her position in the convent has provided her with education, freedom, and the respect of many in the community, including men, it does not shield her from those in opposition to her knowledge nor from the desires of her sexuality. Upon removal of the viceroy and lead abbess from their positions of power, Sor Juana is left vulnerable. We see a gradual demise in Sor Juana and the wife of the viceroy follows suit. Symbolically speaking, Sor Juana goes from holding a position of respect high in the tower of the convent amongst her possessions to ending the movie on her hands and knees serving those in the sick ward; this transition is facilitated by the removal of her belongings and ultimately the burning of her books. Again in a parallel with Father Ladislao, religion resumes its importance in the film, though in this case more half-heartedly so. Left with no further option, Sor Juana resigns to one of the positions afforded to her by the Church, her gender and her class, all prior to the knowledge acquired.

I don't want to talk about it is a direct commentary on acceptance and the fickleness which goes along with it. Not overtly politicized, this film focuses on the powers of money in various scenarios. Money buys the feigned ignorance of the Church and community, but unfortunately not of the perpetual town bachelor or, eventually, the protagonist. Charlotte, a young girl living with dwarfism, is the pinnacle of attention and the reason for financial exchange in the community. Throughout the movie we see Leonor's denial of her daughter's condition; she does not confront the truth with those around them and she tries in vain to hide it from her affected daughter as well. It is the wealth and social standing of the family that allows Leonor to accomplish such a feat; owner of a local store and generous supporter of the church,

money affords Leonor the comfortable lie she lives. We are unsure whether Leonor's denial comes from a caring place in which she wants to protect Charlotte or if it is self-interested due to possible shame and/or embarrassment. Completely oblivious to her situation, Charlotte is educated and cultured to the utmost extent, leaving her a bright, talented young girl. Due to her genuine nature, the well-traveled, highly sought after, much older bachelor Ludovico falls in a conflicted state of love with Charlotte. When he confronts his feelings and proposes marriage, the teenage girl agrees to enter into what is to be a short-lived marriage. With the arrival of the circus to town (a more self-aware, marginalized group there are few) signifies the opening of Charlotte's eyes to the world around her. She decides to leave with the group and at the same time leave Ludovico as well as her cloaked identity among the community. Throughout the entire movie her dwarfism is not addressed outright, yet it becomes responsible for the freedom of Charlotte at the end.

In each film outlined thus far, the community, and everything of which it is comprised, practices their power of influence over the protagonists who are left to survive the outcome. The "panopticon" as we know it figuratively transforms in each plot; the Church, the government, and the family all hold stakes in the power struggles, at times pulling in different directions. These structures mandate actions of those in their presence. All are subject to submission, however those affected most are: Camila and Father Ladislao, Mary and the children in her care, Sor Juana and the wife of the viceroy, Charlotte and Ludovico.

To conclude with our overview of María Luisa Bemberg and her works, we quote her interview a final time: "For me, filmmaking is like poetry: Your quest is for the essence. You avoid dead time; you avoid small talk" (Pick 80). This is an all-encompassing line to retain for the entirety of our corpus; one will notice that there is often more action, more movement, and

more attention to detail than dialogue. If it is true that actions speak louder than words, why can the same not be true for film? The directors want to allow the audience to feel and think spontaneously without telling them how to do so; this point is ironic within our corpus's context of marginalization where the reverse is true for our subjects who are under a certain level of control. We refer back to our citation of Gabbard in the introduction: "the character him/herself does not hold as much importance in psychoanalytic film criticism as that which he or she stands to convey" (12). Bemberg herself informs us by way of the comparison of film to poetry that her works are intentional; they have a purpose in that they are a vehicle through which messages are carried to the public.

Lucrecia Martel and Lucía Puenzo tackle many of the same topics as Bemberg, developing individual ideas more carefully and/or enjoying the new array of potential topics afforded to them since many subjects were no longer considered off limits once Argentina ushered in a new, democratically inclined government. Turning our attention to Lucrecia Martel and her start in the industry, she states the following with regards to her positioning in Argentine film history[11]: "I come from a generation of Argentine film directors who are telling stories and making films after a period of dictatorship … Cinema allows us to reconstruct all that was destroyed. It's a way to refuse forgetting and blanking out things, a way not to accept the black holes created in our history" (224). Not only does Martel acknowledge the benefits of working in a post dictatorship time frame, she also recognizes the work that has to be done in order to again represent a culture previously silenced. Her films hold hope of giving an entire marginalized culture back their voice. The profile outlining the highlights of Martel's career thus far reads

---

[11] It is necessary to mention that from this point onwards we extensively reference Elena Oumano's book titled *Cinema Today: A Conversation with Thirty-Nine Filmmakers from Around the World* as we begin our study of Martel and Puenzo; both directors are among the contributors. Any change in source will be cited otherwise.

appropriately: "Like other young filmmakers grouped together as the Nuevo cinea argentine, who surged to international prominence in the mid-nineties, Martel is fascinated with 'the local,' those regions, vernacular languages, and social classes typically overlooked by mainstream cinema" (261). Taking something so personal as her "patria" and creating works around them simply demonstrates the humanities' ability to transcend cultures worldwide by finding a common ground; regardless of whether viewers call Argentina their home or not, everyone can relate to that local flair of the area where they grew up, including its language(s), organization, and inner workings. In order to expand upon Martel's contribution to film and the change she has achieved through her various projects, we analyze her following works: *The Swamp*, *The Holy Girl*, and *The Headless Woman[12]*.

A recurrent notion that arises upon researching Martel and understanding her approach to film is the role of sound. It becomes an instrument for demonstrating the power of surroundings. A director who places more importance on sound over visuals, we see this put into practice in each of her aforementioned works. Oumano relays this observation with regards to production: "Most art filmmakers regard image and sound as equals, with some, like Lucrecia Martel, even giving sound precedence by allowing it to shape a film's action and emotion and lead the images" (27). Obviously this tactic is a proven part of the filmmaker's style given that the author makes specific reference to her among all others; in addition, Lucía Puenzo is quoted as saying the following: "Lucrecia Martel once told me, 'If I could give you one piece of advice it's to be very careful with sound, because it can change your film for better or worse'" (29). Sound, much like marginalization, undergoes a period of personalization. Each is metaphorically ingested, processed, and individually understood. Sound is the element that allows Martel's narrative to

---

[12] *La ciénaga (2001), La niña santa (2004), La mujer sin cabeza (2008)*

take shape; in other words it becomes the inspiration, and each work notably dedicates screen-time to the perception of sound, be it on behalf of the subjects and/or viewers, and the power it asserts. To ensure that her films encourage viewers to relate to and feel familiar with the content, she says:

> I base it all on sounds—people's dialogue, certain situations—and they allow me to organize a narrative structure. When I say dialogue, I don't mean the actual sentences that go into a movie, more a form that people have of talking with each other, where they don't necessarily stick to a subject but talk about all kinds of issues, go off on tangents, or go back and forth in time. That's what inspires me and provides a frame from which to start elaborating an idea. (119)

This quote outlines what occurs in natural conversation, where participants do not have a script rehearsed but rather draw on emotions, reactions, and interpretation in the moment; conversation mimics the usual spontaneity in daily interactions. An element we broach at the end of this chapter is the tendency to pull from true to life examples as fuel for the narrative, a common practice for each director. Martel herself, in a lengthy interview [13], explains "that much inspiration comes from her native city, Salta, and her family there". Such incorporation of her self in the creative process speaks of the extent to which she has faith in her productions. Ideas originating in this manner give credence to this director's ability to tackle such psychological and sociological events. When marginalization is portrayed in her films, viewers understand that it exists because there is, at the very least, a community of people in Salta experiencing the same reality.

In this way, we can support our argument that the dissertation corpus is a series of case studies, capable of being analyzed by the likes of the theorists we mentioned in the first chapter and those to be mentioned beyond. Martel continues:

---

[13] The particular interview referenced here was uploaded to Youtube from when Martel spoke at Harvard at Gulbenkian. The title is 'Harvard at the Gulbenkian 4.2'; link is as follows:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFxoAb_UQVs

> When I talk about the grammar of cinema, I find it interesting how close narrative elements are to the way memory works, or at least, to the way my memory works—what I've observed happens to me. Memory is an emotional narrative process, so when people remember something, they don't remember any transitional elements, they don't remember establishing shots. They just remember the issue itself. So in the type of films I make, I believe I have no need to explain where characters come from, where they're going, or how time flows. I just need to convey what they're feeling. (176-7)

In this sense, Martel's philosophy echoes Bemberg in that they wish to broach the subject and/or topic without allowing viewers other impertinent details that have the ability to distract. Dominique Russell, in his article appearing in *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, contributes the following: "Martel also pushes against the 'unrelenting combustion engine of physical and psychic energy' of Hollywood-style narrative, its 'ideology of actions and spectacle' as well as melodrama. Her narratives, though tight as a well-laid trap, unfold in non-actions, misses and accidental revelations" (1). While the quotes mentioned recall why we wish to employ psychoanalysis, they also help justify how sociology fits. The feelings generated in the face of something that exerts its power, in Martel's films, ultimately influence characters' internal reactions as well as their relationships with others.

Lastly, before giving way yet again to the film descriptions, we wish to shed some light on how viewers can analyze Martel's works. The director gives insight into how she considers her productions: "My films are structured in layers, so I don't think of the layers as a succession of chronological scenes. I think of the film as simultaneous layers that go down to the core" (Oumano 119). Such explanation is relevant being that, as Martel mentioned in the previous quote, her plots are not preoccupied with the details that many of us are used to: linear timelines, omniscient narrators, hints from the past. In short, a trend in these three movies by Martel is a sense of ensuing confusion. Viewers get caught up in the need for answers rather than the focus on emotions. It is easy to get so involved in unraveling the mystery of the characters that the emotions which define them are missed completely. As she explains when *La nación* interviewed

her for the article "El extraño mundo de Lucrecia Martel" and asked the following question: "¿Cuánto hay allí de realidad conocida? ¿Qué tanto de ficción?" (1), she replies:

> -Para mí, las dos cosas se combinan siempre. La totalidad es un gran artificio, una gran mentira, pero la particularidad de los gestos, los detalles de sonido, son cosas muy experimentadas. … No hay una referencia uno a uno con la realidad de la vida de uno, sino un artificio que uno va construyendo con sus experiencias. Todos los detalles son autobiográficos, pero la totalidad es una ficción. (1)

Therefore, as Martel advises, it is wise to focus on the various elements occurring simultaneously in order to get the best understanding; a tactic most of us employ on a daily basis but never recognize. We must not fixate on what the politics of power can create, but rather go beyond to understand the implications. In fact, neither politics nor institutions in the traditional sense dictate the plots. Martel looks at adaptation to situations. She elaborates in the article: "Cuando uno hace cine quiere compartir algo con otro, y para hacerlo necesitás ubicar al otro en tu cuerpo. Quiero poner al espectador dentro de la protagonista. Yo soy la gestora de ese encuentro" (1). This, again, alludes to the "purpose" of a character and/or subject in film.

The Swamp, like her other two films studied here, share a backdrop in the Argentine northwest, partially removed from the European-ness expressed in more city-centric areas of the country. In this particular work, we get an inside view of a privileged, dysfunctional family headed by the matriarch, Mecha. Long ago her marriage with her husband, Gregorio, dissolved under the blow from his hushed affair with her former, cultured friend, Mercedes. Purposefully confining herself to bed for the majority of her days, Mecha subtly controls from that position the family's existence, all of whom live segregated from the rest of the community. Mecha maintains a strong connection with her eldest son, José, despite his betrayal of loyalty upon moving in and maintaining an assumed sexual relationship with Mercedes in Buenos Aires. With regard to her other children, their existence seems to annoy rather than please Mecha. While her

youngest son suffers from the loss of an eye and she acknowledges the need for his operation, she does nothing to resolve the situation other than letting him wander free in the local wilderness. And lastly, perhaps the most lamentable bond is between Mecha and her daughter Momi. The reason for the mother's intense unwillingness to accept and bond with her daughter is never revealed, although we can surmise that it has to do with Momi's tom-boy like and possible lesbian tendencies. Any façade which the family strived to hold on to and once worked so hard to maintain, as is evident by the once elaborate yet decaying house in which they live, is questioned once they are contrasted with the maids and the longtime family friends living in the city. In the countryside we see displays of (false) wealth and unhappiness while in the city we note economic struggles and a higher level of happiness. Wealth/instability and (un)happiness are not specific to one grouping, instead power plays out in the interactions. The indigenous maid staff is comprised of an older woman and younger girl, Isabel. The younger maid is more loving towards Momi than anyone in the latter's family, leaving us to question whether the girls simply care for each other or if something more sexual exists between the two. Finally, Tali, the cousin of Mecha, is the only source of comfort for the matriarch, and although she lives in the nearby town and is not as well to do, she is the stability in the film. Tali and Mecha's very frequently discussed yet never carried to fruition trip to Bolivia sends the women into an idyllic daydream where they find comfort in escaping the tedium of daily life. While deemed as more prestigious regarding race [14] and class, Mecha as well as her family are not spared from social or psychological issues. Clashes between race and class play out in the community while class and

---

[14] We deal with race in a separate chapter, however for present clarification purposes, despite that fact that we are dealing with a more rural setting, there remains a silent but noticeable division between darker (i.e. Indigenous) and lighter (i.e. European) skinned individuals; the division plays out in terms of employment, socio-economic status, living situation, interpersonal treatment, etc.

gender conflicts reveal themselves in the home. Ultimately, Mecha is no better off in any sense of the phrase than those against whom she considers herself superior.

Much like *The Swamp* and the third film to be mentioned directly after this one, Martel's next film *The Holy Girl* is careful to leave out particulars. There is a fine line, not clearly marked, between the powers of religion and sexuality; the intertwining of the two elements creates discomfort in that viewers begin to question the boundaries of such a line. The term 'awakening' takes on a double meaning here with reference to spirituality and adolescent sexuality. Amalia is the pre-teenage daughter of the sensual divorcee Helena, both living among the chaos that constitutes their life in the hotel. In stark contrast we have Jose(fina), friend of Amalia, who comes from a more traditional, in the physical sense, household life. Amalia lives without siblings and her father is by all accounts absent whereas José lives with her conservative family in a setting clearly distinguishable in comparison with the hotel. However, both girls have questionable figures as role models: Amalia's mother is emotionally fluid and trying to come to grips with her new life while the girls' religious education teacher depicted as a pure, innocent influence is hiding a potentially scandalous personal life. It becomes clear that no one's personal life is private, especially as the hotel is in the throes of hosting a medical conference; the hotel's resultant lively atmosphere, reminiscent of a fraternity rather than a group of professionals, distinguishes itself completely from the peaceful, mystic environment among the girls in religious education. Both Amalia and José are driven by what they deem a religious vocation, which forces them to join the two worlds known to them. When Jano, a doctor attending the conference who in the same weekend is sexually attracted to Helena and invites his family to join him at the hotel, encounters Amalia in the crowd, the dynamics start to change. When seeing the girl in a crowded public space, Jano inappropriately rubs against her and triggers both a sexual

and spiritual reaction in Amalia. There is no longer distinction between sexuality and spirituality. He becomes her vocation and she takes it upon herself to observe him at every opportunity. José, in an attempt to distract her mother from her own, personal sexual experimentation, reveals her friend's secret. Amalia's age together with her gender and social class work against her being spared from harm in the film; she is young and influential, drawn to this man of much authority. She becomes a casualty of the environment in which she finds herself, much like Momi, with religion present on the sidelines willing to offer its protection.

The Headless Woman is arguably the most open for interpretation as it is in tune with a psychological thriller. Such a comparison is made because the interpretation of the protagonist, Vero's state of mind is essential to analysis of the film. During the first viewing, it is reasonable to assume that this woman is suffering from denial and anxiety as a result of her actions. Yet, upon viewing it for a second time, it can be assumed that Vero is the victim of a mental disorder; the discerning of said disorder is as difficult as determining whether or not it exists. To complicate things even further, if we follow Martel's advice and pay attention to emotions, there are little to no showing of the sort by Vero. The environment in which Vero moves exerts its power by becoming too overwhelming to confront. Cases can be made for the presence of amnesia, memory issues, or other mental disturbance in which the individual emotionally removes him or herself from the situation at hand. The assumption that a mental disorder is at play is not outside of the realm of possibilities being that her aunt suffers from what could be an advanced form, and Josephina, a relative, wonders aloud why members of their family succumb to such mental afflictions. Not to mention the title of the film alluding to Vero's mental state. One day while driving, distracted, Vero is under the impression that she has hit something. There is the fading image of a dead dog in the rearview mirror and insinuated, later visible damage to

her car. Out of fear or ignorance she continues, completely overcome by the current reality. Upon further protagonist rumination and outside news reports, viewers are encouraged towards the interpretation that Vero has hit and killed an unnamed indigenous boy. There is a stark contrast between the upper and lower class as well as races, seen also in *The Swamp*; Vero seeks treatment and continuously returns to an underdeveloped, indigenous part of town while she keeps her home in the city. She is essentially the epitome of a lost, powerless identity; her affliction, and her inability or disinterest in using her voice, allow that those around her dictate her behavior. The film becomes a metaphor for the functioning of the psyche, be it in a healthy state or otherwise. However, it is Vero's incoherence in thoughts and behaviors that become her weakness and lead to her submissive attitude. Her situation is most clearly reminiscent of the women protagonists in Bemberg's films, and their forced submission to power, a theme less salient in *The Swamp* and *The Holy Girl*.

The young girls and/or adolescents studied here: Momi, Isabel, Jose(fina), Amalia, Jose, and the unnamed indigenous boy are most at risk of succumbing to the power that threatens with marginalization due to age and familial dysfunction. On the other hand, while Mecha, Dr. Jano, and Vero are all adult figures, they are emotionally unstable and unfit to perform self-care much less be concerned with those around them. In the majority of the cases outlined thus far, suffering is cyclical in that many of the adults are already conflicted from prior experience or genetics and in turn continue the behavior which impacts the younger generation.

Before rounding out the director and corpus outline with our treatment of Lucía Puenzo, it is significant to mention that while each filmmaker deals with all of the three areas of marginalization pertinent to this dissertation, each has a stronger focus in one over another. Bemberg emphasizes social class, Martel stresses race, and Puenzo tends more towards sexuality

and gender. Self-discovery becomes a byproduct of all the plot resolutions. Though not many strong arguments exist in favor of marginalization, we are reminded that it becomes the stimulus of action.

The interesting attribute that lends itself to Puenzo is the fact that she views herself as both a writer and a filmmaker, marrying these two passions when working with film. From what we have seen regarding the work preferences of Bemberg and Martel, neither makes strong mention of the role of writing during production; rather, they conceptualize a project around experience. This is not to say that Puenzo does not function in the same way, we are only pointing out that in her case emphasis is placed on text since it constitutes her background as a writer. There is not much evidence to support that Puenzo personally involves herself in the films in the sense of adapting autobiographical material for use. And while Bemberg and Martel do not strictly practice this either, they find inspiration from their backgrounds. In Oumano's book, Puenzo discusses the processes of textual and film production, respectively, and their (dis)advantages. She begins with a candid idea of why film takes on a different dimension than literature when it comes to teamwork: "When a team works in such a connected way, it's powerful and magical, especially if you come from a writing experience, where sometimes you are lost and don't know where you should go with your script or your novel and you are alone" (98). To which she adds: "Cinema can be a series of happy accidents, so you have to be flexible and ready for surprises, but those surprises can also be bad" (98). All in all, one gets the sense that Puenzo is first and foremost a writer, ending the current interview segment on this note: "However, I think I like the two extremes best—the writing and editing. I enjoyed the shoot, but it brought anxiety and all kinds of problems. You enjoy it, but at the same time, the clock's ticking and it's a lot of stress. In the editing, after everything has been filmed, you just have to

make the best of it, and the writing, when you have no limits, is for me the best" (98). What calls our attention as far as the correlation between the three directors and their creative processes is the fact that writing cannot exist independently from filmmaking. Whether the writing takes place on paper or consists of a series of mental notations, it is the way in which an idea is transmitted; narrators and characters participating in the films are vehicles through which these women convey and bring a narrative to life.

Upon discussing her first film, *XXY*, we see the most relevant tie between all the directors: their desire to make connections. "The story of *XXY* (2007) was at the extreme of the coming-of-age love story, the most atypical imaginable. I liked this idea because I also thought that young people from around the world would identify with the film. They don't forget that one of the characters is an intersexual and that the other one is discovering his sexuality, but they can relate to this moment in life where everyone is lost" (Oumano 189). Just as Bemberg specifically mentions the representation of women as a goal and Martel the daily life within the community of Salta as a model, Puenzo alludes to the importance of formation in teen years and beyond. This is further evidence that fictionalization is far from these filmmakers' repertoire, thus forth justifying any real world connection that a viewer can extract from the films' contents. As Puenzo so eloquently puts it: "That's the final part—when you meet people and give them that freedom to see your film the way they want. I hate books and films that give you answers all the time, because they are telling you how you have to read that book and how you have to see that film. When you leave a film with questions and viewers have to find their own answers, it's a richer experience" (189-90). The act of introspection has the ability to be beneficial for one who practices it as well as for those with whom they interact.

We round out this view of Puenzo by citing a quote by her which alludes to the fact that she is conscientious of the marginalization that can be analyzed in her films: "So films can be political from an unexpected point of view, maybe not always from the point of view people expect, but perhaps from a place on the margins that most of us are not even aware of" (Oumano 215). Let us keep this is mind in the three chapters that follow as we argue our thesis statement of how categorization in terms of race, social class, and gender lead to marginalization yet our films negate long-term sustainability of such occurrences. Lucía Puenzo's films (and two novels) that we work with here are: *XXY*, *The Fish Child*, and *The German Doctor*[15].

The premise of *XXY* is the exploration and definition of sexuality by our subject, Alex, who is visually perceived as a girl[16], and how society responds. The fact that the film is set against a modern background is even more call for concern as it portrays an un-accepting community despite the belief that society has become more tolerant through knowledge. Alex is a closeted, teenage hermaphrodite, with her parents closely guarding her powerful secret for concern of others' reactions as well as for her protection. A friend in whom she confides puts in motion much gossip at the local school when he betrays her confidence, forcing her safety to be in jeopardy. At an already difficult point in her life due to puberty, her struggle is compounded by the fact that she must decide how to proceed through the course of hormone treatment. Through the meeting of Álvaro, a boy her age, and her experiences with him and other people in the community, she is forced to come to certain realizations regarding her gender and sex. All this as Álvaro, too, is experimenting with his sexuality; the two find solace in discovery alongside one another. Alex's parents also struggle with the outcome of the decision they made

---

[15]In Spanish: *XXY (2007)*, *The Fish Child (2009)*, *Wakolda (2013)*.
[16] For this reason, going forward we use the subject pronoun 'she' and possessive adjective 'her' in reference to Alex; the topic of gender and sexuality in terms of this protagonist is further dealt with in the corresponding chapter.

upon her birth: to not remove her male genitalia but rather let their child govern her body as she grew older [17]; further dialogue in the movie suggests that the parents' decision is rather progressive. In an especially poignant scene, her innocence is violated and her secret no longer such when she is overtaken by a group of young boys wanting to verify the rumor. While the prominent issue here is gender, there also remains the issue of social class as a renowned Spanish doctor, his son being Álvaro, lodges with Alex's family. There is a conflict of interest between him and Alex's father; it is the powerful nature of the difference in seeing Alex as a medical case versus as a child.

The Fish Child deals equally with all three of our proposed areas within the relationship between the protagonist, Lala, and her family's indigenous maid, Ailín; in this way, there is a strong argument to be made for the similarities between this work and *The Swamp*. The plot frame of dysfunction in the upper class while two adolescent females struggle to cope inside their respective worlds proves to be the strongest link between the two works of the dissertation corpus; the politics of the family unit are responsible, largely, for the plot instability. Lala comes from a troubled home life where the only bright spot is the relationship she shares with Ailín. In turn, this young guaraní maid from Paraguay brings with her more emotional baggage than that of which Lala is aware. Ailín, abused emotionally and physically by almost every man to come into her life, is unsure of how to respond to the genuine love Lala shows her. Years earlier, before her arrival to Buenos Aires, Ailín is impregnated by her father and left to care for herself and the baby in the family's home near a pond. The baby dies, presumably during childbirth, and Ailín lays him to rest at the bottom of said pond. Upon learning of this news, Lala understands

---

[17] It is interesting to note here that Alex is a gender neutral name; one in the English language that can be considered the shorted version of 'Alexander' or 'Alexandra'. Perhaps an argument can be made that the parents chose this name intentionally, for purposes of ambiguity and/or flexibility.

Ailín's desire to return to Paraguay and start their life together there. However, the problem lies in the fact that Lala, driven by jealously towards her affluent, judge father's relations with Ailín, poisons him and the murder is pinned on the latter. Both Lala and Ailín have in common their untraditional thoughts and behaviors, allowing them to forge a bond against the marginalizing judgment they perceive from those around them.

The German Doctor is the most politically infused work as it introduces European influence firsthand in the form of the protagonist Josef Mengele, a German doctor known for his experimentation on human subjects during World War II; he evades authorities by hiding in the southern Argentine town of Bariloche, an area already having been heavily influenced by German culture and in a country under the influence of Perón. The premise is in fact non-fictional as it is based on historic events. The plot evolves with powerfully influential Mengele who takes a liking to a humble Argentine family traveling south towards a new life they have envisioned. His interest in the family has virtually nothing to do with their Argentine culture but everything to do with their daughter, Lilith. Genetically abnormal, Mengele wishes to make her his next experiment and does so through the coercion of the girl herself and her mother, Eva. The matriarch of the family puts her trust in this German doctor out of nostalgia; fluent in German, Eva was born and raised in Bariloche where she attended the German school. This results in a close relationship between Mengele and Eva yet a strain between the two and the family patriarch, Enzo, who is unable to understand or communicate in their shared language. It is here within the details of Mengele's stay with this Argentine family that non-fiction and fiction become intertwined; quite frankly, not being able to discern between facts and fiction causes intrigue on behalf of the audience. There is an unsettling feeling that results from knowing what Mengele is capable of historically and then integrating that prior knowledge into the analysis of

this same man who is seemingly invested in the well-being of the family; he is the dichotomy between hero and villain. For him, the entire family becomes a medical study as corporeal sketches and medical history notes fill the pages of his notebook. This is a metaphoric parallel between Lilith and the dolls Enzo crafts by hand. Both daughter and dolls fall into the hands of the doctor who sees this as a situation ripe for carrying out perfectionism; he injects Lilith with growth hormones so that she may physically mimic girls her age while he takes part in Enzo's business venture and instructs that all of the dolls be manufactured in the same likeness. We see marginalization played out in all three areas, especially in the celebration of European whiteness and the push for marked gender traits. In maintaining the continuity among the corpus of film, I make a quick comparison here between Alex of *XXY* and Lilith in that both are subjugated to the power held by their respective doctors' authority. Both girls stand to lose humanistic qualities, much to the dismay of their fathers, the longer they are viewed as medical anomalies.

Those primarily affected are the young, Alex, Álvaro, Lala, Ailín, and Lilith. Curiously enough, the same people thought to protect these youth are simultaneously to blame, at least in part, for the rejection they endure. While it is true that each respective set of parents is not conscientious of the full goings-on regarding their children, it is the parents who welcome others into their home. Without being aware, the parents introduce marginalization into the home.

As we have proposed, the works of Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo are to be viewed as case studies, considered in terms of both psychology and sociology. The story lines are full of contradictions in terms of what is believed versus what is practiced, with acceptance as the mediator. It is in these contradictions where sensitivity appears; subjects risk being marginalized if what they believe and what they practice are not in line with what is accepted. In other words, they contradict what society holds to be true. We consider it as the individual (singularity) versus

society (collective); ideas become powerful through support by multiple individuals. The consequences of being on the outside are at times physical, but mostly psychological. This is due in large part to a consideration we have not yet approached: that of reactions. None of the characters are saved from the confrontations with those around them; at times the reactions are silent, nothing more than a critical stare in their direction, while more often than not they are verbal, causing emotional and even physical scars on those that receive the judgement. In this way marginalization is not a spontaneous occurrence based on predetermined and accepted notions, but rather it requires the participation of several parties at once. We know that it requires the subjects' consent to feel the effects but it even more so implies the willingness of a third party or parties to take part in another's suffering; thus, the subjects are victimized to varying degrees because of the scarring which takes place. An interesting feature of this dissertation has been the explanation as to why these three women decided to tackle marginalization in their works. Since an artistic representation often reflects the creator's belief or interest in the material, the preceding pages have hopefully led to understanding each director's reasons behind their creations; I did this with the objective of shedding new light on the dynamics of race, social class, and gender in their works. Whether the directors intended such a topic as ours to surface or not remains to be justified throughout the proceeding analysis.

It is the intention that a wide ranging set of ideas is used throughout the following three chapters in order to support the topic of marginalization. The most important aspect when considering further sources is their ability to approach the reasoning behind why the labels of race, gender, and social class even exist. Argentine critics, theorists, and academics are also included as appropriate as it is of interest how the works of the three filmmakers are viewed within Argentina in comparison to how they might be viewed in the United States. As we have

stated previously, one of the goals of this dissertation is to show the relevance of Argentine film within United States culture. It is relevant to point out that the U.S. was and still is renowned as culturally and racially diverse; it is rather ironic, then, that there is such emphasis placed on individualism. The idea to be 'one's own person' is often stressed yet with the double standard that it must fit within the powerful labels set forth by society. The idea seems oxymoronic: an individual must stand out at the same time that they belong. By researching the presence of marginalization within Argentina, perhaps the role of individualism in other countries, more specifically those in Latin America versus the United States will become clearer.

My suspicions are that the clash between the individual and society happens relatively often: let's call them 'contradictions' as we have done previously; some possible ones to keep in mind for the subsequent chapters are those that follow. I have indigenous blood yet I am not treated as favorably as if I were European. I am from the upper class but I have problems that run deeper than economics. I physically appear a woman but my anatomy or sexual orientation portray otherwise. These statements are never spoken outright; however, actions betray even the most carefully choreographed façade. Many of the characters we deal with here hide behind a mask if you will; a mask that they wear when facing the public and one that is removed in solitude resulting in their vulnerability. Anyone feeling this way, meaning that they must inhabit two different personas to live a comfortable life, is clearly not at peace with themselves or society; in short, they do not or cannot belong, harkening back to the purpose of this dissertation. Therefore, we spend the subsequent pages discussing the challenges and outcomes of this exclusion. We will maintain the word 'outcomes' since 'consequences' brings to mind only the negative and 'gains' implies the positive. While arguably there is a lot of hurt at the surface of the situations, there is also some good that results.

While we have done a sufficient job of giving an overview of the three directors and the corpus of their work, we must find the one tie that binds them all together. Yes, it is clear that marginalization is present. And yes, it is true that the marginalized gain a voice through these cinematic productions. However, what is it that led these three filmmakers to be grouped together in a dissertation such as this? The short answer: their inquisitive nature. Being as though we must defend such a statement, let us consider the quotes in the lines which follow. Firstly, in a work titled *An Argentine Passion: María Luisa Bemberg and her Films*, Lila Stantic [18] explained the following about her colleague and friend: "She defined artistic creation as a plunge into the depths of the unconscious, where dreams and fantasies reside, as well as nightmares and phantoms" (35). Making a case for a psychoanalytic analysis of her films, we understand that Bemberg's inspiration grew out of her own curiosity for personal exploration which she later channeled into her work; undoubtedly, auto-reflection came as a result of what she witnessed not only during her upbringing but also in the society in which she moved. In a cyclic form, society caused internal analysis, which in turn produced films rich in societal commentary. Next we consider Lucrecia Martel via her own words in an interview granted to a newspaper division out of Salta; she responds to this question: "Cambiar un mundo: -Fuiste elegida para ser parte de los festejos de los 20 años de Inadi [19] y te premian porque tu obra interpela a los poderosos, habla de los dominantes y los oprimidos, de postergaciones de género, de relaciones desiguales. ¿Cómo te hace sentir saber esto? ¿Te reconocés en esta lectura de lo que muestran tus películas?" (1). Martel: "Reconozco que es mi preocupación y lo que me movió a hacer esas películas. El cine es un discurso público y, cuando yo empecé, lo hice con plena conciencia de que era la forma que

---

[18] A well-known name within Argentine cinema, she has collaborated with both Bemberg and Martel on some of their respective films.

[19] Inadi stands for 'Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenophobia y el Racismo'. [Source: inadi.gob.ar/salta/]

yo había encontrado de participar en la vida comunitaria. Uno sabe cuál es su motivación, pero es difícil predecir si va a ser efectivo o no. … " (1). Martel is undeniably driven by the curiosity of how others live and sees her films as a contribution to such a discussion on a societal level. Lastly, in an article done by *La nación*, Puenzo speaks of her interests outside of film which influence her work: "'La medicina era una alternativa en mi vida … Me inquieta, me intriga. La medicina y la ciencia despiertan en mí mucho intéres. … También leo textos relacionados con la neurología … La mayoría de mis historias surgen de estos universos'" (Scherer 1). As can be seen, each woman's interests go beyond a personal level and actually focus on others; while not afraid to use themselves or their lives as creative material, the primary concentration is analyzing others. If one supports that film can be analyzed then it logically follows that the audience is part of such analysis. Ultimately, film is made for an audience, therefore it naturally distributes its influences among society.

To conclude, this question was previously posited: was consumer detection of marginalization purposeful or coincidental within the films previously mentioned? Until this point we can safely say that our directors conscientiously chose/choose as their focus those deemed easy targets: individual(s) who stand out and are recognized, be it purposefully or not, but who are not necessarily given the chance to defend themselves on the matter or against the powers at be. However, we come back to develop our answer at the end of the dissertation. As the thesis statement explains, the corpus is a series of examples where marginalization takes place and the audience plays a key role in a director's drive to produce. Discomfort is felt to varying degrees among the films and there is significant importance in being able to detect why that is. If it can be identified as to why these representations provoke such reactions, then discussion is opened up on the topic. The visualization of interactions both with the self and with

others is powerful in that it leads to further contemplation by consumers. If a recurrent feeling or reaction is present among the audience, then, it becomes clear that the work at hand has accomplished the task that it set out to achieve.

Proximately, starting in on the section that begins the body of the dissertation, chapters two, three, and four will explore race, social class, and gender respectively. Each chapter begins with an explanation of exactly what is meant by the specified social constructs with regards to this work. I structure it by then joining the stated corpus of work, sources, theories, and ideas in order to explore at what junctures race, social class, and gender go through a sensitizing process. Through the analysis of our cinematic and literary representations, we can pinpoint triggers of (un)intended marginalization and consider the outcomes. Finally, I want to reinforce that the Argentine focus serves as an avenue to incorporate a culture other than my native one with the intention that constructs and ideas can be shared cross-culturally.

CHAPTER 2 "*RACE* AS IT INFLUENCES IDENTITY"

This dissertation is an analysis of the individual in their environment as transmitted through both literature and film; I achieve this by considering how people (the collective) become individuals (the singularity) in terms of race, social class, and gender. We want to focus on the specified contexts (i.e. external stimuli) as that becomes the pinnacle of the transformation as we go from a group mentality to individualization. In this process, race, social class, and gender are constructive because assignment within each construct becomes a series of generalizations applied to the individual; as we made clear in the introduction, sensitivity comes about when the social guidelines of the construct and the psychological/physical individual are not in sync. The important differentiation period, undergone by way of the feelings and/or actions exhibited in the face of these powerful labels, is the way in which an individual expresses the self. Yet, there is a subtle division between what is standard in the expression of individuality and what is marginalized, and this is all based on context. Marginalization is, then, an alternative to acceptance; our subjects are not uniform in their feelings or actions when confronted with how they deal with race, social class, and gender. These three defining constructs are listed in order of their prominence both psychologically and socially; race begins the body of analysis since it is the least fluid. Our subjects have no say in their racial make-up, and have no choice but to react in spite of or in accordance with what their context considers appropriate based on their race.

We begin with this classification of race and note that it is the most silenced among the directors' collection of works used in this dissertation. Race is not reactive; it simply exists as a socially constructed idea and is reacted to. The role of race is implied rather than specifically voiced by film participants, and it does not claim a central stake in the plots' unfolding narratives despite the fact that it is markedly influential on psycho- and sociological levels. In addition, it

has the distinction of being the singular area of the three with which we deal unable to be physically altered and is almost entirely reliant on contextualization; this is an idea we broach further on in this chapter as the desire arises to appropriate a second race at the price of disregarding the native[20] race. Race, just as social class and gender, is innocent before it becomes definable by personalizing it via an individual example. Karl Marx, in *The German Ideology*, parallels Arendt's thinking when he states: "The first premise of all human history is, of course, the living existence of human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relations to the rest of nature" (61). Therefore, when combining various human examples, there is a comparison and contrast occurring simultaneously in which we start to see several reactions when confronted with the other, for our sake we focus on: fascination. The individuals and their cases become objectified as if the specific attributes of race, social class, and gender were an attainable goal. This dissertation desires to debunk the myth that there is an ideal in existence; this chapter as well as the following two go through the steps of understanding the three constructs and exemplifying their variance by way of our subjects. If we showcase the varied ways in which to be racial, class oriented, and gendered, then there is less possibility that individuals are denied access to acceptance; in other words, sensitivity is diminished in terms of an (in) appropriate way to think about and interact with the constructs. By the project's end, we provocatively aim to prove that marginalization is a more common occurrence than not, and by contextualizing the three constructs via media, we understand them and make them less powerful.

For introductory purposes, we acknowledge that the construct of race (just as with class and gender) have varying connotations according to the target culture. We focus on race in terms

---

[20] An internet search for a definition of this term states: "(of a quality) belonging to a person's character from birth rather than acquired; innate". https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/native

of the social; in other words, while ancestry is necessary when discussing race, skin color is also important. The correspondence of blood race and social race is largely negotiated by skin color. In the Spanish language, and consequently many Latin American countries, there exists the possibility of referring to someone based on their physical coloring. Undoubtedly, the context in which this is done is very telling of the message being conveyed. In general, the lighter the skin, the more association with European ancestry while the darker the skin, the closer the alignment with Indigenous ancestry. Whether spoken or not, race informs who people are socially[21].

Going forward, we find it is necessary to arrive at an intelligible understanding of how we intend to interpret race. The research of three scholars is cited in the paragraphs that follow in order to achieve a well-rounded definition, starting with a more generalized view and then narrowing it down. I begin with Amy Ansell's work, *Race and Ethnicity*, in which she expresses the following:

> (Racial/ethnic) classification involves the partitioning of human populations into distinct and bounded racial ethnic groupings, often along a scale from upper to lower status. Historically, such systems have been linked with a range of dehumanizing discourses that have justified colonialism and slavery, and later segregation and various forms of apartheid. (36-7)

It is obvious that being merely cognizant of race plurality implies an equal notice of the distinguishing features attributed to each race. The link to marginalization appears when it has been previously decided that said features are grounds for forced participation in "groupings". It is in the distinguishing that categorization takes form and leads to social gaps; the quote succinctly mentions the impact race has on social class and treatment of an individual in society. In this way, we say that instead of being a characteristic, race becomes a way of life. Ansell goes

---

[21] Dr. Jorge Chinea suggested this differentiation between blood race and social race; he pointed out that race is informed by countless historical events, not all of which are readily made known. We discussed, among other things, the approach towards the construct of race in Latin America, which tends to be more indirect. In Latin American countries there is potential for distancing between people and their blood race in order to achieve an idealized, whiter social race; this comes at the price of denial and self marginalization.

on to explain the development of racial studies, highlighting as much the focus on the physical as

the psychological:

> The basis of racial classification changed by the end of the eighteenth century in accordance with new if still crude scientific efforts to establish types of humans. The typological method of observation and measurement so central to physical anthropology and an emergent scientific racism was based on empirical principles originally devised in the natural sciences. Application to human populations involved physical observation of skin color, hair texture, bodily stature, head shape, facial proportions, and so on, as well as purportedly associated mental and behavioral qualities. (37)

Ansell references the end of the eighteenth century, and we take that to imply that while race as a

tool of separation is dated, it continues to be relevant today, right down to our continued

attention to physical and psychological characteristics. While this separation is practiced in

society, its implications are so well-rooted that consumers of literature and film, alike, need little

to no prompting to internalize the differences in subjects based on race. Let us preview the

analysis by mention of Miss Mary, Camila, Vero, and Lilith. These women, in contrast with

others in their respective communities, have fair skin. This, alone, is enough to presume that the

aforementioned females come from a fortunate background and behave in a corresponding elitist

way; these assumptions, little to the surprise of viewers, are upheld, in great part, by the

narratives' resolutions.

An entire analysis of an individual, as we have briefly exemplified, can result from a

planted generality. Needless to say that the aforementioned citation by Ansell justifies our claim

that marginalization is as much based on appearances as on the resulting associations. Not

unintentional, we see that she listed "skin color" as the characteristic of primary importance with

respect to physicality; what follows is a series of reactions based on one detail. When finally

considering the mental and behavioral qualities of race, one ought to be conscientious that a fair

share of stereotyping has already been done. However, psychological qualities, unlike the physical ones, are learned, and no doubt influenced by the stereotypes.

Therefore, we see that race is two-fold, physical and emotional, an idea with which the references in the subsequent paragraphs deal. Fortunately, we note that in the following citation, Ansell mentions the ways race classification have positively progressed in favor of a broader acceptance; however, this progression has a long way to go in terms of forgetting the details attributed to different races on which societal structuring was/still is based. She states:

> The bases and methods of classification shifted again after WWII. The emphasis on immutable differences of racial types that underlay the 'races of man' paradigm above gave way to the study of ethnic group clusters that still predominates today. The new paradigm is distinct in that it celebrates common humanity and disavows the search for pure or biologically discrete races. (37-8)

While the shift in such classification is noble, it can hardly be said that it distances itself from the idealistic. While the acknowledgement of unchangeable physical characteristics was and is a step in the direction towards the eradication of marginalization, it does little to change societal mindset which in turn gives way to acceptance or rejection. *The German Doctor* deserves mention here as it is in relation to WWII (on the cusp of a favorable shift according to Ansell), yet race is still resilient in the community as an organizational tool. Likewise, in terms of the other films with which we work that are situated in a more present time, race persists; *The Headless Woman* and *The Fish Child* are just two cases in which race maintains strong undertones despite societal advancement. Analyzing *The German Doctor* and *The Headless Woman*/*The Fish Child* all side by side, despite the years during which the plots are situated, they all display favoritism of light-skin and/or European over being dark-skin and/or Indigenous. The continued strength of race present in an individual's way of life is supported by Ansell: "The distinction between race and ethnicity (and nation) itself changes according to social and

political context" (38). Thus, we recall "contexts" as Ansell mentions them, allowing for varied interpretations of the importance and weight of race in maneuvering the social. It cannot, however, be forgotten that race is deeply embedded in the people and the individual, meaning that minimizing attention to the aesthetic (i.e. physical) alone is not remedy enough for the psychological misconceptions. Race as much as context must be wholly analyzed to include the subtleties of (inter)personal communications.

It is here that we become more specific, recalling that we have said race is influential on psycho- and sociological levels. Our quotes from Amy Ansell look at the physical (sociological) and emotional (psychological) attributes of races and how they are used to structure. In their work, *Race and Ethnicity: The Basics*, we focus on how both Peter Kivisto and Paul Croll place race and ethnicity in the mental/social life of the individual; viewing the two terms as parts of a whole supports how race is an individual and social attribute. In the subsection of "How are race and ethnicity related?", they state:

> The question to be addressed in this section concerns the relationship between racial groups and ethnic groups. . . . The first [answer] suggests that racial groups and ethnic groups are two different types of groups. The second position claims that while racial and ethnic groups are usually distinct, in some circumstances they are overlapping. The third [answer] views racial groups as a subset of ethnic groups. (4)

The introduction of ethnicity as it relates to race allows us to underscore the psychological aspect at play. We explain the connection by considering the definitions included in the glossary at the end of the work: "race-a grouping or classification of people based on what are presumed to be biological differences typically evident as differences in physical appearance due to such features as skin color" (162) and "ethnicity-a form of collective identity based on a subjective belief in a shared culture—which can include a shared language, religion, values, and practices—and a common history" (161). These distinctions parallel what Ansell sustains in terms of "race

classification", yet Kivisto and Croll take it one step further by introducing the concept of "identity". As a result, it compels us to restate that while we favored their "third answer" as the ideal, the subjects of our corpus are more in line with the "first answer" as there is a rupture between race and identity.

We can ascertain that the cited scholars distinguish between biology and sociology in the formation of race as a category; both views are relevant in our study of race as a source of marginalization. Our film subjects are physically distinguishable due to their respective races[22] yet when specifying ethnicity the situation becomes more convoluted. How can the aforementioned be so? Many of the subjects embrace an ethnicity other than that which corresponds with their race, in which case our corpus aligns itself more closely with Kivisto and Croll's "first position" which states that "race and ethnicity are separate groupings". The act of embracing another ethnicity shows itself in the form of fascination, both outright and repressed, for the marginalized other. Therefore, this is where we see physical marginalization due to race and/or psychologically due to ethnic identification. The hope for bridging the gap between differing races leads to the acceptance of tolerance among ethnicities. Kivisto and Croll continue with supporting that the differences arising in terms of race overshadow acceptance: "Contrary to the predictions of modernization theorists and Marxists, both of which foresaw a future in which race and ethnicity would decline in significance . . . the historical record clearly reveals that divisions based on race and ethnicity remain a salient feature of contemporary social life in the twenty-first century" (1). To recall the four previewed subjects to be primarily analyzed in this chapter, alongside others, Miss Mary, Camila, Vero, and Lilith all find themselves discriminated against when their 'whiteness' separates them as a foreigner in the communities they frequent. In

---

[22] To clarify, we work namely with: European (German, English, Spanish and otherwise) and Indigenous (non-European).

fact, we see racial and ethnic discrimination go both ways when European ancestry and/or whiteness are juxtaposed with the Indigenous; race goes beyond skin color and includes attitudes/behaviors. We can conclude upon the reading of this final quote that racial categorization exists because society has failed to deem such a practice as ineffective. In fact, race, though only inherent insofar as biological composition is concerned, is supported socially, in part, by ethnic identification. Instead of diminishing in importance, popular thought in varying contexts has swayed in the opposite direction, considering race as qualitative in an individual.

Essentially, the citations from Ansell, Kivisto, and Croll allowed us to give an overview of the way in which the concept of race necessarily implies ethnicity and both are understood and relevant in psychological and social considerations. An individual will first internalize race and ethnicity based on personal comprehension. This cognitive process, however, is previously and continuously influenced by society. The overarching theme as it pertains to race is that there was and is a biological distinction, which will not easily be done away with. What follows is self-identification, in the form of ethnicity, which does or does not correlate with race. Thus, European-Argentine and Indigenous-Argentine classifications are equal part psychological and sociological. We are concerned with what motivates the discrepancy between the two labels and whether or not the subjects choose to mold an identity based on their race.

It is useful to refer back to the notion of foreigner as seen in the first chapter of this dissertation. Let us consider the following scenarios; an individual is: racially (i.e. physically) distinguishable from another and/or ethnically (i.e. psychologically) distinct. Foreignness does not pertain solely to geography but rather its nature is compounded. Nearly all of our subjects are Argentine, or at the very least reside in the country, therefore their being a foreigner must originate from another source. We briefly recall the work previously cited by Kristeva, more

specifically the chapter titled: "By What Right Are You a Foreigner?"; in further defining the foreigner, she states the following:

> If one goes back through time and social structures, the foreigner is the other of the family, the clan, the tribe. . . . The foreigner was defined mainly according to two legal systems: *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*, the law according to soil and the law according to blood. Are then considered to belong to the same group those who were born on the same soil . . . or else the children born of native parents . . . . (95-6)

This seems straightforward enough, thus placing anyone not part of the community by blood or residence as another. However, a strict adherence to that idea would only find Miss Mary, the viceroy and his wife, and Josef Mengele as true outsiders, and we know this to be far from the truth. In actuality, they stand a better chance fitting into their designated communities than others in their vicinity who are not European enough or not seen as cultured enough.

The crux of the problem is to be found in what we now state from Kristeva: "The group to which the foreigner does not belong has to be a social group structured around a given kind of political power. The foreigner is at once identified as beneficial or harmful to the social group and its power and, on that account, he is to be assimilated or rejected" (96). In this way the true geographic outsiders we just mentioned are not considered as such because their culture, money, and/or knowledge better others in the community in which they find themselves. Unfortunately, looking at things from this perspective, the majority of our subjects are much more likely not to be accepted because their status is not influential enough in the community. Therefore, to have a complete grasp on Kristeva's notion of the foreigner, we must understand that an individual can be foreign by biological, geographical, and identity standards. As we have seen, race and ethnicity go hand in hand with foreignness, and their respective definitions are anything but flat. Being foreign on any level equates itself to marginalization. At the same time that it seems every individual has the potential to be foreign, he/she also has that equal potential to belong, all this

changing drastically depending on the context. Every denoted foreigner is considered native within a certain bloodline, within certain territorial boundaries, and within a certain mindset. In this way, we join what we have understood of race/ethnicity and foreignness. First we preoccupy ourselves with race as it pertains to ancestry, including familial country of origin and birthplace. Secondarily we consider race in terms of physical positioning. Finally we think of race and how it is internalized. With regards to our subjects, they are, to a certain point, internally conflicted concerning their biological race which goes hand in hand with their presence in society. And even if they succeed in avoiding such self-doubt, society is determined to place them in their predesignated classification.

Additionally, depending upon the specific race, such classification has potential to deem our subjects metaphorically voiceless in terms of power, an idea taken from Gayatri Spivak which we subsequently explore. Interestingly enough, though, not one of the subjects is dependent upon their race (nor their ethnicity); the pride and/or shame is felt but never spoken about directly by those affected. Miss Mary acknowledges her English background but simultaneously deflects any reference to it because it sets her apart in her current situation, much like the viceroy and his wife do not flaunt their Spanish nationality since that alone does not endow them with any rights. Camila and Ladislao attempt to cover their city roots and take cover under the guise of commoners from the campo. Ludovico is actually saddened by his cultured past because it is not enough to win over Charlotte. Momi, Amalia, Vero, Alex, and Lala's racial privileges do not bring them the joy that they end up seeking in another. Meanwhile, Mengele, too, attempts to cover his German origins while in exile. All of the racial/ethnic privilege available does not translate into acceptance nor happiness nor freedom; much is dependent on the social power dynamics amongst the participants.

This dissertation focuses on the outside, in both the literal and figurative sense, and race is the first noted category in which individuals are defined by their placement. In a compilation of varying materials titled *The Post-Colonial Critic*, Spivak discusses, amid other topics, culture and representation. In an interview, "The Problem of Cultural Self-Representation", Spivak is asked: "What are your reservations regarding reader response theories?" (50) This question is useful to consider in light of our argument that Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo create works with the goal of transmitting a message to the audience. While Argentine culture is being represented, it is not restrictive in the sense that racial discussions only take place in Argentina; rather, several races/ethnicities are showcased within one country, revealing the complexity of establishing a norm. For that reason, it is noticeable that English (Miss Mary), Spanish (viceroy, his wife, and Alex's doctor), Bolivian (continual mention made by Mecha and Talia), Uruguayan (temporary home of Alex and her family), Paraguayan (Ailín), and German (Mengele) traces are found in the films so as to demonstrate the diversity with which communities are created. When Spivak answered the question, she called attention to the narrow-mindedness with which an analysis of a community is all too often conducted:

> The kind of reader response theory that is in vogue here in the United States seems to suggest that one could assume a community of readers without troubling to look at the socio-political production of these communities or questioning the notion of hegemonic communities. The question that I have to pose when people ask me to distinguish my position of 'interest' from reader response is: who is the reader? My position vis-à-vis reader response is reactive: the political element comes out in the transaction between the reader and the texts. (50)

It is arguable that our three Argentine directors have indeed given considerable thought to who might view the finished products and how they will be perceived. Had they not done so, the works produced would play it far safer in terms of social commentary. In fact, the information gathered on our directors suggests that rather than disregard the hegemonic, or powerful

communities, the films are targeted towards unveiling their truth and seeing the value in the outsiders who participate. Each director takes careful steps in order to delineate the center of the "panopticon" so that said center can later be denounced for its participation in marginalizing others. Ultimately, our analyzed works would aim more toward garnering audience approval if not for their collection of socially disruptive plots that prove their functionality as cultivators of discussion.

And how do we know that the directors are successful in having achieved these objectives? Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo undoubtedly tackle specific social groupings with which themselves and/or others have nothing to do. It requires an effort on behalf of the audience in order to fully comprehend the gravity of the plot. For example, Bemberg gives life to an English governess, Martel to Indigenous peoples, and Puenzo to gender/sexually ambiguous adolescents. Despite any experiences they can claim with such cases, they do not presume to autobiographically explain them but only to artistically represent them. The hegemonic voices of the film cannot help but reveal those which are inferior since the latter must exist for the former to appropriate power. English-bred Mary does not assume power until she is needed by the Argentine family, and just as quickly loses it when she is dismissed. The Indigenous community in Salta experiences inferiority because of dependency on the European families for employment. The gender/sexually ambiguous adolescents are at a disadvantage for lack of understanding in the community, a social space where things are seen as definite and any ambiguity is met with confusion, which takes the shape of intolerance; however, this idea is further developed in the chapter discussing gender.

Spivak further elaborates on the topic of artistic license and representation in the chapter "Questions of Multi-culturalism". There remains the need for a certain objective approach, where race and ethnicity need be portrayed as they typically occur in society.

> The moment that I have to think of the ways in which I will speak as an Indian, or as a feminist, the ways in which I will speak as a woman, what I am trying to do is generalize myself, make myself a representative, trying to distance myself from some kind of inchoate speaking *as such*. There are many subject positions which one must inhabit; one is not just one thing. (60)

At the same time as the directors' backgrounds and perspectives are relevant in leading up to film analysis, a certain degree of distancing had to have occurred in order for them to create in the way that they did. The foreigner within us, as stated by Kristeva, is released by the three women directors because they have acknowledged internal conflicts and tried to share them with others. Bemberg, Martel, and Puenzo are not the voice for the marginalized, but they lend their voice to them. Therefore, their works are representative and cannot claim full disclosure as only part of the story is told; the other part of the story is composed of audience reactions and undeniable truths on the matter at hand. The subjects of the corpus are instrumental in the transmission of a message, as we understand by stating Spivak's following lines from the same chapter where she addresses the issue of "speaking in the name of" (63):

> It is not a solution, the idea of the disenfranchised speaking for themselves, or the radical critics speaking for them; this question of representation, self-representation, representing others, is a problem. . . . And there has to be a persistent critique of what one is up to, so that it doesn't get all bogged down in this homogenization; constructing the Other simply as an object of knowledge, leaving out the real Others because of the ones who are getting access into public places due to these waves of benevolence and so on. (63)

It is fitting that the race/ethnicities/cultures existent in the films are apparent and not discussed amongst the subjects. The filmmakers openly acknowledge what their anticipated outcome of production was and address how others have perceived it. In this way we can justify that these productions with which we deal are parallel to case studies in that previously silenced voices are

struggling to be heard through the audience; a third party is necessary in order to facilitate discussion, in this case the audience owning the role of third party and films/novels as the vehicle to sound the marginalized voices.

Since this dissertation deals with race largely in terms of the dichotomy between European and Indigenous, the mention of Spivak here is critical yet again as she deals with Subaltern Studies. The term "subaltern" immediately calls to mind a hierarchical division in which we are dealing with those considered in sociological terms, while "alternate" implies a deviation; dealing with Indigenous identity as such is an embodiment of the term. The gravity of race as an issue is understood because the representations (in the form of characters) are not personal nor autobiographical in a strict sense, but safe and relatable because of the distance they provide the reader/viewer. Race can be criticized and/or praised by way of the analysis of appearances and behaviors. Marginalization, while largely silent in nature, is even more so in this case because discussion of race can be done inadvertently and seemingly in a non-threatening manner.

In "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography", Spivak discusses the colonizer and the colonized, saying: " … the moment(s) of change be pluralized and plotted as confrontations rather than transition (they would thus be seen in relation to histories of domination and exploitation rather than within the great modes-of-production narrative) . . . " (3). A physical/verbal confrontation versus a transition (that has less harsh implications) is accurate in that race is permanent and unable to be changed. From birth, each one of us is already placed into our first social group: race (as based on skin color). This grouping will require, at varying times, confrontations but never transition from one to another. We can consider that every individual is 'colonized' in terms of being racially profiled, and society occupies the role of

'colonizer' as it does (not) act on those profiles. Some may argue that the category of gender is also pertinent here, to which I would retort by saying that it is to be differentiated in the following way: biological gender can be altered, not to mention that we have a choice in gender portrayal and sexual orientation can be decided. Although, self-identifying as man or woman not in correspondence with biology can and does result in socio-cultural conflict, which is a point to be discussed further on in the dissertation. However, before we are able to act or even speak, biology dictates our race and ancestry begins molding our identity. Try as one might to deny their race or claim another as their own, it is an impossible feat, as it influences our physicality; race cannot be ignored, only psychologically altered based on a practiced ethnicity.

As Spivak points out, individuals progress as they are able to express themselves. And if we wish to make a change regarding ethnicity, the only option is to confront race. Paradoxically, the subalterns are often silenced by societal indifference, robbing those that need to use their internal/external voices. In the previously mentioned chapter titled "Questions of Multi-culturalism", Spivak states: "For me, the question 'Who should speak?' is less crucial than 'Who will listen?'" (59). This is a very intuitive observation, considering that the "hegemonic" race has a humanitarian responsibility to speak up for and simultaneously listen to the powerless; their unwillingness to do so maintain the dominated as such and further exploits the racial privilege of the "hegemonic". A trend among the white/the European/the hegemonic subjects is their self-interest and lesser respect for others; on rare occasion do we see any reciprocation (physical, emotional, or otherwise) on behalf of said subjects towards the people that have served them in one way or another. Cases in point are the following examples. *Miss Mary* allows access into an even more complex hierarchical living situation than the other productions, as we see the Argentine family look down on the Indigenous as well as Miss Mary's current life choice while

Miss Mary looks down, too, on those darker-skinned than herself; the family matriarch, Mecha, looks to others below her status and bloodline as inferiors, treating them as charity cases. She befriends a rural, unmarried couple and throws a wedding for them to "cure" their act of living in sin. And she does not view Miss Mary as much more worthy of respect, stating "[you are] too pretty to be a governess." Miss Mary, in turn, practices much the same superiority when she says: "hands off me you native" to a dark-skin boy undeserving of such a prejudiced attack. Meanwhile, in *Camila*, Camila and Ladislao perform a lesser demonstration of their power, but hurtful nonetheless; after lying to the village people that had shown them such warmth and welcome, they refused to accept their charity in the form of silence and two getaway horses when the authorities learned of couple's whereabouts. The village people were left with the guilt of having to turn over two accepted community members to a sure death. *The Headless Woman* finds Vero in denial, failing to confront the heartbreak she has caused an Indigenous community that did nothing other than care for her with open arms in their hospital; in fact, her aunt even betrays Vero's hidden instability by observing "that voice doesn't sound like yours." Finally, in *The German Doctor*, Mengele stops at nothing to carry out his plan for "the perfect race"; using Lilith, in part, to further his biological knowledge, he also had sinister plans for her twin siblings before he was forced to flee. We know this because it is blatantly stated in the film: "you'll find other twins". These examples show that the actions of the dominant race do little to protect the silenced, because then these others would gain power through discourse. On the matter of the subalterns being heard, Spivak elaborates in the aforementioned chapter: "So that in fact, for the person who does the 'speaking as' something, it is a problem of distancing from one's self, whatever that self might be. But when the cardcarrying listeners, the hegemonic people, the dominant people, talk about listening to someone 'speaking as' something or the other, I think

there one encounters the problem" (60). There is power in discourse, a control the dominant race maintains by considering the dominated in the way that they want; the hegemonic race wants the dominated to believe they are inferior, and when the latter do so, the former feels justified in their behavior. This is the case with our Indigenous protagonists and characters throughout the corpus; when and if they get the chance to be heard, their situations are overlooked and/or misunderstood. We observe the Indigenous subjects' histories as being relayed through European subjects, resulting in the process of filtering against which Spivak warns. The Indigenous are doubly marginalized, once by society and again by being spoken for rather than being allowed to speak.

Barbara Sutton offers an interesting take on race in Argentina in her work: "Contesting Racism: Democratic Citizenship, Human Rights, and Antiracist Politics in Argentina" (2008). She states the following concerning the role of race in the country: "While still a marginalized issue, racism in Argentina has received increasing attention in academic and political circles during the past decade. Recent studies reveal racism to be an important mechanism of exclusion, one that permeates other cleavages such as inequalities based on class, gender, national origin, and citizenship status" (106). Race is therefore only one source of exclusion, and class as well as gender also contribute to it. Thus, in an effort to further justify that analyzing race within Argentina is pertinent in today's context, it also serves us to include two examples that Sutton utilizes to show how this is true.

> The image that the state projects abroad also provides a lens for examining ethno-racial politics at home. World fairs, travelers' guides, tourist brochures, and other official information for visitors are sites where national identity is performed and packaged as an export product. A visit to the web site of Argentina's Secretariat of Tourism during 2006 revealed the reiteration of old tropes. While the website called attention to 'colorful' attractions (fiestas, rituals) related to indigenous traditions, Buenos Aires (which in the dominant imaginary is coded as European) was presented as 'the most elegant and the busiest city in South America which represents the Argentina essence'. This vision of

> civilization and modernity is closely tied to racialized portrayals of the population. The official website also informed prospective visitors that '95% of the population is white and most are descendents of Italians and Spaniards. As a result of the massive European immigration, the white and Indian half-castes [mestizos] were slowly reduced and at the present they amount only to 4.5% of the population. The pure indigenous population—Mapuches, Collas, Tobas, Matacos, and Chiriguanos—amount to 0.5% of the population. (109-110)

This quote is relevant, independently of the statistics given, because it demonstrates a generalized mentality; to the dominant culture, race is still at the core of who an Argentine is, and whiteness is given a higher value. For our purposes here, let us hypothesize that our directors created their works in contrast to this ideal white image; they underscore the existence of Indigenous and its influence in Argentine culture. Additionally, the quote above continues: "Another official website, that of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, has offered ethno-racial statistics, stating that Argentina's 'ethnic groups' are the following: 'Whites (85%), *mestizos* (10%), aborigines and others (5%)" (110). In conclusion, we can make varying assumptions based on the decision of the tourism sector to emphasize a demographic profile largely dominated by whiteness. Europeaness constitutes a large percentage of the idealized Argentine population. Being European or its descendant is celebrated and accepted in the country. The Indigenous were phased out of the country both geographically and sociologically speaking (a fact which is expanded upon in the proceeding references from the works of Magnus Mörner and Alice Helg). Sutton deems the celebration of whiteness and the marginalization of the Indigenous accurately as the reality of racism. Our films visually represent physical and social racism at play in the subjects and communities they portray.

We mentioned previously that we consider our analysis of film subjects in terms of three independent criteria. We focus on establishing the criteria and then situating the individual accordingly. In this chapter we will determine whether marginalization is apparent or abstract

within the specified contexts. Then, we want to point out how the subjects are rejected based on race as the first criteria, causing the construct to become sensitive. Lastly, we will refer once again to the thesis statement and suggest why race need not lead to subjects being found on the outside; in other words, address how each film director makes an argument for doing away with racism in society[23].

To begin chronologically according to production year, we analyze *Camila*. Race is not a profound presence, but merely a detail for the following reasons; it does not help nor hinder the actions or behaviors of two lovers, rather it is more influential in the political climate of the plot. Its presence is created abstractly, manifesting itself not in the characters per se but rather in the framework, in particular as the audience notes the change of terrain; let us elaborate on this visual representation. Geographically, the country of Argentina is known for its extended territory, bringing to mind a variety of scenes, not least of which are the gauchos in the wild western-like pampas and the bourgeois of the city, both portrayed in this film[24]. While this imagery is appropriate in certain cases, more carefully so nowadays when contrasted with the time frame of the nineteenth century from which Camila O' Gorman's story originates, hence, careful attention should be paid to the historical development of the landscape in the scenes. Camila and Father Ladislao are affected by race only as an external factor not detrimental to their

---

[23] In the interest of organization and brevity, each specified area (race, social class, and gender) will take precedence in its appropriate chapter without the necessity to simultaneously elaborate on either one of the other two; comparisons and contrasts among areas will be saved for the final chapter.

[24] The concept of "civilización y barbarie", translated as 'civilization and barbarity' is one that arises frequently in reference to Argentine history. It depicts two very different faces of Argentina and puts into words the transition of the country over time; it references culture in Argentina as well as the political climate of the time. Civilization alludes to the progressive cities and towns, while barbarity speaks to the undeveloped plains of the countryside. Vanden and Prevost, in their previously cited book, speak of the "liberal reform leader": Domingo Sarmiento. His presence in the 1850s is synonymous with "The epic Argentine struggle between the rural *gaucho* and remaining Indians, on the one hand, and the Europeanized *porteño* (port) elite from Buenos Aires . . . The 1853 defeat of the *gaucho* dictator Juan Manuel Rosas by reformist forces ushered in a new regime that opted for the 'civilizing' influence of the port city over the rural land owners, the *estanciaros*" (50-1). Further mention of Rosas takes place on the following page.

existence. Camila enjoys a comfortable lifestyle in the center of Buenos Aires, surrounded by two notable luxuries of which she takes advantage: a large estate and a shop converted into a quasi library. Ladislao benefits from the privatized seminary grounds. And both characters frequent the ornate, elaborately furnished church. We take note that their specific town and its inhabitants live in the epitome of civilization for the time period, though constantly conscientious of what they perceived as the outside threat of barbarity. Those civilians who lived in the city center and supported Rosas represented a certain hope for a progressive Argentina as did those in the countryside[25]; all those whom Camila and Ladislao encounter are supportive of Rosas, with the difference being in attitude and practice. "Civilization and barbarity" became more about describing groups of people than ideologies. When Camila and Ladislao disagree with the current political state, this becomes the opinion that unifies the lovers. In the moment that they realize their political stance has led to lust, they metaphorically shed their civilized image and flee to Argentina's yet untamed north, expressly Corrientes. Once there, the differences between the city and the countryside cause their new home to be viewed as barbaric. Lodging has been reduced to a one-room, dilapidated building that serves also as a makeshift school for the local children.

Due to the differences between Buenos Aires and Corrientes, the inhabitants of each are seen as racially different according to the mindset that civilization and barbarity created two distinct countries, two different Argentinas; those from Buenos Aires are considered the modernized and those in Corrientes as the uncivilized, rustic natives. The geographic

---

[25] Further reading in Vanden and Prevost's book, in an article by Vacs, also previously cited, we understand the divided Argentina of that time into those that wanted a "centralized government, associating with other countries" versus those that wanted to maintain "provincial autonomy, with a focus on Argentina alone"; Rosas represented the latter of the two groups and tended towards a showing of nationalism. "The fall of Rosas in 1852 was followed by a short period of internal conflict as the Buenos Aires and provincial elites clashed over the definition of the political and economic design of the emerging state" (400).

displacement of our subjects leads, in part, to their psychological and sociological estrangement. In fact, their lives in the view of the Church, political, and familial leadership, depreciate with their physical move and alternate political stance. Race within this context translates not into blood nor appearance, but location. Subtly, Bemberg reveals the falsehoods within the civilization versus barbarity dichotomy throughout the film. Barbarity exists more so in civilization than it does in the outlying provinces, and it has as its host the individual. Politics control the Church and the family, with these two structures more easily monitored in Buenos Aires. The Church leaders and the O' Gorman patriarch pledge their loyalty to the Rosas campaign above all else, including the lives of Camila and Father Ladislao. Camila's father is the most expressive in his extremist ways, showing his cruelty at the onset of the production by emotionally abusing his mother, killing a litter of kittens, and ultimately showing no regard for the lives of his daughter or her unborn child. On the other hand, the preconceived barbaric residents of Corrientes show the mercy that their civilized counterparts in the city lack; they initially accept Camila and Father Ladislao even though the two arrived under false pretenses. Still, despite discovery of the subjects' betrayal, they are provided the time and resources for escape by those in the community. Finally, all those considered natives, including the employees of the jail where the victims are held as well as the soldiers assigned to carry out the death sentence, practice the compassion that the Europeanized do not. The natives experience hesitation and doubt in carrying out the punishment of incarceration and murder of the two victims, speaking to the conscience that they have, which the bourgeois from town lack. The resounding message that this rewriting of historical events contains is to show the misconception of a label. Had the natives been in charge of Camila and Father Ladislao's fate, we can believe that they would have lived. Politics took precedence over human life in this case, with the former

placing more importance on societal ideologies. Camila and Father Ladislao become prisoners of war in a sense, denying their racial (and forcefully intertwined political) upbringings to defend intellectual freedom.

In the same way as *Camila*, our second film *Miss Mary* politicizes race. In an Argentina developing both economically and socially, a quote later on suggests that the country looks towards Europe in achieving proposed advancement goals. From the onset, we have a very clear contrast between peoples indigenous to a land and foreign blood; in an opening scene, Mary employs the word "natives" to make a backhanded political comment in the following sense. As a citizen of London transplanted to South America, as much by her own choice as by the extenuating circumstances of war in her birth country, she is repeatedly told at the onset of her tenure as nanny that: Argentina is a "civilized country"; this is a statement which she indirectly refutes in the aforementioned scene during which a flashback shows her reflecting upon employment with the family and referring to the people with whom she had contact as natives. Therefore, her comment harkens back to the polarizing views that citizens of one country had of one other. In other words, while Argentina fantasized Europe and considered them synonymous with success, their European counterparts viewed Indigenous Argentines as exactly what the former tried to evade: uncivilized, native peoples. Being that the term Indigenous is referential to those originally inhabiting the land, the mention of native by Mary herself is accurate in denoting the shift in Argentine societal practices. In fact, this film is reflective of the role of immigration and society's displacement of minority races. Those Argentines who could not claim European blood ties tried to appropriate Europe in other ways, such as via upbringing, much like we see in *Miss Mary*. While from a viewer perspective it is as though Mary is marginalized for being a

foreigner, in reality she is less of an outcast than those Argentines not able to afford the quasi-European essence that the bourgeois claim as their own.

From an advantageous standpoint, Mary is a tool representative of prosperity, one used to elevate the status of the family that hired her. Seemingly, Mary does not stand to make any economic gains, but rather grow from an experiential stand point. As a governess, she is instructed to raise the children, primarily the two girls, in the way of all things European. She becomes a type of surrogate mother, offering that which their biological mother cannot. From the onset, the English language used between the mother and her daughters distinguishes them from others in country. Race is undoubtedly prevalent in the movie as evidenced by the fact that no attention is paid to Mary's qualifications; she is hired based on race. Her mere presence places the family in an enviable position; she is a puppet for European ideology while her actions are dictated by the familial patriarch. In the clash between ideologies and actions, we see a comparison of cultures. With this particular movie, we do not see an outright clash between European and Indigenous, although slightly so between European and Argentine. The Argentine family welcomes a foreigner, in the geographical and cultural sense, before considering an Indigenous candidate (one of their own in terms of nationality). This is most probably because of what they stand to gain in the interaction: prestige, language skills, cultural awareness, and envy from others. In conclusion, let us consider that Mary and Camila live with the assumption that they are influential, in part because of their race, and as will be seen later, their social status. However, both women are subject to the political power whether they are deemed valuable or not.

The moment when either woman oversteps her boundaries, as does Mary sexually with Johnny, or is considered devoid of contributions, she is rejected from the power circle to the mercy of society as outcasts. It is worthy of mention here that Sor Juana, in *I, the worst of all*,

has a parallel experience. Sor Juana enjoys protection via connection to Spain; the viceroys, by virtue of being European, exercise their power to make necessary exceptions allowing the nun to practice her studies. Yet, race here is dealt with under a false pretense, as it is the government that holds power. When the viceroys who befriended Sor Juana are removed from their position, they are no more powerful than her. Ironically, Sor Juana's placement in the convent can be attributed in part to her race as can her figurative descent in the convent's hierarchy. Not of pure blood, her future is even more restricted than a typical woman of the time period (during which marriage or the convent were the two options), and when not backed by European favor she loses influence in the community. All of this occurs in the country that is present-day Mexico, adding yet another layer to the hegemonic situation of the plot; we never consider Sor Juana as European or not given that her education and position in the convent call attention otherwise. However, all of the nuns and the country for that matter were dominated by Spain. When one considers the entirety of the film, the scenes never take place within the community; in fact, the bourgeois, including the higher ranking religious leaders and the viceroy/his wife created an environment in that convent which much revolved around them rather than the likely Indigenous community on the outside. In fact, much of the film was shot in a way that requires the audience to focus on the bourgeois rather than the fact that a country was being overtaken by said powers. No natural landscape is shown; rather, all action takes place within four walls.

Camila, Mary, and Sor Juana are aided, in part, by race, but race also contributes to their emotional and physical downfalls. Had each woman behaved in a way supported by her respective racial ideologies, they would have led less conflicted lives. Problems often result, in their cases, from the disconnect between what Arendt deems "the public and private realm" as is explained in her chapter titled the same: "According to Greek thought, the human capacity for

political organization is not only different from but stands in direct opposition to that natural

association whose center is the home (*oikia*) and the family" (24). Within the plots we have

analyzed thus far in this chapter, relationships (be they blood ties, friendships, or otherwise) have

suffered as a direct result of their inability to fit within the given political context which is all the

while governed, to a certain extent, by race. Arendt goes on to state: "In our understanding, the

dividing line is entirely blurred, because we see the body of peoples and political communities in

the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide

administration of housekeeping" (28). In other words, it is the social network (turned political)

ruling the psychological (private) being. While each protagonist embodies a free spirit not

dependent on their family (i.e. race/ethnicity) for survival, Arendt explains this way of thinking

is in vain:

> What all Greek philosophers, no matter how opposed to *polis* life, took for granted is that
> freedom is exclusively located in the political realm, that necessity is primarily a
> prepolitical phenomenon, characteristic of the private household organization, and that
> force and violence are justified in this sphere because they are the only means to master
> necessity . . . Because all human beings are subject to necessity, they are entitled to
> violence toward others; violence is the prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the
> necessity of life for the freedom of world". (31)

What does such a quote imply for the fate of Bemberg's subjects? That because each woman

consistently clashes with the political situation, complete with racial tensions present at the

forefront, she does not enjoy freedom. Beyond loss of freedom, she suffers varying degrees of

exploitation: Camila is sentenced to death and is helpless in saving the life of her unborn child,

Mary has a soiled reputation in the eyes of her former employer as well as an altered view of the

once promising Argentina to where she moved, and Sor Juana is metaphorically stripped of her

knowledge and demoted in rank. Meanwhile, each woman's fate becomes symbolic of the

pitfalls possible when race plays a part in politics; when both components come together, they

overtake the private. We have three instances here where the racial situation in question hardly involve the Indigenous communities, but rather focuses on the Argentines and/or Europeans. Thus, when mention of race surges, we expect it to include the Indigenous and are surprised when they are not present; what this tells us is that racial superiority maintains a fickle status, and is not limited to dominant versus inferior, but also occurs between two dominant races.

On the other hand, Martel maintains Indigenous characters and culture at the forefront of *The Swamp* and *The Headless Woman*, thus redefining how race is considered in Argentina within the scope of the respective plots. Taking Salta as her focal point, as well as undoubted first-hand knowledge, Martel explores the coexistence of Europeans and Indigenous within a given community. Geographically close to the border[26] Argentina shares with Bolivia, this city has a high population of Indigenous peoples, distinguishable, for our purposes, not so much by language as by physical characteristics. To elaborate further on the topic of Indigenous versus European, let us understand that both are prefixes to Argentine nationality, with an understood struggle for societal acceptance. There exists the notion of being Indigenous-Argentine and/or European-Argentine, two distinct identities seen as such[27]. Rather than maintain a middle ground for peaceful coexistence, introduction of one binary into the other is problematic as depicted in the films. We want to stress the use of the term identity for the reason that follows. Independent of heredity, an individual can employ certain actions/behaviors to associate with or distance him/herself from a particular race. Race has physical implications that identity cannot claim; the desire to appropriate or feel akin to a particular race can occur via the psychological and social, forming in this way an identity in coherence with or without the biological. Therefore, in Martel

---

[26] Geography needs to be kept in mind when speaking about Argentines in terms of identity; due to proximity, there are markedly unique situations at the borders with Bolivia, Paraguay (in terms of our dissertation) as well as with Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil where cross-cultural/racial exchanges can/do occur.

[27] The racial classification of Indigenous-Argentine versus European-Argentine is not one seen as prominently in Bemberg's works, though similar ethnic identification is seen in Puenzo's corpus.

as well as Puenzo's works studied in this chapter, race and identity become separate ideas; the characters' racial make-up and behaviors do not necessarily coincide, creating, in certain circumstances, a case of being doubly marginalized. The purposeful mention of non-peaceful coexistence was previously done in order to be able to refer to two strains within relationships between Indigenous-Argentines and European-Argentines; one is attributed to dependence, the Indigenous on the Europeans economically, and the other to care/stability which is true of the reverse situation. At least within our plots, survival of one racially conceived social group is crucial to the survival of the other. Speaking in terms of race, when the European goes out in search of the Indigenous or vice versa, chaos ensues; the introduction of the European world into the Indigenous is rocky at best. I hope to exemplify such clashes in the following paragraph by way of exploring the feeling of discomfort that our subjects feel when not in or surrounded by their native (i.e. familiar) environments.

We have stated that the family in *The Swamp* is trying to hold on to the image that deemed them affluent to begin with. This is done is two ways: ownership of the house and pool on the outskirts of the city[28], and employment of two maids. In such ways the family believes to put distance between themselves and the local peoples (read: Indigenous inhabitants). The truth of the situation is that the family is no more distinguished, maybe even less so, than the Indigenous culture to which they feel superior. How does this truth come to be revealed in the plot and how does it relate to marginalization? Through a series of subtle references, we see a hierarchy established as to which race is believed more valuable; as a matter of fact, rejection, practiced by both races, is outwardly apparent. The consistent power struggle plays out primarily

---

[28] This point is developed in the following chapter on (social) class.

in social interactions as a way in which psychologically repressed feelings are (sub) consciously made known.

The opening scene finds several older, fair-skinned characters sun-bathing around the pool. The appearances made by the two maids, of noticeably darker skin and distinctive physical features, occur in direct correlation to serving the family; whether it be Isabel caring for Mecha after her injury or the young girl emotionally connecting with Momi, the Indigenous are seen not heard. A case in point is Isabel's limited dialogue. Outside of brief interactions with the European family, her voice is hardly used, even in their absence. Even in relation to the presumed father of her unborn child, we see a silenced I. The audience begins to view her as transmitting the message of dysfunction that abounds in the family and community. However, returning to her role with regards to her employer, Isabel's silence is not enough to prevent the young maid from Mecha's scorn. On separate occasions Mecha verbalizes disapproval of Isabel, never commenting on the maid's nature outright but rather fixating on her race. For example, a constant practice of Mecha is to incorporate race as if it were an insult. She implies that the "Indians" are both lazy, because they do not attend to the phone, and untrustworthy, when her towels go missing. Another incident where race is implied insultingly is how the matriarch stereotypes Isabel by stating, as a matter of fact, that the young girl's situation (of being pregnant) is one expected from "girls of her kind/like her". Yet another clear-cut example of glorified whiteness is how the doctor in town, referred to as "el gringo," is entrusted with the care of the Mecha and Tali's children. When alone, the children are free to run in the wilderness of the countryside, but within the public eye and alongside their mothers, they are tended by a rarity in the community, a white male presumably born abroad. Lastly, in the religious scenes when the virgin appears, all participants, which we as viewers see on screen, are Indigenous.

Interestingly enough, the appearance takes place in the civilized, developed town, though not in a particularly upscale area. In fact, as we discuss in the following paragraphs, the population of the town seems to be largely Indigenous and/or working class. In comparison, the only traces of religion that infiltrate the campo where Mecha resides with her family are through the televised news reports. Thus, what is the reasoning behind the inclusion of religion? Often when one thinks of religion, it is synonymous with a coping mechanism; faith is something to turn to in the face of struggle. The only peoples seemingly able to admit to and wanting to resolve their struggles are the Indigenous while Mecha and her family are not aware of or do not want to recognize their problems. Perhaps this is why religion does not reach them as it does the others; the act of practicing one's faith can be telling of social dynamics. Regardless of being undervalued, the Indigenous of the community go on to help the Europeans survive in more ways than one. This together with all of the white dysfunction and dynamics, it negates the supposed value of Mecha's family in that it removes them from a pedestal and humanizes them. But in order for this to be done, the white families face hardships which prove them to be vulnerable as well; we have Isabel's decision to 'abandon' the family as well as the presumed death of Tali's young boy as he falls from the ladder. Perhaps it is not outlandish here to point out that the Indigenous are a strong presence as evidenced by Isabel's resistance while the Europeans are simultaneously weak when confronted with the fatality of the boy; strengths and weaknesses do not belong exclusively to one race over another.

Momi, the daughter of Mecha, is the hopeful character in this film. She serves as a bridge between the European and Indigenous worlds by way of the infatuated, almost sexual relationship she maintains with Isabel. We quickly justify it as an 'almost sexual relationship' because, more than one scene finds the girls in bed with one another, cuddling as potential lovers

yet never totally crossing the line from caregiver and cared for; in one instance, when the two young teens are sharing a bed, Momi is deemed "la sucia" by her brother on the phone[29]. If we keep this analysis strictly physical, we observe how the girls are laying side by side until the phone call and Jose's subsequent comment influences Isabel to get up and leave. The initial position of the two girls assumes that they are equals, sharing an intimate moment in the same bed, with no notable difference between the two. However, once Isabel rises to leave, we see her resume the role of serving Momi whilst clad in her appropriate attire. This moment for both goes far beyond any possible sexual connotations as it is just one of the bridging techniques practiced subconsciously. Momi is not comfortable in her affluent, European world, nor does she belong as she is constantly reminded by her mother. In a figurative sense, Momi looks to deny her ethnicity in order to infiltrate that of Isabel.

We now discuss why the following scene evidences why the integration of one race and corresponding ethnicity into another is not possible within the plot lines of this film. Let us take as the finest example the occasion when José, Mecha's wayward son, participates in a celebration in town. In attendance is a principally indigenous crowd, including Isabel's love interest. José's presence is not taken favorably and ends up in his being physically knocked out by Isabel's lover. The young aggressor gets into a fist fight with José, leaving the latter with injuries that plague him upon returning home that night. It may be that the Indigenous are marginalized within society as well as in their relation to the upper class, but with regards to their specific community, the lighter-skinned/white people are not welcomed. This is the double standard in place where no one race takes priority; the European family expects to be able to

---

[29] The translation for 'la sucia' is roughly 'the dirty one'; the comment is about as ambiguous as Isabel and Momi's relationship. Therefore, we make mention of it because while sexual undertones seem likely, as we point out in the chapter on gender, we can approach it here from an angle of social status.

marginalize the Indigenous but also be tolerated by them. At every step, Mecha marginalizes Isabel as the hired help via her disregard to include her in the family. But, it becomes clear to viewers that Isabel's absence will be felt as Momi begs her to stay and Mecha grows increasingly unable to cope with the household on her own. In one of the final scenes in which the two girls appear allows viewers to see a distraught Momi watch Isabel through the window as the latter transitions into the position alongside her lover.

The previously mentioned scenes emphasize how racial struggles lead to positioning on the outside; no race is inherently superior to another, but it is treated that way. Thus, magnifying the differences in races leads to a further divide between them. It seems as though the fight between José and Isabel's lover serves to demonstrate the struggle for racial dominance in the figurative sense. The fight scene was not primarily focused on a dispute between two boys but rather it was compounded by years of resentment and ideals engrained into them by society; the violence resulted from racial tensions more than anything else. Additionally, practicing any kind of power based on ascribed racial superiority also comes with risks. An individual, or an entire race for that matter, cannot ideally and morally be rejected in one instance and then depended upon in another, although this does occur; Momi is the only one who understands this delicate balance, and the others suffer from their ignorance.

In the same way that *The Swamp* shows disparity between being European-Argentine and being Indigenous-Argentine, so does *The Headless Woman*. In fact, the disregard for Indigenous life, whether that be attributed to the protagonist, Vero's, ambiguous mental state or society, is salient in this second film. It remains questionable, due to her possible state of psychosis, whether or not the woman takes into consideration the race of the boy whom she struck with her car. However, it is true that the disappearance of the child does not readily make headlines; in

other words, can we attribute this to the child's race as well as his social class? One way to answer such a question is to recall, again, the setting of the plot. Still situated in Salta, we see the contrast between the city and its outskirts as we did in *The Swamp* and even *Camila*. There are three primary areas in which we see Vero function: her usual spaces within the city center, the hospital located in the noticeably poorer and heavily populated Indigenous locale, and finally on the desolate back-roads of the city outskirts. The only place in which Vero fits in, physically speaking, is the city center. Otherwise, her presence is foreign; as support, let us state Martel's quote from Oumano's book as the former talks about the casting of Maria Onetto as Vero: "I also cast her because of her physical features-she's very tall, very white- and that was important because I was trying to find somebody who may or may not have committed a crime and is trying to hide from that. Because people in that part of Argentina are short and dark, with her type of body it would be hard to hide" (70). Such a citation backs up the claim that race is an unspoken yet strongly felt component in Martel's works. The purposeful inclusion of Onetto in the cast is to enhance this social commentary.

Conversely, Vero seeks out the Indigenous although she has depreciated it simultaneously by her actions. The fact is that Vero (Onetto) tends to gravitate towards that same area where she indeed is a foreigner, the Indigenous part of town. Whether her intention is due to the desire of acceptance or a subconscious feeling of guilt, we consider this point proximately. In an interesting take on the racial dichotomy here, we see that while Vero is not relevant within the Indigenous community, her presence is neither shunned nor scorned; rather, those around her are indifferent whereas we do not see the same practice when we consider the opposing angle. The Indigenous are not present in the city center save for the labor and/or service needs of city inhabitants. While Vero's actions are not condonable regarding her feigned ignorance of the

accident, we can argue that she is the most innocent of those in this chapter accused of marginalizing another. In comparison to both of the corpus subjects known as Mecha, Vero does not demonstrate an active intolerance of a culture different from her own. Interestingly enough, she is the perfect example of Kristeva's concept of "foreigner to one's self". This woman is practically overlooked by those around her, including her husband and the man with whom she maintains an affair. To state she is overlooked does not mean that she is forgotten or even ignored, but rather she is told how to act/feel due to her unnamed condition. There is no attempt to rehab her to health, only to address the problem in so far as it can be masked for the time being.

In closing the discussion of *The Headless Woman*, we previously mentioned that psychoanalysis is useful here. What is it that drives a troubled Vero back to an Indigenous hospital? Guilt or kinship? It is obvious that if her goal is to avoid that particular culture, then surely she would not intentionally seek out their presence. Yet and still, we have the ambiguity surrounding the young child; she may or may not have struck him with her vehicle. It is helpful here to consider Vero as victimized as well; she, too, falls prey to marginalization, albeit in a very different sense than the Indigenous. She is no longer a contributing member within her personal relationships; in many a scene with others, we see her objectified in the sense that she is told how to think, feel, and act without the capacity to do so autonomously, probably owing in large part to her mental fragility. Arguably, her continued pilgrimage to the Indigenous parts of town can be an unconscious attempt to connect with an ethnic identity. In a sense, both she and the unnamed boy are helpless per way of their submission to those dominant around them; the men in Vero's life and society in the boy's life occupy that position of authority.

More so than in Bemberg's films, Martel's subjects share a certain affinity for the opposing race and ethnicity. We cite two papers by Freud that address identity through awareness of the self: "Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-analysis" and "Negation". Regarding self-awareness, Freud wrote: "Everyone—or almost everyone—was agreed that what is mental really *has* a common quality in which its essence is expressed: namely the quality of *being conscious*—unique, indescribable, but needing no description. All that is conscious, they said, is mental, and conversely all that is mental is conscious … " (378). However, as is later explained "No; being conscious cannot be the essence of what is mental. It is only a *quality* of what is mental, and an unstable quality at that—one that is far oftener absent than present" (379). Thus we can safely say that Momi and Vero are more than likely not conscious of their transference of feelings from one culture to another; being rejected by their own cultures causes them to seek acceptance in the opposing ones, a practice we will see subsequently in Puenzo's works. In addition, we can take this lack of consciousness one step further in the cases of the matriarch, Mecha, by supposing that she, too, is practicing some form of negation. Freud points out: "Negation is a way of taking account of what is repressed; indeed, it is actually a removal of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed" (182). Mecha simultaneously scorns and idolizes the Indigenous. Her behavior towards Isabel reveals that by way of denying the Indigenous, she secretly feels comfortable. Much like her daughter, she seeks refuge in a culture opposite her own, a fact she displays upon her whimsical plans of travel to Bolivia. An authentic dislike for another race would not cause one to seek it out as does Mecha, and as a welcome escape from her current life at that. In this way, too, negating her feelings for the Indigenous protects her from feeling close to the only other family member similar to her,

Momi. Race in the contexts of these two films physically separates people from a sociological standpoint yet it can bring peace when analyzed from a psychological perspective.

The same compulsion that drives Momi and Vero towards the subordinately considered race is played out in Puenzo's *The Fish Child*. Lala, too, is a foreigner in her own right within the Buenos Aires elite to which she was born. In order to dissect what is meant by the elite circles in which Lala moves, we consider the following from Adorno:

> The terms for classifying different societies, some of which come close to the usage of ethnology and anthropology, really refer to different forms of communal living and of the production and reproduction of life by human beings. They refer to basic types of arrangements by which people gain their livelihood and which define the forms of their coexistence. (29)

By virtue of the fact that Lala resides in a home environment where European and Indigenous coexist, she does not immediately suffer at the hands of elite rejection. Instead, she comes of age seeking comfort from the Guaraní culture of Paraguay, into which she is accepted through Aílin. Adorno compliments his discussion with the mention of "socialization," a piece that is fitting here as it expands upon our idea that Aílin is not disposable regardless of the setting: " . . . there exists between people a functional connection, which varies considerably, of course, according to the historical level of development of the society, and which leaves no-one out, a connectedness in which all members of the society are entwined and which takes on a certain kind of autonomy in relation to them" (29-30). The existence of Lala's family would be affected by the absence of Aílin as much as Aílin would be affected by the absence of Lala; each teen plays a role in the other's reality, which includes their maturation and physical/emotional development.

In the case of Lala and Aílin, the case of "socialization" transcends race and endows each teen with a purpose within society; within the confines of the home, race is of little consequence

in *The Fish Child*, with the exception of Aílin's assumed role as maid. Ironically, the term home is used in a literal sense in order to call to mind a social structure, since neither teen can claim the loving family that goes along with it. To specify further, we see an even deeper parallel between Lala and Aílin, that of abandonment. Lala is all but ignored by her father and forgotten by her mother while Aílin is violated by her own father and orphaned by her mother. The adolescent girls seem to readily accept an existence on the margins as such difficulty pales in comparison to hardships endured thus far. The complications lie in the harsh reactions they confront from others. Outside of the home, race asserts itself and takes on an altogether different connotation, one of control. Ultimately, the teens' actions are predicted based solely on stereotypes before being played out; Lala is primed to be a future socialite and Aílin to lead a life of continued service. When the teens challenge the racial dichotomy, acceptance comes about in an untraditional sense. Rather than be feared, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Northern Argentina come to be synonymous with a mental oasis, in which even the second of the two Mechas takes part. Either the women in question in this chapter feel more comfortable within this Indigenous culture, or else as quite probably the case with Mecha, she feels inherently superior without having to put forth the effort required inside the confines of a self-facilitated, European social collective. The existence of the Indigenous is continuously seen as advantageous or else without consequence when compared with the European culture; at no indicated point in time do they pose a threat to those around them as could be the reverse circumstance when the dominant culture exerts its power.

Besides the obvious parallels to be drawn between *The Swamp* and *The Fish Child*, it is useful to point out two further factors that make the films compatible before delving into Lala and Aílin's circumstances specifically. There are the recurring themes of both water and

spirituality which equally impact the races but with differing effects. One wonders, from a psychological perspective, if both elements come together to reflect the respective situations of our characters. In *The Swamp*, the pool is pivotal in that its existence boosts the socio-economic status of the people around it: those adults and children sun-bathing at its edges. However, the putrid green water is telling of the falsity of the familial façade, essentially dulling the face value of the European and deeming them equal to the Indigenous. Then there is the strong Catholicism present in the town, affecting most definitely the Indigenous population as we see played out in the images of them gathering around the sites known to have welcomed a vision of the Virgin Mary; the Europeans are aware of but not fazed by this occurrence. Upon trying to establish a connection between water and Catholicism, a case is made for the tradition of baptism. In this practice, purification of the soul takes place. It is symbolic step of all those to going through the sacrament as children of God. Thus, a connotation of baptism is ironic in the two films as marginalization has all but destroyed the possibility of peaceful coexistence among cultures. The moments in which we see water in *The Swamp* are poignant; the rain washes away Mecha's blood after she has fallen in a sort of drunken stupor, the shower washes away the dirt from the family's children after a day outside, the river washes away the children's worries as they go fishing, and the green pool engulfs Momi as her cannonball breaks the surface. On the other hand we have the pond in *The Fish Child* that also has dark implications; in fact, it becomes a makeshift memorial to Ailín's dead child, near which people leave offerings of various forms. Ailín, upon giving birth, submerges herself in a bathtub. When the baby dies, she wants his soul to rest in the water where he can be free. Yet, while the pond has become a symbol of a past tragedy for the townspeople, both Lala and Ailín find comfort in the signification of freedom. Lala, in an attempt to understand the events of her lover's past, explores the underwater world

where the fish child resides. Therefore, the act of submerging themselves into water is strikingly similar to the process of being baptized. In addition, neither body of water is the blessed, clear water used in a baptismal font; rather, the areas embody the characteristics of the antithesis of a font by being forbidden, murky waters. Could we say that there is a symbolic washing away of the past in order to appropriate another? We have water as a washing away of what it is that displeases each character about her background, largely as it has to do with race and ethnicity. Whereas Ailín prefers to forget her blood race, Momi and Lala want to shed their social race; it is not that the each character is concerned with skin color per se, rather the connotations that are attached to them. Regardless of whether the water is pure in clarity, it is representative of new beginnings in religion and in nature (i.e. giving life to vegetation, being needed for survival).

So, in discussing *The Fish Child* as a separate entity, we again have two very distinct worlds being portrayed, one of prestige and one of poverty. However, the Indigenous culture here silently takes on a more important role as the film gets its name from a Guaraní myth, that of the "Fish child". We also see, again, the model of the prominent, young Argentine girl wanting to be part of the Indigenous culture of her simultaneous maid/lover. Lala is determined to renounce the affluent circle to which she belongs for a life of simplicity and insecurity with Ailín; she takes her desire one step further as she ventures, alone, to Paraguay in search of Ailín. Instead of the city versus the countryside as in *The Swamp*, we have the question of two countries. Still, Lala's dedication to Ailín does not waiver, even finding out that she kills her own father to be with her lover. Lala is so devoted to Ailín that she no longer has an identity of her own, which is more extreme than can be said for a Momi merely in despair after Isabel's departure. Lastly, the role of language is a distinguishing factor in this film as much as it is in the film and its respective analysis that follow; language is imperative in the mentioned relationships

as well as in identity formation. Guaraní becomes the language utilized between Aílin and Lala as if to compliment the independent, third ethnicity they have created through the joining of their respective races. We see the German language with an almost identical role in Puenzo's *The German Doctor* as with English in Bemberg's *Miss Mary*.

The German Doctor can be easily connected to *Miss Mary* as there is a direct integration of the European culture, although in the former it is not looked upon in an entirely positive light; therein we see the tie with *The Fish Child* in the mixing of two races/ethnicities in the construction of an identity as being problematic. In fact, the European culture here is almost seen as an invasion metaphorically played out in the presence of Josef Mengele. Until his arrival, the German community situated in the south is a seemingly pleasant commentary on how two cultures, in this case German and Argentine, get along without incident. In these ways, Puenzo has a way of taking ideas about race that are already well-known, and turning them on their heads. We expect all things European to be celebrated and are deceived when this is not the case. Whereas the European culture is generally portrayed as forceful, in Puenzo's movies it takes a back seat as the Indigenous and/or Argentine culture makes itself known. While Eva's German roots are strong and Mengele reinforces that fact, her loyalty remains with her Argentine husband, Enzo, and their family.

Geographically, Patagonia belongs to the territory claimed by Argentina. However, from the onset of Enzo and Eva's arrival, we understand that race and ethnicity are distinct and can exist independently of geography. Racially, the inhabitants viewed on-screen are biologically, read physically, similar; despite her genetic anomalies, Lilith as an Argentine is representative of Mengele's view of the perfect race he tried to stabilize in Germany. Still, beyond the physicality of the town and its people, the engrained details composing individual identities are strikingly at

odds in terms of German and Argentine. A German school, where the language permeates every aspect of life, claims as its responsibility the education of its students. Lilith, in her intellectual formation, is influenced by both German and Argentine, much as her mother. Therefore, we slowly see a struggle taking place between the two races in order to claim dominance in ethnicity. Beginning with the inclusion of Mengele within the intimate family circle, we see Argentine become the other even inside its own borders.

Enzo, assumedly full-blooded Argentine, intuits this occurrence and fights to marginalize the European by way of rejecting Mengele. Race is hardly abstract in this film as it is responsible for joining Enzo and Eva with Mengele. Though Mengele initially sought out the family, it is Eva who takes a liking to him because of their shared ethnicity. Enzo is ethnically marginalized for his inability to connect with the German ties, yet for that same reason he is able to maintain a neutral position that allows him to eventually assess the situation for what it really is: a threat to his family's safety. On the other hand, Mengele is never marginalized but only exiled in the end, his situation reflective of the potential complications of mixing Argentine/German identities. He also fails in his attempt to marginalize Enzo while attempting to promote racial and ethnic purity within the Patagonia where he temporarily resides. The doll project metaphorically allows audiences to understand how Mengele hoped (and failed) to see Germany and his vision for the residents of the Argentine south. Lilith ultimately enjoys the protection that a mixing of races and ethnicities has provided her. Her story is undoubtedly typical of other Argentine children and many in today's society in that she simultaneously shares racial and ethnic components of two different groups.

As the subject analyses draw to a close, we go about concluding with a paragraph of comparison as well as one of contrast between the films previously discussed. Let us quote

Foucault in order to maintain our perspective of the label of race as a tool to ensure continued power; "Traditionally, power was what was seen . . . Those on whom it was exercised could remain in the shade; they received light only from that portion of power that was conceded to them, or from the reflection of it that for a moment they carried" (187). The dominant race, European, is unmoved in the plots because its presence consistently blocks the Indigenous from advancement. Each film considers race as a salient topic and further examines how the characters deal with it via ethnic identification; as in the cited Spivak article, perhaps the mistake committed is trying to ethnically transition rather than confront. In fact, confrontation, most specifically internal confrontation, is rather absent from our corpus. The failure to confront the reality of the situation definitively plays into the individual being marginalized since he or she does not put forth an effort to own their struggle. Intentional confrontation of their situations could potentially alleviate many of the conflicts that arise. Not one subject is satisfied with their place racially and ethnically speaking, a fact which aggravates already existing racial tension. Regardless of level of happiness/sadness or indifference, the subjects are stuck in a perpetual pattern, destined to the same fate they try to evade. From any perspective, the Indigenous culture is almost seen as separate from being Argentine, as if the two are not compatible. Lala and Momi lust after the idea of being Indigenous because it is the exotic and it represents what they are not, while Mary is lusted after. Vero remains virtually without race except for the fact that her physical appearance hints at her European-Argentine identity. The young victim struck by the car is not regarded as Indigenous, yet by way of the opening scene we see a group of boys playing in the street. Based on physical features, their race is inferred, coupled with the fact that the accident takes place on desolate back roads, far from the modernized city, a backdrop which begs the question of why Vero was traveling that way to begin with. Such denial in identity

formation is a slippery slope as it is to deny the one part of the individual not able to be changed. Paradoxically, the eventual, societal marginalization seen here takes root in the psychological state of the individual.

As we mentioned Foucault previously and the notion that those subjected to power are cast in shadow, the contrast among these films reveals to what extent the subjects are in darkness. It should be pointed out that considering oneself as Argentine automatically implies that either one has European or one has Indigenous ancestry, it cannot be seen as distinguishable from both of these two influences at once. On the powerful end of the racial spectrum, we have Camila, Ladislao, Mary, the viceroys, the Mecha's, Momi, Vero, Lala, and Mengele. These characters are sociologically guaranteed a certain degree of privilege because of their race. However, ironically not even an associated superiority is enough to overcome the issues that each one has as far as ethnic identification. The introduction of societal matters shakes the racial foundation that provides stability to its core. We see the trend that while racial superiority within society may ease some aspects of life, it by no means shields individuals from political, familial, or personal complications. In this sense, our subjects deemed racially inferior, as is the case with Isabel and Aílin primarily as well as Sor Juana, have the advantage; they are already accustomed to operating in a world that operates them. Therefore, their clashes with society are not as urgent as when their racially dominant acquaintances realize that a biological race can only afford them so much privilege. From an arguable stance, it is more envious to be on the outside as all are exposed to the same constraints, just on varying levels. The silence imposed on the Indigenous actually serves as a strength building exercise for those affected because they have been taught how to cope in such a world, a skill which the European lacks. Those Europeans still hold on to

the feeling of importance they once enjoyed by virtue of the fact that they were the model race

(i.e. top caste) and ethnicity during a time of development in our country of focus, Argentina.

Thus, since we have an understanding of what is meant by race (and ethnicity) and how

the two are treated via interpretation, it is necessary to chronologically consider how this

category came about and why. Richard Graham, in the introductory pages of *The Idea of Race in*

Latin America, 1870-1940, starts by stating the following:

> The racial theories prevailing in European, North American, and Latin American thought
> from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1920s (and even to 1945) decidedly shaped
> public policies on a number of important issues. Initiated in Europe, the classification and
> ranking of humankind into inferior and superior races profoundly influenced the
> development, indeed, the very creation of the sciences. Biology, medicine, psychology,
> anthropology, ethnology, and sociology were all to some degree shaped by the
> evolutionary paradigm. (1)

He goes on to explain how the ranking system morphed into a hierarchy, placing respective races

in positions of power or subjugation. This, in turn, influenced communal practices. In other

words, race became so engrained in the development of societies that it undoubtedly became

irrelevant to understand why such thinking was even tolerated; in any case, race as a deciding

factor became a discriminatory instrument by empowering one race over another. Graham

continues: "Although the racist conception of human beings began to lose its credibility from the

early twentieth century, it was not until the Nazis began to apply those concepts to eugenics and

to undertake massive extermination of the 'inferior' races that most scientists firmly denounced

the, by then, pseudo-scientific character of racial theories" (1). It is important to mention this

history as it explains how the Indigenous came to occupy the inferior position while the

European assumed hegemony in the "panopticon." The quote fails to explore why specific races

are considered inferior, there is little validity behind such practices and yet people continue to

buy into such proposals much as they have done previously. Two of our films precisely coincide

with the timeframe and racial superiority pointed out in the previous quote; the plot for *Camila* is based on biographical elements of the protagonist from the nineteenth century and we also have *The German Doctor* dealing with Doctor Mengele's desire for the purification of race. Though the above-stated quotations are used to discuss race theories arising during said time span, such concepts of race existed before, as we discuss going forward. However, Graham very appropriately points out why he has chosen to tackle the given years and why Europe belongs in the study of race in Latin America:

> Latin Americans faced a difficult intellectual dilemma regarding race. On the one hand, racial heterogeneity characterized most of their societies. On the other, many Latin Americans aspired to an even closer connection to Europe and sought to follow its leadership in every realm. From the time most of their countries gained political independence from Spain and Portugal in the early nineteenth century, Latin American elites strove for an even closer integration with the northern European system, whether in trade or in finance, whether in politics or intellectual life. As the expanding forces of industrial capitalism penetrated ever deeper into the Latin American economies, so did accompanying social change and intellectual currents. (2)

Clearly, Europe served as a model for the stability that Latin America strove to achieve during the process of national development. It seems that racial tensions were never at the forefront of constructing solid social and political structures, but rather it became a byproduct. Our quote mentions that diversity in race was the norm in Latin America; then, when do we see it change? When Latin American countries observe Europe and the United States, whiteness equates itself with success while the so-called 'others' see to it that their privileged counterparts are successful. To what extent the United States followed in the footsteps of Europe as far as race, determining what Graham deems "classification and ranking of humankind", is outside the scope of this dissertation; it is useful to mention the comparison here to suggest that the United States did, in fact, practice such categorization as Europe and Latin America, albeit with regards to different races. Such an overview of three geographical areas that paid attention to and partook in

ethnicity as determination of value reflects what we have stressed since the beginning of this study: marginalization based on race (and ethnicity) is exercised worldwide, just in differing form.

In his article, "Historical Research on Race Relations in Latin America During the National Period," Magnus Mörner, too, tends to focus more loosely on the nineteenth century and the relationship between race and society. He goes on to discuss, specifically, the Indigenous population of Latin America and how they came to be referred to in such a way; he essentially establishes an evolution of terms. And since it is the Indigenous Argentine versus European Argentine classification that interests us here, we will point out the most relevant transitions. "The first national constitutions abolished the legal and administrative use of such socioethnic terms as Indian, Mestizo, Pardo, and other 'Castas'. . . . The 'Indians' lack of integration into the national society soon gave rise, however, to the administrative sanction of another designation: *indígena*" (201). We observe the change in wording to correspond to social occurrences.

> It is evident that by the eighteenth century both 'Indio' and 'mestizo' had become social rather than racial terms. Whereas even more or less 'pure' Indians who had settled on the haciendas often rapidly lost their Indian identity (even in the legal-fiscal sense), those with similar Indian ancestry who remained in the landowning villages—with their peculiar Indo-Spanish municipal structure—remained true 'Indians'. (208)

While the termed Indigenous population can imply some degree of mixing of blood, theirs is not the only context in which a pure race becomes less common. Mörner is also very accurate in subtitling a section of his article as "Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Immigration and the New Mestizaje":

> The European immigration to Latin America during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century brought a profound change in the ethnic composition of Southern Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, southern Chile, and Cuba . . . The Caucasoid predominance in previously Mestizo southern South America is thus a product of the last hundred years. (219)

Hence we can safely state that European-Argentines cannot claim the superior status to which historical events thought them entitled; the reality can be seen as simply Argentine without the necessity to delineate lineage. The mixing of blood metaphorically places the two classifications on an even playing field, as it ought to have been right along. Yet and still, popular thought does not follow in the same way:

> Nevertheless, historians are bound to take notes of results of contemporary social science research, which shows both the continuing importance today of ethnic prejudice and of even milder forms of ethnic discrimination throughout Latin America as well as the existence of a caste-like 'indigenous' sector at the bottom of the social ladder in all the 'Indo-American' countries. (200)

Argentina can be considered as such. While the previous quotes from Mörner are dated in the sense that they come from an article published in 1970, it is telling that the content still holds true in the present.

We return to the outline of race, specifically in Argentina, from an article by Aline Helg. She begins with an overview of Domingo Sarmiento's role in Argentine vision of race: "In the 1880s Sarmiento was torn between an evolutionary vision of race and a faith in immigration and education as the solution to Argentina's modernization problems. … In Sarmiento's judgment, there was no doubt that the Anglo-Saxon and Christian United States was the very incarnation of the most civilized race" (39). This quote further supports that very early on in Argentine history the Europeans enjoyed not strictly government favor, but consequently the forced approval of the people (which is not to say that all other racial groups favored Europeans, only that it was the dominant race that was respected). Helg goes on to explain the existence of the Indians, or as Mörner distinguished, the Indigenous (the way in which this dissertation refers to said group of people), in Argentina's history. "The Indians, however, were considered the most challenging enemy of Argentinean civilization until the early 1880s" (44). Actions early on in the

development of Argentine culture, such as under General Roca as Helg mentions, stigmatized the Indigenous and the feeling endures in the present. Upon such happenings, another racial occurrence took center stage: "Therefore, in the late 1880s, blacks and Indians became insignificant minorities and immigration became a major social issue" (44). Here, we see the shift from Indigenous Argentine to European Argentine, with the latter not as burdened by negative connotations[30]; on the contrary, we see the arrival of Europeans as synonymous with progress, as Helg points out. She explains that immigration to Argentina was brought about by those people from Europe looking to leave declining "socioeconomic conditions" as well as an increase in "demand for Argentinean cereals and meat", all translating to a 'whiter, more European' Argentine population (45). However, as the author develops after the aforementioned information, European immigration was not without resistance. Yet, in the end, the connotations of European race in Argentina are seen as positive. As we have seen, the negativity surrounding the Indigenous reaches further back in history than the reality of the European Argentines. Consequently, such deep-seated prejudices are not easily erased in the face of this other set of mixed blood peoples that have come to represent a time of development in the country. Despite progress having been made to bring awareness to the Indigenous culture, I would argue there is still a figurative black cloud hanging over the heads of those born with that blood. In addition, there is a prideful element to being European as that phase in history helped aid development and overall progress.

While racial marginalization in general has a much wider scope than what we are dealing with here, at the very least European/Indigenous-Argentine and the previous situations can serve as cases representative of other such racial/ethnic combinations in existence, regardless of the

---

[30] It is necessary to acknowledge existence of issues among different European groups.

country. Race, often with political connotations, has the potential to lead to violent events; consider a point made by Freud in his chapter entitled "Why War?":

> Thus we see that the violent solution of conflicts of interest is not avoided even inside a community. But the everyday necessities and common concerns that are inevitable where people live together in one place tend to bring such struggles to a swift conclusion and under such conditions there is an increasing probability that a peaceful solution will be found. But at a glance at the history of the human race reveals an endless series of conflicts between one community and another or several others, between larger and smaller units—between cities, provinces, races, nations, empires—which have almost always been settled by force of arms. (277)

We notice that Freud utilizes "human race" to imply that all races are part of a group of individuals, yet the varying interests/differences among the individuals create the problems. A division of superiority and inferiority hardly remedies the situation. In fact, assigning more favor to one race over another within any community has the potential for violent consequences as all beings are trying to resolve parallel issues. Thus, we have an argument in favor not of abolishing the fact that different races exists but rather tolerance.

In the works where race is not as prevalent a theme as gender or social class, it undeniably exists in that it plays, to a certain extent, into the social ranking of our protagonists. Being that the two are, in part, codependent, we will begin our discussion of social class. The two are distinguishable in that social class is a more fickle classification, able to be changed by way of individual effort, luck, or chance, whereas race is more permanent. In that way, it goes without saying that social class is much more sociological than race. Race and gender, while connected to society, are in large part psychological; neither of them depends on society directly for its existence, but rather they are judged in that way. Gender will be discussed last being that it is the area where sociology and psychology play a rather equal role. We end this chapter with a citation from Lucrecia Martel, taken from Oumano's book, which accurately sums up the influential nature of race:

In my view, Argentina is a classical South American country that was influenced by Immigration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That was enriching but created a problem—an upper class connected to Europe—and that created a society where social classes are also separated in terms of race, so social injustices become issues of race or ethnicity. For example, it seems normal in Argentina that white people are in power positions and black or dark-skinned people are in working-class situations. . . . *Headless Woman* (2008) triggered a dialogue in my province on this issue of social injustice. Actually, whenever I set out to make a movie, I have a political intent. (223-4)

Argentina is representative of the racial situation in many countries; no longer is racial uniformity consistent, regardless of the country. Undoubtedly many factors contribute to the ethnic/racial diversity in communities globally, and this has become a new reality with which members of said communities must deal. There is a positive connotation to diversity because it equalizes all of the participants. Argentines are not uniform in their racial make-up nor are people from the United States. In fact, origin is strictly territorial in reference; the more accurate descriptor is lineage as it traces racial roots.

CHAPTER 3 "*SOCIAL CLASS* AS IT DETERMINES BEHAVIOR"

Social class is a construct formed under pressure; we take the stance that an individual is unstable in the tiers of their community as long as there are fluid expectations. Reference to social class calls to mind an organizational, societal fabric controlled by financial status. There is not, in fact, a sole class, but rather strata to which individuals theoretically belong based on their economic worth. Social class, just as the other two categories with which we deal, has little to do with character and more to do with perception. However, we make it clear from the beginning that while money is pertinent to the positioning of the individual in a society, behavior becomes the deciding factor when observed by the panoptic eye of society, and more specifically a given community. Wealth, poverty, or any point in between is not immediate causation for marginalization, but rather the individual's reaction (i.e. behavior) to their situation is under scrutiny; in this way, the individual becomes sensitive to even the slightest changes in the social climate. If they behave in accordance with their stratum, in other words as others do in their situation, then immediate marginalization is avoided. The clash between idealism and reality is grounds for a rupture in the private/public arena. To exemplify what we mean, we take Camila as a case in point; born to an aristocratic, religious family headed by a staunch, patriarchal supporter of Rosas, her humility, attraction to a priest, and more liberal views do not lend well to acceptance in her stratum. Thus, she opts for intentional marginalization which eventually leads to complete, familial alienation. Therefore, I frame social class as organized by money and maintained by behavior; if and when there is disconnect between money and behavior, we pay attention to the rejection and consequent sensitivity that occurs both on an individual and a community level.

In chapter two, we considered race as more static because it is processed mentally (in terms of ethnic identification) and perceived by others; there is a certain forced passivity because it cannot be physically changed. In contrast, we have this idea of a constant push and pull between the private and the public. Social class as a categorical tool is not consistent and individual input has the ability to alter it. As we analyze in our cinematic subjects, social class is portrayed and understood in terms of appearance and behaviors as perceived by (an) other(s). A value is placed on the individual for what they offer to their stratum and to the community; is this particular individual beneficial to others or a detriment? We mention Karl Marx as he is included in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Modern Criticism and Theory*: "The capitalist mode of production, which deprives the worker of the product of his labour, is thus the root cause of all generalized manifestations of social alienation" (38). There is a certain objectification of subjects within our plots that has a direct connection to their labor. I interpret Marx as asserting that the individual is separated from his/her output the moment in which they produce it. The individual's value correlates with what they can offer; this, in turn, forces interrelations. Individuals interact based on production, with some providing goods/services and others seeking them. In such a way, attention ought to be paid to more than just economics when studying class organization within a society, because there are clearly established roles between those who give and those who gain. Marx also says, in *Capital: Volume I*, that: "The persons exist for one another merely as representatives of, and, therefore as owners of, commodities. . . . the characters who appear on the economic stage are but the personalities of the economic relations that exist between them" (123). Thus, we are reminded of the figurative, material, and literal exchanges that occur in a community, not entirely independent of money and behavior. People exchange goods and services, and the roles taken on when they do so later dictate their (un) acceptable

behavior outside of the labor market. The maneuvering done in the labor market that is later translated to the level of class they achieve, it all lends itself to (not) being marginalized.

To expand upon this idea that our films can create discussion on social class by subject and situational representations, we cite an article by Rudolf Arnheim, more specifically an excerpt taken from a subsection titled: "Artistic Use of the Absence of Nonvisual Sense Experiences". Social class, because of its dualistic material and behavioral nature, is easily intuited by third party observers. He states the following: "Charles Chaplin wrote somewhere that in all his films there was not a single scene where he 'spoke', that is, moved his lips. Hundreds of the most various situations in human relationships are shown in his films, and yet he did not feel the need to make use of such an ordinary faculty of speech. And nobody has missed it" (329). So, how exactly does such a quote fit into our area of social class or into the other two categories of race and gender for that matter? They are all abstractions, carried out by action, psychologically or socially. In terms of social class, much can be extracted, or inferred if you will, from gestures, body language, and above all behaviors in relation to another. To understand how this is so, how it is that an individual reveals much of themselves without the necessity of a verbal explanation, let us consider two definitions of the environment in which each of us moves: 'society'[31]; "1. an organized group of persons associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes. 2. a body of individuals living as members of a community; community".

Inevitably, a society, and by extension a community, involves a grouping of individuals who perform certain roles successfully. This does not imply, however, complete cooperation by those involved. There is a consistent struggle to lead a pleasant existence; along the way, there is

---

[31] Both definitions are taken from dictionary.com; entries appear chronologically.

a sliding scale between acceptance and rejection. Power is constantly changing hands in an area where several people are cohabitating; marginalization originates here from the desire of one (or multiple) individual(s) to enhance their resources and values against another's. A community evolves through the silent dynamics of its members, silent in the sense that its workings are not palpable. These dynamics occur because the perpetuation of social class derives, in part[32], from the aforementioned behaviors exhibited in private and social interactions.

The chronology of the various definitions of 'society' that we have enumerated indicates that first and foremost society establishes a base and builds on itself via organization and the existence (presence) of an individual. Frankly speaking, society as a whole is less preoccupied with regards to specific needs and desires; this becomes the responsibility of the individual and those in his or her family and/or friend unit. Therefore, class takes on a deeper meaning because it is bound so closely to the private being of individuals. María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo experiment with the private/public and portray the outcome by way of the plots of their films, as Arnheim suggests, without the need for direct dialogue that speaks to the issue. There is an intuitive feeling, as much from the audience as the subjects themselves, that aids in comprehending to which class someone belongs and why, in turn mentally contriving existence. An existence is inherent, but it is informed, in terms of this chapter, by the boundaries of what an individual has to offer and how that marks their place in and outside of the labor market.

What we have is representation that the psychological effects of the public "panopticon" are successfully incorporated to the point where little to no thought is required to classify an

---

[32] We mentioned that behaviors play a part in societal mechanics but it is not to be ignored that economics is also influential; the role of economics in terms of organizing the social, i.e. social class, is tied in at the end of the chapter, as a secondary consideration after psychology. We first deal with behaviors and relationships before commenting on the role of production, i.e. financial components.

individual or understand their positioning. The concern, however, is the strength of any social category, be it social class, race, or gender, since psychologically speaking, nothing is finite as implied by the following article. The "panopticon," in terms of the social or otherwise, feeds off acceptance and/or rejection. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari penned the essay "How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?" in which they bring to life the metaphor implied by the title. Society, just as the body (and mind) is empty if not receiving input; this input is what leads to change. They write:

> You never attain the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit. People ask, So what is the BwO? –But you're already on it, scurrying like a vermin, groping like a blind person, or running like a lunatic: desert traveler and nomad of the steppes. On it we sleep, live our waking lives, fight—fight and are fought—seek our place, experience untold happiness and fabulous defeats; on it we penetrate and are penetrated; on it we love. (150)

Society can influence mentality but cannot completely control as long as the being retains his/her individuality; the fulfillment of needs/desires making us individual. One reading of a "body without organs" is as the manifestation of the essence of the human being. The emotional fulfillment of human beings is not attainable because it represents the finish line which gives life purpose. And much purpose comes in the form of the other, i.e. that which we do not possess. Here we do not reference solely possessions, but also other people, hence the relevance of relationships. Lastly, we want to include that they state: "The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy . . . Psychoanalysis does the opposite: it translates everything into phantasies . . . It royally botches the real, because it botches the BwO" (151). It may be that the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari are not compatible with Freud, however we argue a connection. The "body without organs" and psychoanalysis have, at their core, the mental. They strive for happiness but approach possible attainment in a different way. The hopeful result of the journey is the same: freedom to attain. This is the thing that humanizes

individuals and places them all on a level playing field. Society, more specifically social class, is the result of individuals struggling towards survival; during that struggle, happiness is, hopefully, attained en route. No social construct elicits happiness. Instead, an individual acting in a way that brings them happiness is the ideal. Yet, the power that the constructs have to dictate behavior is what leads to marginalization if there is not a successful joining of construct and behavior.

Theodor Adorno proposes a unique perspective when explaining sociology and his mention here is critical to rounding out the preliminary ideas we have previously stated. He states that the behavior studied by sociology does not translate only into actions that affect the abstraction that is society, i.e. work, production, contributions, but rather said behavior has affected the thought process, hence the psychological underpinnings of social class; in *Introduction to Sociology* we quote the following: " . . . sociology is really nothing other than an agency of control conforming to the technocratic ideal, but which is now being extended beyond the mere outward arrangement of the production apparatus to penetrate the communal life of human beings and finally the consciousness and the unconscious of human beings" (135). Our directors want to confront this hold that society has over individuals, exploring why it has become the individual living for society, and not the reverse situation: society as working for the individual. Should it not be that a social construct benefit an individual, not harm them? Social class becomes powerful because it produces situations that can marginalize and we exemplify how that is in this chapter.

Adorno continues: "For the very concept of technology contains an ineradicable moment of dominance over nature, and as soon as this idea of technology as dominance over nature is applied directly and without reflection to human beings, the notion of dominance over nature is transferred just as directly to human beings" (135). In the narratives via film with which we are

working, we see the dominance of the social of which Adorno speaks. Instead of the organization which society claims to provide, we see chaos when class undermines existence. This is especially true in some of the tragically destined subjects, including: both Mecha's, Camila, Leonor, Helena, and Vero; among these women, class expectations run deeper than the others who enjoy a quasi liberation in the form of marginalization as is the case with Isabel and Ailín. We argue that there is not one incident of social class being advantageous in the films because it, instead, serves to deepen the divide between individuals; even when masquerading as positive in the case of the bourgeois lifestyle, the pressure to upkeep appearances leads to private/social struggle, as is the case in our dubbed 'tragic' subjects. The stronger cases where we witness the practice of keeping secrets in our respective plots are as follows. In the case of Leonor, during the opening of the film, the following line is said to her: "God punished you one time". And upon viewing the rest of the film, we see this protagonist dedicate her life to covering up that punishment (Charlotte's dwarfism); she runs a successful business in town and donates to the Church, both actions she feels the need to fulfill in order to overcompensate for her tainted reputation. Equally scarred by her failed marriage and Momi's tomboy-like nature, Mecha acts in the same way by hosting gatherings at the family pool and employing maids to whom she constantly refers as "these Indians". Lastly, for comparative purposes, we state that marginalization affords Ailín less societal pressure because she does not have a prestigious reputation to lose; Lala's father directs his comment of "singing in Guaraní, that's how the women mesmerized the Spanish", insinuating that regardless of Ailín's behavior, she has to combat the prejudices associated with not only her race but her class as well.

Whereas race and gender issues can spark debate, we argue that social class is understood without such discussion. At no point in the corpus of works that we examine here does a subject

have to be told that they are upper, middle, or lower class, though they are constantly reminded through commentary that they are not European or not feminine/masculine enough. Before we continue on in our development of the idea of society versus the individual, let us briefly recap how our cinematic subjects fit into such a framework. Further on in the chapter, their situations are discussed at more length. There is an interesting contrast between the earlier of the two films from Bemberg; Camila is from the aristocracy and Miss Mary is employed by it. And then, in the latter two films by the same director, we see yet another contrast; Sor Juana has chosen to lead a life of humility and Charlotte is unknowingly humbled as she is shielded from the community. While all of these women are educated and capable, society organizes, i.e. classifies, them much to the detriment of their personal growth. In the case of the films by Martel, we see metaphoric entrapment of the subjects. Not one of the protagonists is physically restrained, but rather their positioning in society renders them helpless. Mecha and Momi are the products of their upbringing and lifestyles, struggling to maintain an air of importance by separating themselves from the townspeople, yet constantly curious of the freedom to be had if they let go of the latter image. The same is true of Helena and Amalia as permanent residents of an otherwise temporary living space, the hotel. Not to mention Vero's identity struggle as tied to her mother, husband, and daughters' opinions of her. Lastly, in terms of Puenzo, we see emotional restraint among her protagonists; not free to act how they want in society, the subjects resort to undermining classification standards in private. Young Alex explores sexuality outside of the public eye, mostly for fear of rejection from others. Meanwhile, Lala and Aílin do the same, though more for concern that the former's family will separate them. And Eva plots with Mengele to remedy Lilith, apart from the watchful eye of Enzo.

The commonality observed among all of these subjects is what we discuss going forward: society as a form of control. Each subject's existence becomes two-fold in the sense that they live a lie to please social standards while they simultaneously, and cautiously, live the truth outside the peripheral of judgements from any other(s). It is important to recall, here, that these subjects are only stand-ins for what occurs every day off screen. It is much easier, more comfortable, and safer to self-identify with a film subject; it is cathartic to watch personal issues played out on a big screen, issues that are nonfiction in nature. Once again referring back to Arnheim's quote utilized earlier in this chapter, outright acknowledgement of race, social class, or gender is not necessary to the comprehension of these films or any other for that matter; there is power in visuals, and in fact Martel, specifically, tends towards a more silent approach in her works, allowing the camera to do the talking as it captures human interaction with each other and with the landscape. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, Martel pays particular attention to sound as separate from speech; she encourages interpretation of the subject in his/her environment, electing to include noises so as to promote recognition, much as social class requires recognition of behavior.

Alongside this mention of control, we make continued, if not indirect, reference to the "panopticon". As we recall our view of society as fluid in nature, and the individual as unstable in terms of production, perception, and behavior, it remains that there is vigilance. Social class expects of the individual and he/she works to meet those expectations. At this point, we include statements from Foucault in *Discipline & Punish*: "The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation . . . Slowly, in the course of the classical age, we see the construction of those 'observatories' of human multiplicity … " (170-1). We have equated this mechanism to society and its classification strategies, which gain control, in large

part, on an unconscious level, as Adorno points out. Society conditions (i.e. disciplines) its members to appropriately participate. Such named observatories were not, arguably, constructed with the sole purpose of discipline, but rather with the intent to control without forthright verbalization. They function by organizing; this lends itself to individuals' consent without their being conscientious of it. Thus, individuals are conditioned by control at an early age, as proven by a citation from the subsequent lines where we note schools to be one of the institutions modeled after the also cited "military camps".

We see that simple organization plays on the psyche in that it convinces and rationalizes rather than promotes freedom of expression. We continue on, now, to get an idea of the "military camp model", as stated by Foucault, in order to understand the aforementioned observatories which become a metaphor for our subjects' class dominated situations. "In the perfect camp, all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning power" (171). The gaze, considered abstractly, is the judgment performed by those exterior to our subjects' situations, more precisely that of every person but the subject his or herself. This gaze cannot be controlled, but can only control. Essentially, our subjects are at the mercy of third party perception. "For a long time this model of the camp or at least its underlying principle was found in urban development, in the construction of working-class housing estates, hospitals, asylums, prisons, schools: the spatial 'nesting' of hierarchized surveillance" (171-2). Quite clearly, a model that starts out with the intention to keep order quickly becomes a hierarchy as at least two parties are required for performance: one required to keep order and the other to obey. Therefore, concrete examples of control are present in public, but psychological control takes hold in private. If such a model and practice extends from military camps to schools, surely it can be applied to society and basic human interactions; this

encompasses family structures, upper class participants and their employees, individuals and strangers to name a few. And why stop there when we can adapt a generalized statement: the consequential mindset of such hierarchy affects an entire community where residents are set on maintaining appearances. Hence, organization becomes autonomous. We conclude by citing, again, Foucault:

> A whole problematic then develops: that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control—to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold for their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. (172)

In essence, the community and the home are the microcosms of an observatory; under constant scrutiny, the objective is to avoid marginalization through homogenization, most namely in the way of social structure. However, as we see our subjects defy the implied rules of the observatory, they become marginalized regardless. This becomes problematic as it ruptures the organization and results in the subjects unwilling to give their life to society.

This decision would favor existence over acceptance. A key way in which we see defiance from the subjects is through their actions related to social standing; those with whom we deal for this area have chosen to ignore the habitus, a concept developed in the proceeding paragraph, by way of non-conformism. Still, non-conformity here is a double-edge sword, implying consent and lack thereof by the subjects. Some opt for intentionally breaking habitus while others are only believed to have done so because of unacceptable behaviors. Victimization is expected in an observatory, and it implies a victim and a perpetrator, just as the one who subjects another and the subjected in a hierarchy. The way to break the repetition of discipline is to act out, as our subjects have done, to some extent, which begins largely on the mental level. In

other words, a conscientious decision must be made before a physical act can even come to fruition. Case in point is the article "The Unconscious" by Freud: "How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the unconscious? It is of course only as something conscious that we know anything of it, after it has undergone transformation or translation into something conscious" (98). Our subjects only become conscientious of class as a differentiation factor when it is brought to their attention; in other words, a comparison and contrast occurs concerning their social status. On the one hand, race and gender are splintered categories, containing numerous avenues of exploration. Social class, on the other hand, is recycled time and again into upper, middle, and lower divisions, with little space for situating oneself in between the various strata. Repetition of past practices keeps the strata of a community in place; the influential power of such organization is threatened when repressed desires become stronger (in other words, when an individual breaks with stratum expectations, namely in reference to behavior). To break through the power, an individual must practice that mental flexibility mentioned earlier by ending repetitive discipline and class divisions via direct confrontation of desires; this translates to active decisions made in the moment without fear of repercussions. The catch becomes, as we have said, marginalization; no longer a victim of control, they transition to become a victim of un-acceptance.

What, then, is to become of this individual? Maybe an additional essay by Freud, titled "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process", can shed some light on the after effects of deciding between societal desires and personal ones; "Let us suppose, then, that a child's ego is under the sway of a powerful instinctual demand which it is accustomed to satisfy and that it is suddenly frightened by an experience which teaches it that the continuance of this satisfaction will result in an almost intolerable danger. . . . Thus there is a conflict between the demand of the

instinct and the command of reality" (372). Behavior is that negotiation space between instinct and reality. We see that the child, much like the adolescent or adult to which we are referring, is, too, capable of succumbing to two different thought processes while determining which one is the better course of action. A mention of Mecha, from *The Swamp*, is most appropriate. Physically she maintains her existence from her bed, a metaphor for her fear to participate in life; she is torn between what is expected of her in terms of being the matriarch of a semi bourgeois family while yearning for that ideal trip to Bolivia that would allow her to exist as a non-stigmatized woman. The fact that an internal conflict such as this even exists harkens back to the power that society has exerted over participating individuals. While this "splitting of the ego" can be applied to race as much as to gender, it is especially applicable under the social class category as it speaks to the complex expectations of society and the realization that the social is influential not only in the creation of the three labels discussed in this dissertation, but also in how our subjects react when given such labels. The "splitting of the ego" can and does take place upon conflicting emotional input, burdening individuals simultaneously with acceptance and marginalization.

The coping mechanism then becomes, as D.W. Winnicott explains, the division between the "true and false self". When the pressure of society pulls in one direction and desire in another, we see the emergence of two separate entities because a peace cannot be struck between them. Let us consider the following: "In particular I link what I divide into a True and a False Self with Freud's division of the self into a part that is central and powered by the instincts (or by what Freud called sexuality, pregenital and genital), and a part that is turned outwards and is related to the world" (139). The "true self" is composed of desires and instincts while the "false self" is moderation and expectations; the moderator between the two is reality (i.e. situation/context). A

case in point is Mecha from *Miss Mary*, who retreats to her 'crying room' when the falsity and sheer unhappiness of her existence becomes unbearable. This division of self suggests a severe compromise as it pertains to making a decision; as is often depicted in the narratives, an individual takes certain actions or acts a certain way, not absolutely understanding that repression has taken place. This means, in terms of our corpus, that our subjects must be understood as multi-faceted in the sense that the superficial and the emotional are not in sync. Superficial belonging can imply emotional marginalization, adding yet another layer to the difficulty of analyzing their situations. Winnicott goes on to describe the possible division between the two selves, explaining that "at one extreme the False self showcases itself as real and at the other as only the representation of the social" (141-2); with several points in between, we argue that the majority of our subjects fall into the middle ground: "Less extreme: the False Self defends the True Self; the True Self is, however, acknowledged as a potential and is allowed a secret life" (142). Upon taking into consideration the social aspect of race, social class, and gender as they fit into the Selves, we observe the fragility and instability of the human condition. Inconsistency, ironically, is the one element which binds our subjects together as a collective. Winnicott concludes his scale of Self division by recognizing that "acceptance in society cannot be achieved by the True Self alone" (142). This is important to us because it supports that the subjects studied in this dissertation, all of whom practice a normal, mental processing of external events, however, the key to their happiness is to strike a balance where they can live comfortably in society while remaining loyal to the individual.

The aforementioned balance becomes most difficult to strike in the context of class structure. Let us get more specific by stating outright that we are observing Argentine class structure. To get a better idea of social dynamics in this country, we consider it, first, in

conjunction with its Latin American counterparts. We cite Philip Oxhorn as saying: "Any analysis of Latin American class formation must take as its starting point the region's extreme levels of inequality and resultant heterogeneous class structure" (214). It seems that this article brings to light the danger of class heterogeneity by exposing the fragmentation that takes place. We know that neither extreme is absolutely beneficial; there are problems with both total homogenization as well as heterogeneity, but where does Argentina fall? In the lines that follow, we observe that although there is a heterogeneous class structure in existence, a strong middle class endures and is sought after. Leonardo Gasparini, in *Monitoring the Socio-Economic Conditions in Argentina 1992-2006*, provides us with an overview of Argentina from the perspective of poverty and labor; we extract his idea that "it was a once relatively stable country that has since undergone several economic fluctuations". Thus, from this overview, we want to present a statement concerning income as well as social grouping to see how the two correlate. "While income distribution changes were unequalizing over the period 1992-2001/2, they turned equalizing during the recovery 2002-2006)" (11). However, the question of income and its distribution no longer seemed to have such a strong hold on the hierarchical tendencies of social class. Gasparini writes: "The presence of a large middle-class was a distinctive feature of Argentina's economy. . . . In the early 1990s and despite 15 years of increasing inequality, Argentina remained as one of the low-inequality countries in the region" (13), but he then points out that the country no longer belongs to that group. And we believe it may be so for the reason that follows: "Polarization is a dimension of equity that has recently received attention in the literature. It refers to homogenous clusters that antagonize each other. . . . Polarization and inequality can go in different directions. This was not the case in Argentina, where the distribution became more unequal and more polarized at the same time" (13). We notice a split

between income and class, supporting what we have said thus far: class in not entirely dependent on income, but rather has alot to do with actions and behaviors. In an article by Jorge Raúl Jorrat, he explains: "Hasta aquí podemos señalar que Argentina está entre los países que más se autoidentifican con la clase media y donde, según clasificaciones objetivas de clase, sería uno de los países con mayor presencia de clases intermedias . . . al tiempo que sus habitantes no dejan de ver a su sociedad como particularmente elitista . . . " (78). Essentially what these quotes from Gasparini and Jorrat are conveying is an idea of the socio-economic climate in our country of focus and how that does (not) play into identity formation; these contribute to an understanding of the film plots and the subjects' corresponding behavior based on class.

We must not forget that the social history of Argentina plays a part in its present class situation. In returning to the previously cited book by Oumano, Martel says the following:

> In my view, Argentina is a classical South American country that was influenced by immigration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That was enriching but created a problem—an upper class connected to Europe—and that created a society where social classes are also separated in terms of race, so social injustices become issues of race or ethnicity. For example, it seems normal in Argentina that white people are in power positions and black or dark-skinned people are in working-class situations. (223-4)

Compounded, too, with social class is not just economics, but also race. As we mentioned "polarization", we see this to be true of economics and race, forming those social classes of which we have spoken. As was pointed out to me, when Martel references a "South American country", she is referring more specifically to the Southern Cone; this is an area that can claim social class is formed as much by economics as by race due to its unique immigration history. Unfortunately, as far as we are concerned, "polarization" is negative in that it promotes marginalization, or racial/class discrimination. Undoubtedly, it will be the middle-class, Europeanized group that holds power while the lower-class, Indigenous descended group suffers

the negative effects. Case in point is when Martel states: "*Headless Woman* (2008) triggered a dialogue in my province on this issue of social injustice" (224). Salta, Argentina, is just one province in a country where several races and classes coexist, and just one example of a current, tense societal climate in the world. Therefore, it is no wonder that our subjects practice some sort of "ego-splitting/true and false self division" or fake façade in order to fit in more closely with the groups that have a history of control. The fact that Martel's film triggered a dialogue suggests that it had the potential for being the catalyst for social change, proving the capability to deal with a social issue and speak to its relevance.

Continuing in the same vein of contextualizing social class, we now look at it beside Argentine film, setting up for our analysis by inclusion of select quotes and ideas from: *Pitt Illuminations: Transition Cinema: Political Filmmaking and the Argentine Left since 1968*. We want to reiterate our claim that social class as a salient feature in our filmmakers' works is logical. We recall that the referential years from 1968 onward are appropriate being that within the earlier part of this time frame our first film director, María Luisa Bemberg, gets her start in the industry. "After the media boom of the 1960s, Argentine activist filmmakers began to reexamine models of national cinema concerning social and political issues. Revisiting political film from a new vantage point, many looked to the genre of *cine social* of the mid-1930s, which dealt with issues of class and the rights of laborers in predominantly dramatic fiction films" (28). This can very well mark when it is that sociological issues, more specifically relating to class, appear as viable and desirable material for plots; however, we want to stress that it is more Martel and Puenzo that deal with socio-economic circumstances as provocative in the nature of their plots, whereas Bemberg treats them more as a detail. Bemberg must be certainly considered

an activist, for her plots (as well as those of Martel and Puenzo) are born out of politicized issues[33], both private/public.

Bemberg's films analyzed in this dissertation would fail to exist if not for their defiance; in fact, none of them showed Argentine politics or the corresponding class behaviors in an entirely positive light. Given the socio-political climate throughout the span of this filmmaker's career, this justifies considering her work as social. Bemberg was required to maneuver two potential pitfalls of production: tackling taboo topics and straddling the line of (non) cooperation with governmental restraints. The aforementioned lines lead into an explanation of Juan Perón's effects on the industry, stating that film took on a functional role for the country (beneficial for filmmakers) and even prompted support for his policies. But, the relationship between politics and film was not always a stable one, especially as the former was interested in favorable representation and the latter in creative truth. Some (dis)advantages of the union were as follows:

> Early on, then, the Perón administration gave birth to a complicated relationship among the state, the industry, leftism, and labor. On one hand, Perón's administration marks the beginning of censorship, the ratings system, and centralized state control over film activity. During this same period, however, the industry began to rely increasingly on state subsidization and eventually the state's political support of its labor force. (51-2)

Hand in hand with politics is the sliding social scale, in terms of economics and behavior. As we read on, we see that the disadvantages with political influence in any, and all, aspects of film were found in the limitations which we have mentioned in the second chapter. Film became, unavoidably so, a political tool. While censorship became something to overcome, it undeniably also stoked the fire of creativity from those directors of film who would stop at nothing to convey their message. As time went on, members of the industry banded together to defend that

---

[33] My dissertation director pointed out to me that Bemberg is more appropriately classified under 'cine de género' due to her interest in campaigning for women's rights. We mention her in connection with 'cine social' because her works were instrumental in broadening the spectrum of cinematic topics. Her films are arguably critical of the elite, together with women's roles in that class stratum, because the behavior displayed in that social circle is flawed.

same creativity that was threatened under the relationship with the government: "In 1980 the Permanent Committee for the Defense and Promotion of Argentine Cinema hosted a public debate in the Teatro Nacional, asking 'Does Argentine cinema have a future?'" (70). *Pitt Illuminations* follows by outlining the events of that debate, highlighting that the outcome was positive in that it encouraged a break between film/government (military), allowing all supporters to feel united in the drive for creative license.

The reasoning behind mention of the film/governmental relationship is first and foremost to convey the early stages of Argentine film (what Bemberg went through) and second to show how far Argentine cinema has progressed (the situations of Martel and Puenzo). Social class is doubly engrained in cinema because we have the economic/behavioral element of the filmmakers' personal lives and how that is or is not translated into their work. Social class also unifies race and gender because it affects every society; race/gender can be more or less problematic depending on the individual and their situations, but they will always deal with the behavior demanded by their class. The restrictions in place regarding freedom of speech and expression found María Luisa Bemberg as the most affected but certainly not deterred. She persisted in social transformation via acceptance, acknowledging race and gender conflicts amongst all social classes to show the potential for marginalization despite being (under)privileged. In a final quote from our previously stated work, we include: "In 1982, on the verge of the military's softening, a group that included several prominent women filmmakers printed a solicitada in the popular magazine *Humor*. This piece, signed by the director María Luisa Bemberg and the screenwriter Aída Bortnik, argued for the protection of human rights and for the duties of citizenship" (94). Racial, gendered, and above all social tolerance are human rights which 'cine social' and 'cine de género' promote from separate angles. Bemberg's

struggle with producing films with a social impact was a long journey, one during which she was confronted with many of the same confinements as her subjects. Without her contributions, both cinematically and socially, Argentine film would not be as unrestricted as it is today.

Social class is an overarching category because it includes race and gender; it almost always follows that social class does not affect race and/or gender, but race and/or gender can affect societal standing. With that in mind, we now discuss how Lucrecia Martel and Lucía Puenzo fit class-related behavior in their works. In an article titled "Little Red Riding Hood Meets Freud", Rodríguez Schroeder discusses the following: " . . . 'a new generation of filmmakers has succeeded in reinserting Latin American Cinema into the global cinematic marketplace, by appropriating some of the very conventions that the NLAC [New Latin American Cinema] rejected out of principle—for example . . . by redirecting the NLAC's emphasis on societies or extraordinary individuals in upheaval, focusing on the micropolitics of emotion" (94-5). Of most interest to us is that emotions take precedence, suggesting the importance of interaction between individual and surroundings, i.e. behaviors. How an individual behaves in their given context is directly tied to social class as we see later on in this chapter. Both Martel and Puenzo tend toward exploring the subjects in their surroundings and the reasons for their behavior. In many of the respective plots, we see behavior as dictated by upbringing; economic status and hierarchical placement in the community (translation: social class) has a direct correlation with subjects' actions. If we had to classify Bemberg's works, we can say, in contrast to Martel and Puenzo that hers tend more towards political commentary without focus on emotions and/or behavioral analysis; this is most probably due to the period of time in which she worked.

Therefore, we again focus on Martel and the article we previously cited by Rodríguez Schroeder; in said article, he exemplifies, by way of discussing the filmmaker's works, what we initially included regarding the evolution of Argentine cinema. He considers the works as broaching social constructs within the microcosm of Salta; Martel is cited as saying: "My cinema has this political dimension. It demonstrates that one can transform the world through the combination of one's will with the will of others. Reality is something we author, not something that exists. It is something we have constructed, and if we have constructed it one way, we could also construct it some other way" (99). Such a transformation begins with the acknowledgement that the social is composed of many parts, not least of which pertain to race, class, and gender. In response to the social, we have behaviors. Reality, then, becomes our reactions to the social (i.e. society). Again, we see the unification between social class and race/gender because of behavior. Social class influences the environment in which the child grows and consequently perceives their race/gender, all as part of their reality. By default, all three of our categories are politicized because they are, to varying extents, interdependent. As a complement to the comment above, in an interview that Walter Salles conducted with four Argentine Filmmakers, including Lucrecia Martel, he posed the following question: "Do you think that the social, economic and, above all, political chaos that Argentina is living through can inspire filmmaking? Or, conversely, is it an impediment?" Let us keep in mind that the interview took place in the year 2002, a world of difference in comparison to the time during which Bemberg produced. Martel answers:

> The perception of the chaos differs a great deal, depending on where you are when you contemplate it. As far as I'm concerned, I have viewed it from within the confines of my own upbringing. I feel that I belong to a middle class that is still desperately fighting to hold on to its few remaining privileges. I have never understood the fragility of an upbringing that does not prepare us for history, but only for day-to-day consumption. What is different is that I don't view this fall from position with fear, but rather with huge curiosity. Of course the practical mechanisms of film production become more complex

in these circumstances. But cinema has always been more a vision of the world than production facilities. (68)

Mention of the interviewer's question and the director's answer give credence to the statement that social class is fickle, something that race and gender are not by virtue of the fact that the latter two categories are not readily changed/maintained by behavior. For that reason, the panoptic power of class classification can be outsmarted by perception, read mental flexibility (or identification). Martel, herself, contemplates change with openness rather than trepidation, something she transmits in her film. Instead of promoting fear, chaos should inspire the curiosity that Martel has so astutely mentioned. In essence, chaos is an opportunity for change in disguise. Social class often represents something once familiar; it recalls an individual's upbringing and reasoning for their actions. When the once familiar becomes the unfamiliar, there is a disconnect between the individual and the self as well as the individual with others; social class can inspire comfort or provoke unrest depending on where the individual situates him/herself through behaviors.

Finally, concentrating on Lucía Puenzo, we consider an article by Ángeles Donoso Macaya titled "Orthodox Transgressions: The Ideology of Cross-Species, Cross-Class, and Interracial Queerness in Lucía Puenzo's Novel El niño pez (The Fish Child)". It brings up this idea of choice, especially in the face of social issues, at once a form of control and liberation. In terms of control, Macaya proposes that the act of ignoring classification actually plays into the control it has on the individual, making him/her think/act a certain way to get what they want: " . . . the novel actually stages a central problem of our neoliberal times: simply violating traditional boundaries and hierarchies is not inevitably transgressive of the social order but can actually represent hegemonic ideologies" (712). Yet, there is a freedom in the adolescents' decision between two classes, because as we see proximity, the variety of options can challenge

the social construct and by association the control it exerts over the situation; constructs do not account for all of the possibilities that a situation can render. " . . . it is interesting to Zoila Clark's argument that in both *XXY* and the film adaptation of *The Fish Child*, Puenzo approaches gender, race, and class as social constructs that we choose, since we, 'the 'humanimals' that we are, [are] capable of choosing from a sea of possibilities our preferred state within nature'" (712). To briefly touch on the mention of Clark's argument, we state that while it is agreed that gender can be chosen as is discussed in the following chapter, a different stance is taken regarding race and class. We have said that race is not chosen and say that social class has a predetermined feel to it. What do we mean by this? Ultimately social class becomes based, among financial aspects which are discussed at the chapter's end, on a series of behaviors in reaction to circumstances. These behaviors can, without a doubt, be altered. However, society read others, has the last say as to whether a change in behavior has led to movement among classes. Let's take as an example the subject of Camila; she shed her bourgeois image in an attempt to blend among the locals in the countryside. She changed everything from her customs to behaviors and even name, but eventually the family name and status caught up with her and became responsible for her death. In a similar fashion we see Lala and Ailín[34] attempt to shed affluent, dysfunctional backgrounds which pursue them across borders. And of even more interest to us in this specific chapter is the following quote, from Macaya's article, in reference to *The Fish Child*:

> In fact, in Argentina, having a domestic worker has become a status symbol that separates women into different classes. Speaking specifically of Paraguayan maids in Argentina, Clyde Soto, Myrian González, and Patricio Dobrée note, 'Beneath the appearance of a free exchange are hidden unequal relationships between people who are valued differently: some of these women are to serve, other to be served. For this reason, having access to domestic labor is simultaneously a status symbol.' Soto González, and Dobrée

---

[34] Although Ailín's background does not seem synonymous with affluence, an argument can be made that she was better off than those around her due to the name her father had made for himself as a television personality; their societal status remains unknown, however the remains of their home near the swamp suggest an elevated positioning.

go on to point out the ubiquity of the association of Paraguayan, indigenous, woman and immigrant identities with domestic labor. (718-9)

We see the notion that appearances deceive, which is essentially what social standing is: an image constructed around the physical/material world that is displayed before others. The key to the upkeep of an image is behavior since actions have the ability to betray the exterior of an individual, for better of for worse. In reality, if we speak of "incompatibility," this issue is involved in every relationship within our films. Incompatibility is seen between subject and situation as well as between subjects. More specifically, we refer to the fact that several subjects do not inherently belong in the social stratum in which they move with regards to behavior involving money and relationships.

Throughout the next several pages, we return to focus on the comprehension of social class itself, and the many facets that create its existence. The area of social class is perhaps the most frustrating label with which we work; society's role in assigning the label is implied in the term itself, and any change is forced to consider all facets. Let us maintain that by social class we are dealing with position within the community, thus yielding a certain ranking if you will. Initial class labeling is determined by upbringing. Behavior is relevant when maintaining the rank. Actions and circumstances later decide continued participation in the same stratum or fluctuation. Within our corpus, there is delineation between upper, middle, and lower classes, without much verified change in status taking place. We turn now to introduce Pierre Bourdieu by way of some key ideas, as they pertain to this dissertation, in his work *Distinction*.

To begin with, we discuss the importance of structure and the physical/emotional components that facilitate its upkeep. Under "The Taste for Necessity and the Principle of Conformity", Bourdieu allows us to visualize the class delineation process. He uses this example:

It tends to be forgotten that to appreciate the 'true value' of the purely symbolic services which in many areas . . . make the essential difference between luxury establishments and ordinary businesses, one has to feel oneself the legitimate recipient of this bureaucratically personalized care and attention and to display vis-à-vis those who are paid to offer it the mixture of distance . . . and freedom which the bourgeois have towards their servants. (374)

We interpret Bourdieu as saying that establishments, businesses, and, by extension, an individual's personal life, share an organized hierarchy. Wherever an individual falls in said hierarchical structure determines their behavior; if that individual does not comply, there are significant outcomes. We take two extremes of the situation to exemplify: a business owner and their employee. A business owner holds power by virtue of the fact that he/she has created/maintained the business. He/she exerts control over their employee because the former has the capability to hire/fire the latter at any given time. In turn, the employee behaves in such a way as to keep implied job so that they can make a living. The employee fears consequences if they do not comply, and the owner knows this. In this particular situation, existence is dependent not just on another, but rather the behavior demonstrated during interactions with them. Failure of the business owner or employee to adhere to the structural dynamics results in a collapse of the system. This metaphor is just as relevant outside of the work force, and can be applied to personal relationships as well. Appropriate behaviors ensure the compatibility among subject/circumstance and two or more subjects. Change in this regard is a process because it can challenge the knowledge gained in an individual's upbringing and work/personal life.

Next, we see a mixture of appearance and behavior in what Bourdieu labels "properties"; "Thus, members of the class who do not possess all the modal properties—e.g. men in a strongly feminized occupation or a worker's son at ENA—have their social identity deeply marked by this membership and the social image which it imposes and which they have to situate themselves in relation to, whether by acceptance or rejection" (104). This intermingling of

appearance and behavior is potentially the most important occurrence in making peace (or not) with social class; it requires introspection to the extent that individuals must decide whether they are living the life they please or living to fulfill a label. If an individual is at conflict with themselves and their situation, they are much more likely to exhibit behavior which provokes a positive/negative change. Appearances can be falsified, but it is more difficult to do so with regard to properties; we take the term properties to refer to behaviors. Social class influences behavior in that it translates to the result of acceptance or rejection of the self by the individual as well as acceptance or rejection of the individual by another.

Finally, we quote from the chapter titled "Conclusion: Classes and Classifications", in which Bourdieu stresses "perception", which is arguable the most important component as it is the only fathomable reason as to why individuals worry about appearances and behavior. He states: "A class is defined as much by its *being perceived* as by its *being*, by its consumption— which need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic . . . " (483). Social class is performance in that it requires participation by the individual and acceptation or condemnation by a society; however, it is not exclusively conscientious participation, but rather there is subconscious influence. There is a fear of being found on the outside, i.e. not belonging to the class that physically and behaviorally describes them. Such an occurrence would be to negate what the individual has worked so hard to both portray and act out. Therefore, the performance is critical because it incorporates all elements of the desired social class. In order to elaborate on this idea, we cite Jeremy Lane's *Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction*: "Since, in Bourdieu's account, the dispositions incorporated into the habitus need never be mediated through any form of discourse, those dispositions appeared to exist in a realm beyond the grasp of reflexive critique, whilst their incorporation became an immediate, even automatic process" (137). We sustain that

there is a certain set of learned behaviors (i.e. habitus) applicable to the distinctive classes, often noticed but un-scrutinized by the individual performing them. Fittingly, we apply Foucault's idea of surveillance where order is kept by individuals subconsciously knowing where they belong. While race and gender are to certain degrees influenced by biology, social class is taught, often through repetition.

The root for societal behavior occurs in the psyche as it is nurtured by learned behaviors. Lane goes on to speak about the process by which classes are distinguished via habitus, mentioning what Bourdieu called "class racism" in which "the bourgeoisie lifestyle demonstrated their superiority which deemed others inferior in relation to them" (148). This, as we have seen, is part of the hierarchical structures found in the private/public lives of an individual. But this "class racism" does not restrict itself to one class against another, because as Lane proceeds to explain, distinction can occur within the same class, for there is always a power struggle present. The primary consideration becomes: who/what holds the power? To consider oneself (or something) as superior to another lends legitimacy to the habitus. Miss Mary, coming from a middle-class background in England, arrives to Argentina feeling superior to the inhabitants there; she maintains an air of importance and refinery in her employer's home. In this way her habitus is accepted and respected until she acts outside of her learned behaviors with Johnny. After her incident with the minor, her habitus as defining is not longer true because she has betrayed appearances, properties, and perception with her actions.

Any struggles seen within one social class or between them starts with behavior. To enact change, it starts with the habitus, though it is not an easy journey given that the psychological and sociological mindsets fixate on a singular class (lower, middle, or upper) with respect to a given individual. Not only does this individual have to act appropriately within their class, but

they must accept or reject the other class to which they do or do not want to belong. In conclusion, Lane states: "At the heart of Bourdieu's understanding of the workings of the habitus is . . . an implicit or 'practical' sense of what can and cannot be reasonably achieved, of what does or does not fall within a particular historically and culturally determined 'horizon of possibilities'" (194). Thus, we comprehend that sense of pre-determination via expectations; it was previously stated that social class has potential to change. However, I propose that it changes superficially speaking (i.e. on the social level) while remaining steadfast in the psychological sense. Behaviors can be altered more easily than the reasoning behind them. We find support for this in Camila, Miss Mary, Sor Juana, Leonor, Mecha, and Helena; these women are prideful in terms of their class, so much so that they cannot even consider a permanent alternative to the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed. They have grown attached to their situations, refusing to acknowledge that figuratively they no longer belong there. As long as the possibility of power remains, it drives what we continue to study in the following paragraph: habitus. In order to maintain within and/or transition within and among classes, the habitus must be understood, accepted, and learned.

Then, what more is encompassed by the term habitus? In "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices", Bourdieu claims:

> The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (278)

As it is presented, "habitus" is action in that it produces results. Yet, what gives meaning to the actions is the intentionality; intentions transform actions from habits into behavior. Our subjects, indeed, practice a certain habitus; interestingly enough, when they act in opposition to the

habitus they have created it is at this point we see a disruption in the plots. Each subject acts intentionally, thus deeming any action as a conscientious part of their behavior.

Marginalization, in terms of social class, occurs when a subject's behavior does not coincide with their reality. We include Bernhard Wagner and Kenneth McLaughlin in their article titled: "Politicising the psychology of social class: The relevance of Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* for psychological research" since it addresses the extent to which this construct is embedded in the psyche. "Bourdieu uses the term habitus to describe the unconscious aspects or, more specifically, the internalisation of societal structures" (206). The part on which we want to focus attention is the internalizing of structures, because, as Wagner continues to explain, it at once mirrors the individual's place within the class and forms their behavior; essentially, an individual behaves in a specific way because their understanding of their own class in comparison to others allows them to do so. The individual becomes sensitized to the construct. We also pay close attention to the fact that the term 'unconscious' describes aspects of the habitus, suggesting a sense of self deeply rooted in upbringing and learned ways. That being said, movement within and between classes is psychologically difficult, as we suggested earlier, because a reconditioning of the self must occur so as to match outward appearances. It is clear that Bourdieu recognizes the unique nature of a social class, at once individual and communal. An individual carries out habitus in the social space, and it results that this habitus is responsible for the distinguishing of classes. Wagner later implies that what can be analyzed to understand social class is the individual; race, family history, and education are inevitably factors which have facilitated and/or will facilitate a person's sustainability within a class. Yet, what interests us is the fact that several of our subjects cannot and or find it too difficult to sustain existence in their respective classes. Quite simply, the inner and outer worlds are conflicted. There is a

feeling of comfort or desire upon observing another class, and the subjects are left to grapple with a sense of instability in terms of their identity.

We recall the distinction we have made that race and gender can and do play into social class, however the reverse scenario is not plausible. It is certainly true that an individual can be born into or outside of wealth as much as poverty (much as we born with a certain racial background and gender); however, the division of classes is distinguishable in that it is materially based. In turn, the lack and/or accumulation of materials affect behaviors. So, we see the psychological component of social class via internalization and the social via material loss/gain. Our protagonists are threatened with marginalization when they challenge how they define their position in society. In other words, redefinition can occasion being on the outside since there exists a clear divide between upper and lower classes kept in place by repetition. In Lane's introduction to Bourdieu previously cited, it goes on to state: "Much of Bourdieu's argument hinged on the notion that the pre-discursive structures of a habitus were not amenable to this kind of reflexive critique, an argument which left open the question of how those structures might be criticised and transformed" (137). Via all the information cited to this point, we understand that an individual's identity in regards to social class has much to do with their behavior. The upper class often holds symbolic power over the lower class, though there is an ironic equality in that each person is subjected to a set of learned behaviors. Social class is not easily reflected upon because of the previously acquired knowledge that one associates with it; thus, it requires effort put forth to exact a change, and such an action assumes that the original class was not appropriate. Consequently, our subjects subconsciously rebel within their class, but are met with a marginalization that they cannot explain. There is an intuitive feeling of being a misfit among others brought up to be identical to them. Again we are reminded of the opening

quote by Arnheim and realize that our subjects are capable of conveying their discomfort in their situations without verbalization. A strong example where two worlds silently collide is found in the behavior of Eva, in *Wakolda*, where we observe her conflicted state as to whether to entrust Lilith's care to Mengele. Her doubt results from the incompatible elements between her German and Argentine backgrounds, and the fact that these two cultures are hierarchical within Patagonia. She decides to confide in the German doctor, a result which transpires almost in silence to the extent that Eva never vocalizes her internal conflict or final decision. Her subconscious betrays her façade by way of her actions; she self-identifies with the dominant German culture despite her Argentine ties.

Social class is, in fact, a state of mind as much as a state of being. Freedom from it is dependent upon the same habitus that is responsible for control of the conscious mind, rendering self-awareness a tricky objective. Our subjects end up taking one of two courses of action: they either continue with their current habitus or try to break free from it because they think that will bring them satisfaction. Having expanded upon our approach to social class in the preceding pages, we outline here our strategy to analyze its presence in the films. We consider the social space of the subjects, more concretely if there is a hierarchy established with corresponding classes; who holds the power, who is considered inferior, and what are the boundaries, all of these being relevant questions. Then, we categorize the subjects based on said social space. We reflect on the subjects' standing within the metaphorically panoptic plots. Simultaneously, we take note whether or not they demonstrate a recognizable habitus; in others words, is there a pattern that exists among their thought processes and/or behaviors. It is pertinent to mention how the habitus meshes with their space. Lastly, the presence of marginalization is understood in

terms of quasi-freedom or inescapable fate. Is finding oneself on the outside more positive or does it end up in a direction that was predetermined by upbringing?

The hierarchical order is well-established from the onset of María Luisa Bemberg's films. In an article by Estela Erausquin, titled "María Luisa Bemberg's Revolt", we quote the following: "María Luisa Bemberg purposely fights the patriarchal system in her scripts and in her films. She was conscious of her own ideological and social bias, but honestly thought that women's plights were the same, across time, race, country and class" (50). It may seem that the aforementioned quote, focusing on women, is out of place in a chapter that deals with social class; I would argue that the overwhelming female cast demonstrates a coherence among classes in terms of operations; first, that the few men present demonstrate an engrained male power across classes and second, that while the upper class is in control, the middle and/or lower class are indispensable to the lives of said bourgeois and all individuals are subject to similar problems.

We make mention, first, of *Camila*; its inclusion relevant in that the social space is all but responsible for firing the shots that kill both of our subjects. Camila is born into an aristocratic family and Ladislao chooses humility as a priest. A man known in the community because of his power, Camila's father expects nothing less than the unwavering political support of his family. Camila's political neutrality and eventual opposition to her father create an atmosphere of psychological and sociological violence; with her habitus clearly in contention with that of her town and the family, she seeks solace in the equally conflicted inner world of Ladislao. Unable to remain indifferent in his political views or love towards Camila, he decides with her that it is best to attempt to outrun the space which they inhabit. The lovers intentionally marginalize themselves within the lower class countryside where they hope to overhaul the past by adopting their desired habitus: peaceful, non-influential commoners. This practice fails on account of both

subjects who depend on their former societal positions to save them; Ladislao reverts to his vows and Camila to the hope of the love of her father. In conclusion, Camila and Ladislao were conscientious that they had no chance to escape the past as is evidenced by both parties' efforts not to give in to temptation; we recall our statement that social class is not chosen, and the fact that it is ignored by the two protagonists of the film only served to strengthen its later influence. Camila's grandmother's history predicts the young woman's own fate; the patriarch of the family disregards his mother's insane musing of love lost while her granddaughter wallows in the romance. Camila buys into the ideals of love instead of heeding the practicality proposed by her father. Both she and Ladislao act unexpectedly, with the former driven by her oppositional mindset. Together with spontaneity of behavior, we witness a quick, blinded road towards marginalization.

Mary, in her role as governess, is not immediately thought of as powerful or influential, especially when surrounded by a prominent Argentine family. In fact, while an asset to the family, she is disposable in so far as her value to them; more concisely stated, Mary exists in Argentina to serve her employer. It is understood that Mary is not the only individual to have come to Argentina looking for employment; in fact, the war undoubtedly encouraged many towards the same choice. Thus, this English woman is treated as such, as demonstrated in the scenes depicting social functions. We see the filmmaker's strategic move in shooting her almost always alongside the children. She does not share in the adults' conversations nor does she interact with them at all; quite frankly because the heads of the household, Alfredo and Mecha, only have reason to intervene if a problem arises. A shared social space does not imply immediate compatibility among the inhabitants, and the dynamics of the household respect this until the governess's tryst with Johnny. We come to recognize the brief clips of a depressed

Mary, confined to her room and focused on convincing loved ones back home as well as herself that she is happy in her new position, as a forewarning to what we witness as her ultimate reduction. She becomes confined to a small apartment in Buenos Aires, a notable contrast when considering that she formerly inhabited a room in her former employer's estate. All the above being said, Mary ironically sets out cross country to achieve a better life alongside the Argentine elite, but her story comes full circle. She ends no better than the "savages" to whom she refers in the film's opening commentaries. Mary exhibits a willingness to please, one seen amongst the other middle to lower class subjects considered in this dissertation; this drive is engrained in their habitus and can only be detrimental. Said subjects do not wish to please themselves, but those around them. Damage is done psychologically by ignoring personal necessities in order to fulfill the sociological compulsion to obtain the acceptance of others. The deprivation of Mary's emotional needs, i.e. love, affection, adult interaction, cannot be found in Johnny as he is nothing more than a conduit through which to achieve the connection which her employer denies her.

Mary becomes tied to an inescapable marginalization, and social class is only part of the equation. A feeling of loneliness separates her from reality; she cannot relate culturally in Argentina or with her employers on a social level, and as is seen in the following chapter, her sexuality is stifled. The saving grace for this English woman could be her race, but it is not and we can explain why. Initially, the virtue of being English elevates her dominance in the familial sense. Her background and language skills hold economic value as they are desired by the family. She arrives quite powerless and is fired at the height of her influential stage. Yet, her position as a maid has rather inferior implications; we can infer that if she herself came from a well to do background, then she would be in the presence of a governess rather than working as one. Therefore, here the European race allots her economic leverage but very little in the way of

social positioning. The end of the film finds Mary free from the demands of her position as caretaker, though still at the mercy of her original habitus; she was and ends up as a fiercely independent female, making a decent living, but not able to escape the draw of the male figure.

In the circumstances of Sor Juana, we equate the Church to a powerful institution same as the Argentine family unit in Mary's situation, both exercising "surveillance" as we recall from Foucault. To take it one step further, the Church is viewed hierarchically higher than the government. We have the case of the Church (specifically, here, in the form of the convent) and the government, represented in form by the viceroy and his wife as the mediators. Sor Juana, being a member of the clergy, is doubly in the shadow of the two systems over her. The reality of the convent proves tricky in Sor Juana's case because she is not held to the same guidelines as her peers within the social space. Intelligence is Sor Juana's bargaining tool of choice; not only does she use it to get into the good favor of those around her, but it also elevates her status in the convent to one of respect and admiration. However, such a rise in power is a false notion as we see that her education demotes her back to humble beginnings, all because she is seen as a threat to the hierarchy.

In the case of Sor Juana, race is partly to blame for being placed in the convent. However, it is her gender which is responsible for her lack of power in society, a limitation which she overcomes via religion; this is further support for an earlier statement that gender influences social status, not the other way around. Parallel to Mary, Sor Juana strives to please, albeit to a lesser extent; her objective is to practice, just enough, the habitus required of her without losing her ideals. Once Sor Juana feels that her intellectual freedom is at stake, we see her rebel in a way that is incompatible with her social space and standing. Physically, we see the presence of marginalization in terms of social space in three poignant scenes outlined below, moving from a

false sense of freedom to the fate associated with her habitus. The scenes which best capture Sor Juana and her essence as an individual find her in the tower of the convent, surrounded by the expensive material things afforded to those of an affluent class. She finds herself so privileged by having gained the respect of those around her, namely the viceroy and his wife. But, as we see, the government is no substitute for the Church in which various clergy take issue with the nun's intellectual productivity. As the plot develops, we observe Mary's interaction with the two institutions: Church and Government. In her dealing with the highly considered clergy, we focus on the bars, resembling those of a jail, separating the two parties. Yet, the viceroy and his wife treat Sor Juana as a close friend, forming an intimate bond with her. At the film's resolution, Sor Juana's fate has been self-fulfilled by the habitus of her middle to lower class background; she is reduced to a frail figure on hands and knees, serving her sick peers. Despite the fact that Mary and Sor Juana become their contributions in order to move about their social spaces, their identities are not synonymous with said contributions. Regardless of what they offer others, the habitus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that ultimately determines their fate.

As an important addition, we will mention that *I don't want to talk about it* demonstrates the benefits afforded to the affluent class. Clearly money drives the town dynamics, even the local church congregation; Leonor enjoys the status endowed her via ownership of the local shop. Subsequently, excess funds allow the widow to manipulate the town in her favor, more specifically to buy the feigned ignorance of the townspeople concerning Charlotte's dwarfism. Affluence is responsible for two social spaces simultaneously. First, we consider the upper class home in which Leonor and Charlotte live. Second, Leonor has constructed a limited perimeter in which her daughter is permitted to move; the company allowed to visit the mother and daughter is of strict confidence and Charlotte's participation is monitored against supposed embarrassment

caused by her condition. Leonor is completely comfortable within the life she has created, following the respective habitus of a classy, intelligent, strict woman of her circumstance. In this way, she raises her daughter, though not entirely for the objective to carry on the family tradition. In fact, we have another instance of sheltering, which becomes detrimental to the affected subjects.

This idea of sheltering, a very fine example of the panopticon, is meant to imply that subjects are privileged to count on the protection of another(s), yet as we have seen such protection can be stifling and causes the precise conflict leading to marginalization. Charlotte, by way of her intelligence and innocence, attracts the attention of cultured Ludovico; we mention cultured because this characteristic, which her suitor shares with Charlotte, becomes the bridge between entrapment by the upper class and the freedom of the lower class. Ludovico encourages Charlotte towards a broader way of thinking via exotic stories of abroad. In other words, her eventual husband unknowingly pushes the boundaries of his naïve wife's learned habitus. Inspired to see the circus upon its arrival to town, the audience ascertains that Charlotte simultaneously questions her upbringing and sense of belonging. Not traditionally classified as an affluent group, the abnormalities of the performers undoubtedly reveal two interrelated issues; one, that Charlotte does have a genetic abnormality and two, that there is an attainable world outside of the "panopticon" constructed by her mother. Once the innocence of her ignorance has been challenged, she cannot resume the behavior of her sheltered past. Ironically enough, the circus might well be the epitome of the marginalized. While Charlotte's social standing allowed for much privacy regarding her condition, it translated into a sense of isolation once she became self-aware; not even the travel stories of Ludovico were enough of an escape for the young girl who eventually seeks the freedom, in her view, that only the lower class can provide.

Psychoanalytically speaking, repression is seen in Leonor, who we hypothesize tries to keep her daughter's dwarfism a secret so as not to taint her elitist positioning. In contrast, Charlotte frees herself from the holds of her elitist mother upon joining the troupe of outcasts, one of the few subjects in this corpus to truly break from her habitus.

The four women subjects behave in such a way that sets them apart from those around them; this is not immediate grounds for finding themselves on the outside, but quickly becomes so due to the affluence surrounding them wishing to exert its control. Camila's initial indifference develops into disagreement and proceeding defiance. This direct dismissal of her father's authority puts in jeopardy his own power, a scandal which he feels can only be solved by a type of sacrificial killing; the murder of his (grand)daughter at his orders restores his honor. Mary is incapable of being a traditional governess because it is a role she fakes as she believes it the means to an end, this end being the fulfillment of cultural exploration in Argentina. Sor Juana ignores her lower class existence in hopes of gaining the favor of those powerful enough to protect her. While her education helps her arrive to such a level, the fact that she supersedes the intelligence of the powerful Church, she is denied the life she has constructed from practicing another habitus. Charlotte, much like Camila, rejects her affluent lifestyle in favor of the reverse situation. In no way do the considered cinematic case studies here suggest that an individual cannot change their identity, only that there are psychological and sociological occurrences at play during such a transformation that do not always allow for a smooth transition. The situations discussed here back up the claim that the habitus is engrained from birth and is such because individuals emotionally invest in a public image. However, it is easy to refute this idea of non-consensual, total submission when we see the subjects striving for something previously undetected by their current identity. We have seen thus far that there is freedom to explore

elements of another 'life' if you will, albeit with the highest risk being social marginalization and inner conflict.

For the subsequent discussions, we view combinations of both one of Lucrecia Martel and one of Lucía Puenzo's films so as to reinforce that the particular works deal with social standing at their core, although the demonstration of such is distinguishable based on the director herself. *La ciénaga* and *The Fish Child* represent the identity thrust upon four female, adolescent subjects: the two maids (Isabel and Ailín) and the two daughters of the respective employers (Momi and Lala). We envision the social space of both situations in the following way: a well-to-do family, metaphorically polished on the surface but cracking at the foundation, employs outside help that does not live at the residence nor are they welcomed as part of the familial unit. As such, we observe the straightforward boundaries of a power struggle, one which the employer must win to retain the desired societal image. However, we learn in what follows, how the relationships forged between the maids and the daughters threaten to break down the panoptic structure. Meanwhile, let us answer why we have used the verb thrust in order to discuss identity. This practice falls in line with the unconscious effect of power which Foucault mentions, reinforcing, again, that the mere threat of punishment is sufficient to keep the participants in line. All of our subjects participate in the social space of the home, and they do not have the liberty to choose their behavior, rather they act in accordance with what is expected of them.

Isabel and Aílin earn the reputation of being promiscuous, in part due to their actions, but in further conjunction with the blinders through which society sees them. Momi and Lala are the seen, seldom heard or heeded heirs to the family name. All four females have been conditioned in the same fashion, to observe and put into practice the habitus belonging to their ranking. Upon joining forces with each other in the way of feelings and ideas, the girls succeed in forging new

identities. This becomes an exciting experience for the adolescents, though troubling to the adults who intuit that the panoptic structure which once held the familial unit together is now in question. Although neither set of employers (i.e. affluent parents) intervene directly in the behaviors of their daughters, they need not do so because society takes care of this for them.

Initially, it is the households which are most stifling in terms of expression and the teenage girls surprisingly enjoy more freedom as they venture out on their own. Let us explain how this is so. Each maid is shown little to no respect by the matriarch and or patriarch; indifference would be more advantageous than disrespect, but the familial head asserts their power in this way. This fact marginalizes them in the sense of their work environment, and further yet serves as a mirror for how society views them. The respective daughters of the families perceive the position of the maids. In fact, they feel more akin to these employees because they, too, are not so much disrespected by their own families as they are ignored. In wanting to forge human connections, the daughters take it upon themselves to ease the gap between upper and lower class by personally involving themselves in the situation; the respective daughters treat their maids, in both cases, more as relatives than the individuals within their own family.

Earlier, we noted the lack of identity appropriated by each subject, and the reasons why. Here we discuss that despite the relationships formed between Isabel and Momi/Aílin and Lala, society has already fated them down a certain life path. Neither of the two maids are protected from the effects that a lack of familial love and protection causes, thus leaving them further vulnerable to the effects of marginalization; we see the tragic consequences of this via the scenes of promiscuity, assault, rape, and pregnancy. The girls fall victim and become the prey of others. Isabel succumbs to what Mecha deems the fate of many of the work staff: get pregnant with her

boyfriend's child and abandon her employer. Meanwhile, Ailín is abused by her father, Lala's father, and several other unnamed young men; the feelings of Ailín towards any man are unclear given that she suffers from the abuse in silence. We can deduct that her ambiguity towards all forms of love is due in large part to the early disintegration of her own family and her rape by her father. Momi and Lala are no better off than the maids they try to save, seeming to feel the effects of the maids' shunning as their own. These two daughters intend to be heroes and end up victimized as well, not solely by society, but by their beloved partners (i.e. maids). While there is not much evidence that Isabel or Aílin exploited their relationships with Momi and Lala to a personal advantage, there is sufficient reason to believe that, at the very least, their lives would improve. That being said, there is a good deal of codependency in the film as the relationship dynamics rely on one adolescent needing the other; ironically enough, it is the maids who hold the power in this sense as Momi and Lala become more attached to them, be it for care or emotionally related needs. Immediately following both films' conclusions, we reflect on whether or not being situated on the outside of their social spaces affords the teenage girls any freedom or whether they remain part of the cycle. One ending is arguably more discernable than the other, that one being *La ciénaga*. Isabel takes a more defeated approach, silently walking out of Momi's life towards one alongside her unborn child's father. On the other hand, the bright spot in these two situations is the unknown future of Ailín and Lala, much like in Charlotte's case. The teens manage to escape the watchful eyes of their current Buenos Aires community as they cross the border into Paraguay; a dusty road figuratively covers their tracks, though the audience knows they are headed towards the watery burial site of Aílin's baby, bringing her history almost full circle. All four girls simultaneously reject and accept the stigmas attached to their upbringings, causing confusion and subsequent marginalization in the respective communities.

What justifies the unification of *La mujer sin cabeza* and *Wakolda* is the concentration on younger children as subjects, more specifically two from a verified lower class. Subsequently, we see these same subjects fall victim to the actions of privileged adults. Let us give an explanation as to our subjects as they are not nearly as developed within terms of the plot; it would be inaccurate to say that they are completely static characters, yet they are far from dynamic in the sense that they take form by way of others' perspectives. In order of listing we have a small group of unnamed, unsupervised Indigenous pre-teenage boys and then a young Argentine girl, Lilith, as part of a family leading a more bohemian lifestyle. Wealth does not positively touch either of the situations. Instead, its introduction into their world is a disruption. The tragic scenes from the films take place in a social space far from a bustling city; in contrast, we witness back country roads and a secluded mountain lodge, respectively, as the backdrops for the victimization which we explain shortly. However, these social spaces are only temporarily inhabited by Vero and Doctor Mengele; they do not belong, they are aware of that fact, and they ultimately exploit the exotic aspect of their presence. Both come from, originally, a more populous, European background.

Within the difference in social space is where we witness the appropriate conditions for a disconnect in terms of habitus. One unnamed Indigenous boy is presumably killed when Vero runs him over on a deserted road; this we can ascertain based on the fact that the dog accompanying the young group is left for dead and she is overcome by a fear too great to confront the situation, obviously pointing towards a greater guilt than that caused by a dead animal. The un-named's friends and family are left to mourn his loss while Vero lives through interrupted periods of complete ignorance. We come to wonder if the situation had been the reverse, and Vero was the victim, then would her death have provoked more press, controversy,

or concern on behalf of others? Conversely, since the incident occurred on the outskirts of town, to members of the other community, pressure did not mount with regards to solving the case. As we discussed in the previous chapter, Vero feels more akin to the Indigenous community, for a plethora of possible reasons, least of which is her remorse, and this can be a hypothesis to explain why she frequented an area that does not represent her social standing.

Just as the young boy was at the mercy of internally confused Vero, so is Lilith with Mengele. Lilith becomes the experiment of the dangerous doctor Mengele as a result of her family's economic situation. Constantly on the road and looking for stability, the paths of the family and doctor meet; the father of the family, Enzo, is a maker of dolls looking for an opportunity which would allow him to jump start a business. This mission is what causes the family to be traveling the sparsely populated, desolate roads of the landscape in Argentina's south, commonly referred to as Patagonia. The desolation is a key characteristic as it is one which affords Mengele the cover he needs upon his fleeing from Europe. A former man of such high power in his country comes to depend on the modesty of the Argentine family. Though we are sure that the doctor is interested in the family because of the rarity that is Lilith's genetic condition, there are scenes in which Mengele shows familial solidarity. However, we are uncertain as to whether his concern for the family is a genuine one or if he is more motivated by self-interest; the situation points more to gain per part of the doctor as Enzo determines that Mengele's desire in wanting to evidently help Lilith is more detrimental than it is worth. Nor does Enzo want Mengele to have any part in the birth of his wife's twins. Mengele, as Vero, finds more acceptance in a culture other than his own. The irony is based on the fact that a German school exists in the specific town of Patagonia with which we are dealing, though Mengele moves about the institution with caution because the same culture that made him is

capable of triggering his downfall upon detection of his hiding there. Mengele blends into the community while Lilith sticks out despite earnest efforts on her part.

Here we see a situation where the mixing of races within social space leads to tension and vulnerability. Vero and Mengele create the tension and it is the children that suffer at their hands. Ultimately, the children are used as a means to an end to the marginalization of two adults. The space in which the children move is the same one that the two adults want as their own. The area where Vero and Mengele fail within the plots of these films is in the embrace of their own cultures while they rush to appropriate another, perhaps to escape the mind, the self, or an entire country as Mengele did. The marginalization of the children here is irrelevant as not only are they largely silenced but also because they have little to no control over their behaviors at such a young age. Vero and Mengele have conscientiously marginalized themselves to avoid hardships that they inevitably face regardless. Whereas in the cases of Mary, Sor Juana, the two daughters and the two maids there is a sense of maturity and false ability to control the situations, the children in these circumstances are relatively without choice and at the mercy of others.

Finally, we concentrate on the dynamic found between *The Holy Girl* and *XXY*. The two films are comparable due to the subjects; both awkward and at the cusp of adolescence, Amalia and Alex, respectively, receive conflicting messages as they come of age amongst an unforgiving environment. By stating that the environment is without mercy, we refer specifically to external influences rather than familial input. The hierarchy that we witness in these two plots has little to do with power as it has to do with achieving a sense of social normality as we now explain. Amalia resides in a hotel frequented by noteworthy clients; though she has run of the entire facility, she does not benefit from a stable home environment. Her mother is arguably in the throes of an identity crisis, and she sends her daughter to a course on religious studies while she

wanders the hotel trying to come to terms with her divorce. Alex's situation differs in the sense that she lives in a tranquil home together with her parents; however, the family has taken refuge there, in Uruguay, in order to protect their daughter from the bullying she suffered in Argentina. Much to the worry of her parents, the gossip and residual bullying continues in the small beachside community. Bring to the two films' scenes two doctors and the plot changes, for better or worse. Amalia and Alex change in the relation to their surroundings due to the presence of these powerful men who impact their existence.

Prior to their arrival, Amalia and Alex simply exist, indifferent to the fate that comes to them. In contrast, the arrival of the doctors provokes the girls to behave differently than they would have continued to do otherwise, and we now justify the how. Initially, Amalia struggles to come to terms with both her purpose in life and her sexuality. The sexual advances (i.e. assault) made by Doctor Jano puts both of these into perspective. He also captures the attention of Amalia's mother. Therefore, it is on Doctor Jano's habitus that we concentrate; he holds a significant amount of power as the behaviors of Amalia and her mother are dependent on him. Upon discovery that the doctor is married with children, his actions at the hotel result in being even more unacceptable; psychologically he disrupts mother and daughter while sociologically he performs in such a way as to put his professionalism in jeopardy. The visiting surgeon with the objective to medically fix Alex comes from a more innocent angle, not using his power for control as we see with Doctors Jano or Mengele. He does, though not intentionally, impact Alex's thought processes by offering sex-altering options to the young girl in a time when she is most vulnerable; so pained by the discomfort she feels in public, Alex considers the complete transformation into man or woman, initially, as her only option for peace.

The marginalization experienced in these two films is at once similar and distinct. Amalia and Alex share in the emotional journey that forging an identity requires; both seek solace in what they think another can provide them and the hope that through accepting their sexualities they will achieve acceptance. The difference surges in the forthrightness of being marginalized. Amalia's experience is largely psychological while Alex's is also social. Amalia feels in competition with the other girls her age; she wants to have a vocation just as her religious teacher does and a sexual experience just as her friend has. Meanwhile, Alex is emotionally confused as to her gender and sexuality, but the bullying has intensified her feelings; her support lies in Álvaro and her parents.

The two films discussed until now, *The Holy Girl* and *XXY*, distinguish themselves from Martel and Puenzo's previously mentioned works due to the fact that classes are not as discernable but rather individual notoriety implies a hierarchy; we see more attention paid to the fact that two of the influential men are doctors and well trusted due to their titles. Ultimately, Amalia and Alex are treated as pawns operating in the social space of the doctors. We choose the word pawns carefully as little to no remorse is shown on behalf of the doctors concerning their actions with the young girls. As we have previously pointed out, Amalia and Alex share in an emotional fragility not immediately experienced by the other subjects. In reality, neither girl has been brought up in the way of a strict habitus as have the others. To expand upon this thought, let us consider that Amalia's mother may pay attention physically to her daughter, but she is no more in tune to her offspring's emotional needs than her own. Essentially, the hotel as a psychological metaphor mimics an escape from reality; the mother figure, and Amalia by default, exist in a transitory space. As far as the audience is able to conclude, this instability in home life is what Amalia has grown up knowing. Understandably so, she comes of age in a sense of

confusion. Regarding Alex, development has been unstable since her birth. In fact, her parents decided to let their daughter choose a life course on her own once she was of sound age. This decision, while noble and logical, leads to ambiguity in terms of social identity. It is hard to say whether marginalization would fail to exist in these two case studies had a specific habitus been laid out and followed without incidence from early age. My theory is that while atmosphere here plays a large role, the side of nurture outweighs its social counterpart; all subjects, equally, share in familial dysfunction as forming, however little, a part in identity formation.

Once having read this chapter, it is notable that María Luisa Bemberg's films have been compared and contrasted amongst themselves while Lucrecia Martel and Lucía Puenzo's are analyzed side by side due to the latter directors' works having class as more of a focus. Amongst all the films, marginalization comes about per way of choice mixed with circumstance. Social class forms, or at the very least greatly impacts, an individual's identity. The very idea that there are social classes also implies that there is someone dictating who you are before you have a chance to determine that on your own, threatening that mental freedom and/or flexibility so important in avoiding the panoptic trap. We recall Bourdieu: "Social class is not defined solely by a position in the relations of production, but by the class habitus which is 'normally' (i.e., with a high statistic probability) associated with that position" (372). The reproduction of social structure is owed to our subjects' habitus. Therefore, marginalization implies that the internalization of social class is interrrupted. We draw closer to our conclusion by citing Bourdieu a final time: "Individuals do not move about in social space in a random way . . . " (110). The protagonists discussed in this section are faced with challenges within their respective structures, and we see the difference in their social classes via the way in which they handle said challenges per way of habitus.

Being that we have dealt, appropriately, with the psychological aspects of society and social class, we must now comment on the position that economics (i.e. the material) plays here. It is not to be denied that financial situations not only determined social status but also lent the control and/or credence to the behaviors that our subjects appropriated. We might rightly consider that Bourdieu speaks of an "individuals' properties", namely what they can offer. This chapter comes to a close by reiterating that society, at times, plays more than just a role in an individual's life since it actually dictates that person to varying degrees. Production is only half of a person's value in society, the other part pertains to class participation (i.e. "habitus"). We quote Eugene Wolfenstein here as he discusses that production and behaviors (spoken of as interactions) contribute to the make-up of a class:

> The notion of alienated labour, however, survives and becomes a cornerstone of Marx's theory in *Capital*, where it is discussed under a somewhat altered label: the fetishism of commodities. Proceeding from an analysis of the commodity form, Marx argues that the fetishism of commodities arises from a specific social agreement, when commodities are taken to the marketplace and acquire exchange value. (38)

Those considered as upper class, i.e. those with power, have something material, physical, or produced to offer while their middle to lower class counterparts can often only offer service. Additionally, we see this mindset as currently relevant as we reference the article, "Class Structure and economic inequality" as having appeared in the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*:

> In this study, we identify households in the capitalist class by the size of wealth holdings. Having large amounts of wealth can potentially eliminate the economic compulsion to engage in wage labour. Individuals in command of great wealth constitute the polar opposites of individuals with very little or no wealth who must depend on the continual sale of their labour power to reproduce themselves. (Wolff 1384)

Thus, we have a formulation in action that neatly places our subjects and fits with our idea of a hierarchy. In another article, "Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change during the Neoliberal Era", we find the following information: "As in the advanced countries, the dominant social classes in Latin America are defined by control of key power-conferring resources in the capitalist market" (Portes 44), and it goes on to state that: " … 'petty bourgeoisie' … The principal characteristics of this group—commonly labeled micro-entrepreneurs—is the possession of some monetary resources; some professional, technical, or artisanal skills; and the employment of a small number of workers supervised on a direct, face-to-face basis" (Portes 45). There is not a cinematic plot dealt with in this dissertation that does not involve some hierarchy; there is a constant exchange of goods/services/emotions/interactions which enables the class structure to stay in place.

So, why is the above discussion of economics important outside of the labor market and in the discussion of our films? As we have seen, social class infiltrates decision making at the most individual to familial unit. Case in point is the final quote which we utilize in this chapter, specifically with Argentina as a reference point. The title is as follows: "Estrategias habitacionales de familias de sectores populares y medios residentes en el area metropolitana de Buenos Aires (Argentina)":

> Por un lado, las familias eligen una vivienda y su localización con base en su situación económica actual, su autopercepción y la del entorno barrial, la evaluación de sus capacidades económicas para hacer frente a los gastos que esa vivienda impone, etc. Por el otro, los factores del contexto—entre ellos, las políticas sociohabitacionales … definen, en parte, el universo de opciones en función del cual las familias toman decisiones y se plantean objetivos que les permiten dar respuesta a sus necesidades de vivienda.
> (Virgilio 160-1)

We have spent the chapter analyzing the way in which society organizes its participants by class as a way in which to keep order. Marginalization directly challenges that order because it can

result in an outlier which we had not considered previously. Perhaps that explains the strong pull of the "habitus" (i.e. the familiarity) that maintains individuals in the same social class pattern; when they break with the familiar, they are left vulnerable and sensitive. However, in terms of these subjects, the repressed feeling of discomfort within their situation leads to the consideration of breaking free from the class cycle. The only way to deal with the intersection of the familiar and the new is by trying to compromise the two, much as our subjects try to do, more often than not coming face to face with the risk of marginalization.

CHAPTER 4 "*GENDER* AS IT CONSTRUCTS THE SELF"

Birth distinguishes itself from virtually every other experience by equalizing the human population; it is the only situation to which all individuals are subjected equally, physically coming into the world in relatively the same manner. It becomes the initiation to the human experience, and what follows becomes the first (largely unconscious) decision we make as children, adolescents, and later adults: gender. It is true that individuals cannot choose what race they are born, in to what social class we they born, or finally what sex they are born. And it is lack of control in that sense that contributes to sensitivity; marginalization is an even stronger threat when an individual's skin color/lineage, socioeconomic situation, and assigned gender are in direct contention with the constructs we have been discussing. However, whereas race and social class require a maturation to comprehend and align with/refute the construct, gendered choices begin at the onset of development; by this, we mean that portrayal and identification are experimented with as they do (not) match sex according to society. The three categories are interrelated, but gender is distinctive in that it is the first expression of the self. Gender, in fact, plays a large part at the onset of identity formation. Later, of course, this identity becomes tied up with race and social class, among other constructs.

As identity is being produced, it requires a steady stream of input, including constructs acknowledged in society. Let us broach the idea of our subjects as bodies on which expressions/expectations are displayed. With that in mind, we take a quote from *The German Doctor*; "The effect was unsettling. The doll had a mechanic heart. He had never before studied one so closely. It was a work of art that was too close to real life" (17). We have a doll as representative of two births. At the film's beginning, Enzo painstakingly crafts each doll by hand, adding unique details so as to individualize the body. Later, Mengele intervenes and re-crafts the

doll in his ideal image of the perfect specimen. Applying the doll metaphor to encompass every subject seen thus far, we note that each cinematic/literary personality has a prominent characteristic of the inanimate child's toy; the subjects are merely bodies, as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Judith Butler express to varying degrees, carried around, marked, and controlled by outside, societal forces, not least of which encompass race, social class, and gender. In addition, we are not to forget that individual desire begs to be equally expressed; in this chapter by way of gendered displays. In order to appropriately produce a balanced identity, there must be a compromise between society and the individual, not always the easiest task.

Foucault considers the body something to be controlled and Deleuze as a holding place and drive mechanism for desire. Butler, in *Undoing Gender*, considers both functions of the body: "production and projection". Bodies produce desires but they also project expectations, speaking to the "vulnerability" to which birth exposes us. "Although we struggle for rights over our own body, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever our own. The body has its invariably public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine" (21). The body from birth to later experiences undergoes a change of hands that maps the transition of power; at conception we are part of our mother's body, after birth we exist as a separate being, but it is not long before we become part of society, complete with its influences to which we are subjugated. Bodily freedom is temporary insofar as it corresponds with what is expected from it; when it physically transforms or behaves in spite of the power active over it, it no longer belongs to that individual, but rather answers to judgment. In that respect, Butler wants to stress that possession of one's own body is temporal and decision based.

Until this point, we know race and social class as two societal categories that can be performed but not contested. In contrast, after understanding Butler's explanations viewed onward in this chapter, we come to think of gender as "performative" and able to be challenged. The first decision to be made is regarding identification, and the struggle to see diversions from the norm as (non)disorders. She explains the latter point in *Undoing Gender*: "In recent years there have been debates about the status of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders'* (DSM-IV) diagnosis of gender identity disorder and, in particular, whether there are good reasons to keep the diagnosis on the books, or whether there are no longer very many good reasons" (75). The acknowledgement of a disorder, regardless of individual stance about a diagnosis, further reinforces the emotional complexity of gender performance. However, we are not concerned so much by the diagnosis debate as we are about the implications; the goal of trying to understand gender as an identity is so that, as Butler describes it, "autonomy" can be achieved; " . . . those who want to keep the diagnosis want to do so because it helps them achieve their aims and, in that sense, realize their autonomy. And those who want to do away with the diagnosis want to do so because it might make for a world in which they might be regarded and treated in non-pathological ways, therefore enhancing their autonomy in important ways" (77). As I believe Butler wants to reiterate, ironically, that the same thing that allows us to be controlled is that which sets us free: our body and the decision what to do with it. Thus, as we see moving forward, the psychological and the social play a hand in how individuals manage their autonomy; do they lie on one extreme or the other, renouncing their autonomous rights in order to be influenced by society or exercising those same rights to be free but potentially marginalized? Or, do they find themselves on a middle ground? Most importantly, we recognize

that position is not as important as the maneuvering of the conflicts that arise when reflecting on gender.

Male or female. Man or woman. Masculine or feminine. Gay or straight. These dichotomies monopolize the perspective of gender amongst many. It would be most neat and convenient to be able to define the category of gender in that way, however the truth is that such a task is not so simple. Within this classification, we are expected to take into account the numerous subcategories from which it is made. Male or female refers to the sex, often biological, of an individual. Man or woman indicates individual identification. Masculine or feminine speaks to portrayal. Gay or straight indicates sexual orientation. And even then there remains gray areas; let's take, as perhaps the best example, *XXY* and the following quote from Lucía Puenzo from Oumano's book: "For *XXY* (2007), the camera held the body of Inés Efron, who played Alex, within the film a great deal, so we worked a lot with how her body would look on camera and how to make her body seem sexually ambiguous" (56). This same ambiguity that she explores is not freely approached in society due to that fear of being on the outside, yet it is an often silenced part of growth in terms of gender; a period of physical and emotional growth is undergone by every individual where uncertainty, confusion, and an overall state of discomfort is felt as they try to determine their personal parameters within societal norms.

The topic of gender is the largest underlying issue and ultimately touches every work in our corpus. For that reason, it will constitute the final chapter in the body of the dissertation. However, it becomes important to be precise regarding what is meant by gender; given the dichotomies seen above, there is much involved in its analysis, and in the following paragraphs we primarily consider the viewpoints of Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray, amongst others when appropriate. It is also noteworthy to mention that while much of the discussion in this chapter is

focused on the female, given that the directors are such as well as the majority of the subjects, the quotations we utilize serve as much in the analysis of females as of males. As we come to see, according to Butler and Irigaray, the facets of gender cannot exist without the existence of its other, i.e. male and female. We use information gathered from our two specified authors with the goal to come full circle in recalling the argument of this dissertation: marginalization does exist and our cinematic subjects showcase, in this chapter, the challenges of gender classification. While the ideal continues to be eradication, the reality of the subjects' situations demonstrate at the very least how people can and do cope with gender issues.

Here we pause before reflecting on the scholarship of Butler and Irigaray and then making the direct connections between gender and the "panopticon"/marginalization. The article, "Categories We Die For: Ameliorating Gender in Analytic Feminist Philosophy", included in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, provoked two different personal reactions. The introductory lines drew me in because the argument aligned with many of the difficulties that our cinematic subjects encounter:

> In this paper I want to explore what contemporary work in analytic feminist philosophy can tell us about how the 'categories we live by,' or the categories that organize our social lives and constitute our identities, can sometimes render life unlivable because of their restrictive or oppressive effects. The phrase 'categories we die for' captures this ambiguity. On the one hand, many of us have died, and continue to, for gender categories that we couldn't, or refused to, live up to. Think of the violence done in the name of normative and regulatory gender ideals to gender nonconformists—those who do not find a place in gender binarism ('man/woman') or sexual dimorphism ('male/female'). (LaBrada 449)

Up to this point I was enthusiastic to have found scholarship dealing not only with gender, but hinting at, albeit without direct mention, the panoptic forces of society and the marginalization suffered. However, upon reading on, I began to disagree with the direction in which the author was taking the argument. He continues by describing varying categories, indicating how much of

an impact they can have on society's mindset: "Depending on their uses and effects, gender categories can make or break one's life" (LaBrada 449-50). Seeking to make categories more inclusive signals the flawed nature of the same; a sensibly constructed category is not flexible because it does not have to be, it is not strict but welcoming. The introduction of subcategories sends the message that there are an increasing number of individuals who do not, cannot, and will not accept being classified one way or another, for example male/female or hetero/homosexual. Thus, the reverse panoptic effect is taking place on society: there is pressure to create other categories because enough individuals are displaced that they need recognition. Can we not argue that the more categories/subcategories/classifications there are, the closer we move to freedom? Differences become more acceptable and there is less backing in discriminating the groups that previously did not have a label. We end by stating how the author proposes to move forward: "Rather, we ought to investigate what we are using the concept for, and whether we can reinvent that concept to better fulfill our political goals (an ameliorative approach). What concepts should we be using to realize social justice or to make gender categories more livable?" (LaBrada 450). But, why do we need a concept? The diversity of categories mentioned in his article alone demonstrates that specific concepts are restricting; maybe a new trend should be "dying to defy a category" instead of living to appease it, why ameliorate when we could annihilate? Now, I recognize that defiance and annihilation of a category as far reaching historically as gender is idealistic, and more than likely something not to be seen in my lifetime. However, what the film directors studied in this dissertation have done by not working with just male/female, man/woman, and or hetero-/homosexual considerations, is open the dialogue about gender and recognize that while marginalization is suffered it does serve

a higher purpose. The drive behind being marginalized is a powerful testament to personal desires and the inutility to classify by way of gendered expectations.

We begin with Judith Butler[35], and are interested, initially, in how she distinguishes sex from gender; "Can we refer to a 'given' sex or a 'given' gender without first inquiring into how sex and/or gender is given, through what means? And what is 'sex' anyway? It is natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal . . . " (10). Therefore, sex as an issue related to gender is relatively straight forward. Unless it is a medical exception, an individual is born either male or female. Thus, our first dichotomy is resolved rather easily; we can think of this biological differentiation as passive gender, decided without our input. However, active gender is still open to interpretation: "It would make no sense, then, to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category. Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (11). If we know birth to be a given and sex as biologically determined then it is gender that has the ability to distinguish the two. Gender becomes the way in which an individual comes to terms with their birthed sex. If we recognize marginalization as being the disagreement between birth/sex/gendered expectations then the personal struggles of the dissertation subjects can be analyzed as such.

We know that sex plays a role in gender formation, but to what extent we hope to resolve by way of support from the following citations. The subsection titled "Gender: The Circular Ruins of Contemporary Debate", present gender as a concept to be viewed in one of two ways: "Is there 'a' gender which persons are supposed to *have*, or is it an essential attribute that a

---

[35] We start here by quoting from Butler's work: *Gender Trouble*; any change in textual reference is noted accordingly.

person is said to *be*, as implied in the question 'What gender are you?'" (11). Such a question presents gender as a whole of two halves: biology and behavior. If gender was based simply off of sex, "having" a male or female anatomy, it would imply that society (or culture, as it is referred to in the citations to come) has little to no role in gender formation and later identification. But we know this not to be true, and in terms of this dissertation, we are especially focused on how society plays a role. We see social influence in the behavior of individuals. Butler explains gender as something to achieve and implies willing participants in societal expectations from birth/behavior. Essentially, that struggle towards gender also has the underlying implications of success/failure. And who else to judge that same success/failure than society from the time of birth, hence Butler's mention of "determinism" (12). Between the passivity and activity of gender, we deal with society as a mediator. It mediates between what biology provides us and what we desire to be. She continues on to say:

> The controversy over the meaning of *construction* appears to founder on the conventional philosophical polarity between free will and determinism. … the body is figured as a mere *instrument* or *medium* for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related. But 'the body' is itself a construction, as are the myriad 'bodies' that constitute the domain of gendered subjects. Bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender; the question then emerges: To what extent does the body *come into being* in and through the mark(s) of gender? (12-3)

Summarizing the aforementioned points, we ascertain that gender is a result of construction, influenced, to a debatable extent, by sex. Yet the primary concern is how influential society is in the equation; we argue in this dissertation, based on our subjects' situations, that its pressures and effects are much more significant than an anatomical designation, be it favorable or detrimental. The remaining dichotomies of man/woman, masculine/feminine, gay/straight have the potential to be decided on independently of sex. Notice the usage of decided here; we have noted society's strong role in gender, but it can do nothing more than assert its opinion, calling to

mind the "panopticon". The active decision-making per part of the individual is what can lead to marginalization.

We reference another work by Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, in which she speaks to how decision is involved in gender: "To claim that all gender is like drag, is to suggest that 'imitation' is at the heart of *heterosexual* project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender, but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations" (85). The inclusion of the qualifier hegemonic is of note because within the three classifications we deal with in this dissertation, we have spoken of a hierarchical model in place. Gender as a decision is no different. Within the scope of our films, Butler underscores that this classification is at once decided and flexible. There is a prior biological assignment and society suggests that an individual acts accordingly. However, there is no basis for why society expects us to act in a presupposed way; as we see that at a later point Butler explains that gender is performative. But, before delving into that area, Butler explains how society is successful in controlling gender. "But here it seems that I am obliged to add an important qualification: heterosexual privilege operates in many ways, and two ways in which it operates include naturalizing itself and rendering itself as the original and the norm. But these are not the only ways in which it works, for it is clear that there are domains in which heterosexuality can concede its lack of originality and naturalness but still hold on to its power" (85). We summarize that heterosexuality is at once hegemonic and accepted, two adjectives that go hand in hand. Race and social class operate very much in the same fashion, though are less adaptable to change as we see exemplified next.

Judith Butler's article, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" discusses the investment that identity has in gender: "If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition

of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (402). Gender operates freely from sex. Butler frames it as being performed, expressed through actions. This ties into habitus as we see at a later point. Let us consider here some of the issues, from a societal perspective, that arise when making key gender decisions, which serve as the basis for subject analysis in this chapter.

The issues reduce themselves to one of three areas: relational (i.e. unconventional relationships), self-identification (i.e. behavioral confusion), or orientation (i.e. emotional/physical attractions). To briefly situate the subjects so as to keep them present until it comes time for their analysis, we distinguish between them here and associate with them the issues previously outlined [36]. Regarding unconventional relationships, we place: Miss Mary/Johnny and Alfredo/Mecha (parents and heads of household) in *Miss Mary*, Camila/ Ladislao in *Camila*, Charlotte/Ludovico in *We Don't Want to Talk About It*, Vero/Momi/José and José/Mercedes and Mecha/Tali in *The Swamp*, Amalia/Dr. Jano in *The Holy Girl*, Lilith/Mengele and Eva/Mengele. Under behavioral confusion are: Miss Mary, Momi, Amalia, Helena, Vero, Alex, and Ailín. Lastly, in terms of emotional/physical attractions, we discuss: Sor Juana, the wife of the viceroy, Isabel, Momi, Alex, Álvaro, Lala, and Ailín. The reason that the subjects are placed accordingly is that the issues they have marginalize them in such a way that society rejects their decisions to varying degrees.

Is the opinion of Irigaray akin to that of Butler's? We consider a selection of her viewpoints and add them as they support our overarching groundwork laid by Butler. Irigaray's

---

[36] In the cases of certain subjects, their issues can extend to two or all three of the areas.

ideas cited here from *Speculum of the Other Woman* are useful as they overtly cite from Freud. We begin with the biological view of sex in her chapter titled "Woman, Science's Unknown": "'When you meet a human being,' he says, they say, first of all, 'the first distinction you make is 'male or female?' and you are accustomed to making the distinction with unhesitating certainty'" (13-4). Casting aside, for the moment, gender performance, we are dealing once again with biology as it has a significant impact on appearance, one that can only be masked to a certain extent by way of dress/actions/behaviors/etc. However, Irigaray takes biological gender one step further by referring to Freud regarding the distinction between the sexes from conception, where he believes it begins and ends from society's point of view. "Anatomical science shares your certainty at one point and not much further. The male sexual product, the spermatozoon, and its vehicle are male; the ovum and the organism that harbours it are female" (14); from the text leading up to and after our citation we understand that Freud concentrates on the sex organs' as distinct, primarily, in their functions. Whereas the information that Irigaray cites concerning Freud seems concise as to distinction, she herself seems to vacillate on the subject. It is our stance that she aligns herself with Butler in that biological differences cannot and do not account for making an individual man or woman; rather, the importance is, as has been mentioned here, "in the becoming and or performance".

Let us expand, now, on the opinion of Irigaray. She certainly acknowledges that there is a becoming stage or process, if you will, but she does not seem to agree with it. We contend that her stance is that there is undue pressure, specifically on women, to fulfill societal obligations so that they may differentiate themselves from men. She explains that psychoanalysis is not concerned with defining a woman because it is not able to do so; that would almost liken itself to seeing her as opposite a man, which is not her function. A woman's function, just like a man's,

resides in their being; if an individual does then they become. "It is thus, in all exactitude, unrealizable to *describe the being* of a woman" (21). From this "becoming" stem the issues relating to gender; society says there is an (in)appropriate way to become. However, independent of society, "becoming" is not a necessary situation through which to pass. To become is not necessary for survival, but perhaps so for happiness.

It is safe to say that Irigaray does not agree with the strict sub-classifications which exist within the overarching classification of gender. And her disagreement goes beyond just that; she is also at odds with what we could dub double standards in that men are but women become. She goes on to state: "Therefore, the feminine must be deciphered as inter-dict: within the signs or between them, between the realized meanings, between the lines . . . and as a function of the (re)productive necessities of an intentionally phallic currency, which, for lack of collaboration of a (potentially female) other, can immediately be assumed to need *its* other … " (22). Irigaray's disapproval helps us realize that gender, in all of its shapes and forms and sub-classifications, is initially decided at conception as far as society is concerned. However, we as individuals can and do make changes to that as we see fit. In her other work, *thinking the Difference*, we find this sentiment: "The decline of the patriarchal family structure and women's entry or re-entry into the public sphere make new management of civil society a necessity. It is not a question of reviving the civil-uncivil dichotomy between men and women (inside or outside the home), but of reshaping or reorganizing civil society according to current needs" (71). Men and women cannot be considered as opposites or even complimentary, but rather interrelated; both go through similar developmental processes and all individuals react differently. And "current needs" tell us that more flexibility ought be allowed in accordance with gender. As Butler and Irigaray discuss, there is a "perfomative" quality to gender identification, but one that often comes with the price

of (un)acceptance. This performance requires action that may (not) agree with societal expectations, requiring the individual to occupy a place on the outside in order to make him/her self happy in terms of their "true self" or become a member of gendered expectations whose "false self" becomes dominant.

In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray presents desire as an emotional drive that can lead to options not yet considered by society. In fact, desire is indicative of the individual and cannot be limited to the generic, because as she says: "Giving it a permanent definition would amount to suppressing it as desire. Desire demands a sense of attraction: a change in the interval, the displacement of the subject or of the object in their relations of nearness or distance" (8). As much as desire is irrelevant by way of time/distance, it does change according to the situation; "A new age signifies a different relation between: -man and god(s), -man and man, -man and world, -man and woman" (8). Desire in terms of breaking with the gender category finds itself at a distance from acceptance. Man (or woman for our purposes) finds themselves distanced from self, society, and/or others as they become comfortable in their gender situation. But this desire plays an important role because it is ultimately responsible for where they end up in terms of happiness in regards to their gender or any of our three categories mentioned. The panopticon and marginalization certainly complicate life, but they are far from abstract constructions which occasion death as long as they are maneuvered in an appropriate way. There are always limits, both psychological and sociological, among others, which must be challenged in order to achieve desire. And to recall Deleuze and Guattari, desire can never be fully achieved because its absolute fulfillment would, then, occasion death since there is nothing left to strive for beyond that. Therefore, to tie everything together, we make the statement that marginalization, instead of being viewed solely as a death sentence much as the article we refuted portrayed it, is a

character-builder. Perhaps seeing it as such can help those affected cope more easily. We close out this paragraph by citing, again, Irigaray from the work previously mentioned here: "To arrive at the constitution of an ethics of sexual difference, we must at least return to what is for Descartes the first passion: *wonder*. This passion has no opposite or contradiction and exists always as though for the first time" (12). Now this "wonder" is undoubtedly linked to and initiates desire. Desire is something shared amongst individuals, regardless of sex/gender, which Irigaray notes and connects: "Thus man and woman, woman and man are always meeting as though for the first time because they cannot be substituted one for the other. I will never be in a man's place, never will a man be in mine" (12-3). Man and woman, as has been stated early, are not just to be considered merely physically and emotionally opposites, but they approach their experiences in a differing manner, thus rendering them as individuals; "Whatever identifications are possible, one will never exactly occupy the place of the other—they are irreducible one to the other" (13). What are important to us are "difference" and the "other". Those limits that we are always transcending have to do essentially with desire. In relation to something else, we are always marginalized; two or more things will never complement each other perfectly because they are different, others. Desire arises from wanting to appropriate elements of the other, be it man/woman, woman/man or any other variation. The only way to achieve desire is to find happiness in the acceptation of difference. Thus, classification into categories always leaves an individual with disappointing results because there remain other options, other classifications, other categories that may be a better fit than the one in which an individual finds themselves.

Thus forth, gender for our purposes is considered a choice that individuals are capable of making; marginalization is felt when characters do not fit into or blur the lines of socially constructed dichotomies. In a relevant way, Bourdieu's idea of 'habitus' fits well here regarding

that behaviors and actions made by an individual contribute to their constructing of a particular gender. Social structure implies a cyclical case from which one must break in regards to gendered expectations so that an individual can be more in touch with their desires and create an identity where gender plays a role but does not dominate.

How much freedom is there regarding gender? It depends on the extent to which one wants to fulfill biological/societal expectations versus desires. Our cinematic subjects which are analyzed next provide us with examples of where expectations and desires clash, and the situations which results. While not always ideal, the result of such gender centered conflicts at the very least unveil what the true desire of the subject is, and that person must choose whether or not to pursue it, fully conscientious of the threats of being marginalized. And, again, the issues which arise when seeking a gender identity are representative of a less than perfect category, gender, which, as we know, has grown to include more variation in its definition; this being, from our point of view, a positive step forward. Instead of structuring the subject analysis as we have been, by director/film, we go by conflicts[37] surging from three possible areas, reminding again that they are related to: relationships, self-identification, or orientation.

When considering gender from a relational standpoint, apart from how an individual wants to be considered or who they are attracted to, the pairing of two people is paramount in discussion of the (un)acceptable. Relationships are synonymous with gender and analyzed as such. When approaching interpersonal relationships, we are quick to label them as familial, friendships/platonic/acquaintance, or romantic; considering them as such aids in our understanding of the dynamics at play between two or more people. Similar to social class, a specific habitus is expected according to the labeled relationship. In addition, stated habitus

---

[37] Not every conflict is dealt with here; rather, only those relevant to our portrayal of marginalization.

becomes confounded with gendered expectations. There are the realistic relationships, and then the idealistic versions with which society feels most comfortable. In the following unconventional relationships we analyze, we find many of them being heterosexual; from a superficial standpoint, this seems without conflict, however it does not deem each pairing psychologically sound or socially accepted. Intertwined with issues of gender, we find matters of age and social class to name a few. The relationships studied here carry varying tones of sexuality, ranging from latent to exploratory to active. Our goal in beginning with relationship analysis is noticing the interactions amongst the same and between different genders; these exchanges do come to influence self-identification and orientation.

Johnny with Miss Mary and José with Mercedes immediately call to mind the Oepidus complex and we explain this correlation before mentioning Freud. The similarities between Johnny and José are apparent from the onset, they: are younger than their romantic interests, experience a breakdown in their parents' marriage, have an emotionally absent mother, and that desire to be 'heroic' as Freud suggests in a referenced article mentioned below. These young men are at the experimental stage in their sexuality, and the relationships they have chosen go a long way in deciding their masculinity moving forward. To narrate the process of the two subjects in question ending up at this point, we extensively cite "Contributions to the Psychology of Love: A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men", where Freud explains four particular "conditions" of love which influence the decisions men make in choosing a partner. At the end of this listing, he states: "The feature of overestimation by which the loved one becomes the unique, the irreplaceable one, fits just as readily into the infantile set of ideas, for no one possesses more than one mother, and the relation to her rests on an experience which is assured beyond all doubt and can never be repeated again" (197). This quote, we assume, in the best of

cases is applied to a man seeking a life partner. However, when we have a case like that of Johnny and José, we apply the following: "We learn through other examples which psycho-analysis has brought to light that the pressing desire in the unconscious for some irreplaceable thing often resolves itself into an endless series in actuality—endless for the very reason that the satisfaction longed for is in spite of all never found in any surrogate" (197). Our view of Miss Mary and Mercedes as mother surrogates is owed to a few determinant factors; both women are significantly older, they provide the emotional stand-in for the mother that was not available to her sons, and they bear if not a complete physical resemblance at the very least one of personality[38]. Here we recall our mention of heroism. This desire gives each boy purpose in his search for a gendered identity. By being the object of affection and being affectionate with the 'mother-surrogates', Johnny and José are achieving two objectives: metaphorically triumphing over their fathers as they win their surrogates' love as well as asserting their identification and orientation as heterosexual males.

It would not be fair to eliminate the reverse situation in the two aforementioned relationships. Miss Mary and Mercedes maintain equal, if not more responsibility regarding the eventually sexualized relationships with Johnny and José. In discussing these women's culpability, we want to reconsider Freud's "taboo of virginity" from a different angle. In "Contributions to the Psychology of Love: The Taboo of Virginity", Freud describes a love deprived woman who makes it her mission to enter into an ever-lasting union with a man who she can fully satisfy. It should follow, then, that this partnership should equally satisfy the woman. "The expression 'sexual thraldom' was adopted by von Krafft-Ebing in 1892 to denote

---

[38] Miss Mary's ability to speak English recalls Johnny's mother and her desire to educate her children accordingly. Mercedes is a former friend of José's mother. Both 'mother-surrogates' are emotionally distant in their interactions with Johnny and José respectively, calling to mind the original mother figures.

the fact that one person may develop an unusually high degree of dependence and helplessness towards another with whom he has a sexual relationship" (217-8). We see a fault here in that several situations are not accounted for; when a man and woman enter into this union where virginity is given, there exists the possibility of infidelity or separation by death. Essentially, if love is lost in one way or another, it leaves the woman in a particularly difficult situation for she is the one whose virginity is expected. In a case where the woman is no longer part of a union, her mission must start over again, though this time around she does not have her virginity to offer. Miss Mary and Mercedes are just as readily asserting their femininity and heterosexuality in their relationships with their respective partners, and they are doing so in spite of the taboo; they never had a marital union but no longer have their virginity, a contradiction to the theory. We are safe in presuming that neither woman is a virgin at this stage in her life, especially due to their previous circumstances; we know of a past, mysterious love interest in Miss Mary's case and that Mercedes was 'popular' in her collegiate years as told by Mecha, including being a former lover of the latter's husband. That being said, dare we say that the women are tormented by the lack of a union? Per relations with the young boys, do they hope to regain the security they sought in their previous partners when they decided to lose said virginity the first time? Both women's actions are indicative of said 'thraldom', showing dependence on their partners. Miss Mary cries while embracing Johnny and Mercedes constantly phones to inquire about José's whereabouts. Their reverting to 'thraldom' is suggestive of trying to reverse judgment felt upon losing one's virginity for the first time. Instead of a heroic desire like that which is manifest in their partners, theirs is self-interested.

Next, we group Charlotte/Ludovico, Amalia/Dr. Jano, and Lilith/Dr. Mengele. It would be tempting to apply the idea of the Electra Complex here, but we insist that it is not compatible.

While the prior two relationships showed equal participation from both involved parties, the young girls mentioned here are sought after; their sexuality in terms of self and orientation is provoked by the male attention. In actuality, we know this to be true based on the fact that little to no discussion takes place concerning the girls' emotional growth. One would think that the maturation of the three young girls would take the forefront in terms of character development; ironically, the three men experience an equitable amount of onscreen time in which they are also developed within the plotline. As the respective relationships solidify, Charlotte, Amalia, and Lilith assume their respective functions as an object on which the stated men project their attention. The men are seeking not so much retribution from the girls, but rather a target on which to rid themselves of repressed desires. For Charlotte, she is all but desexualized before the attention given to her per way of Ludovico. While her intellectual prowess prospers under her mother's watchful eye, not once does she express romantic interest in another, only an interest in the form of admiration for her eventual suitor. Amalia is highlighted in an almost pure, religious way clothed in her uniform and attending religious education class. Lilith is depicted as a young, frail girl whose body has yet to undergo the effects of puberty or any maturation for that matter.

The girls' development is noted after the men have made their entrance and exit from the formers' lives. Charlotte takes on the role of wife; she goes directly from her mother's care into that of Ludovico, never understanding what it is to be liberated sexually, socially, or otherwise. Amalia understands her religious calling and sexuality, ironically at the same time, never having interacted with boys of her age group. Lilith gains awareness of her body only as she sees herself in contrast with others during that especially telling pool scene. So it can be said that girls grow as a byproduct of the plotline while the men are reduced to having come full circle in their stories. Ludovico is, again, a bachelor. Dr. Jano assumedly suffers in his marriage and his family due to

the possibility of losing them. Dr. Mengele goes back into hiding, although forced to another location. The girls, alone, are initially marginalized by way of the lack of social growth but the situation is reversed when the men find themselves on the outside due to their less than respected actions.

We can and do make a quick mention of the non-traditional relationship existent between Camila and Father Ladislao. If it were not for the religious title carried by the latter, the pairing does not seem so atypical. Beyond the question of social class, which we cannot completely verify on behalf of Ladislao given his vow of humility, the functionality and success of such a relationship is likely. However, a social rule put into order and practiced by the Church as an institution and its followers condemns this relationship. And the root of its condemnation is gender. Being that Camila and Father Ladislao are biologically female and male, respectively, and that they practice their femininity and masculinity, this develops into a mutual attraction beyond platonic connotations; this equation puts them in jeopardy of defying the social practice. Interaction on a platonic level is justifiable, yet when it approaches the sexual a threat of marginalization is present, given the context.

Additionally, there are a few relationships that stand out for the sheer fact that they go undefined in the films. In fact, the participants do not even spend much time together though the connection joining them is understood. There is a strong argument that given this information, these are the healthiest relationships examined in this chapter because there is a sense of innocence as to why they are connected; they consist of Vero/Momi/José, Mecha/Tali, and Eva/Mengele. The commonality amongst them is an emotional dependency not easily gestured on-screen but rather inferred from the dialogue. Vero, Momi, and José have a somewhat untraditional, border-line sexual relationship despite being related. I maintain that the

relationship between these siblings has everything to do with regaining a lack of affection and nothing to do with perversion. The three subjects have not known love in the familial sense, thus their experimentation with it amongst each other is a learning process and fails to become sexual because their understanding that they have a familial bond remains at the forefront. Mecha and Tali imitate the relationship seen between the previously outlined three children. Theirs, too, is a relationship of support in the presence of respective familial situations which they do not find completely satisfying. Lastly, Eva and Dr. Mengele are indicative of cultural ties, both finding a comfort in the other's background. At the crux of all these relationships is a more stable sense of trust than found in the other pairings. In other words, none of the subjects just mentioned intend to or stand to gain anything from the other, be it sexual, material, or otherwise whereas, comparatively speaking, in the other relationships discussed or to be so, there is this notion of give and take.

It would be in error here not to round out the conflictive area of relationships without including the instances of rare family dynamics amongst the subjects. It is, indeed, the reason that many of the subjects end up marginalized. We observe a trend among many of the cinematically portrayed families suggestive of a cyclical practice(s) from which the protagonists need to remove themselves. This raises the 'nature versus nurture' debate. Would these protagonists have acted as such independently or is familial relationship to blame? We briefly recapitulate, being that there are many complicated circumstances pertaining to family. Camila observes the lack of regard her father maintains concerning the emotional health of his mother. Alfredo and Mecha are unstable role models for their children; he openly cheats, she is in a perpetual state of depression, and they both drink as a way to avoid their present situation. Sor Juana does not have a traditional upbringing; rather, she is raised by the fellow sisters in the

convent. Charlotte is unknowingly incarcerated by her overprotective mother; the deceased father is scarcely mentioned in the film. Gregorio and Mecha parallel Alfredo and Mecha in their instability, however there is more interaction between these two, albeit negative. Helena acts as a single, love deprived mother openly dependent on her brother and other men for affection, raising Amalia despite a physically absent father. Vero cringes under the subtle, emotional putdowns from family members around her. Alex comes of age amidst the tension resultant from her parents' inability to agree on the former's gender at birth. Lala's parents are hardly present, except when the mother throws lavish parties for companions several years younger than her or when the father sexually abuses Ailín. Enzo and Eva parallel Alex's parents in that they are in disagreement concerning Lilith's physical development and Mengele's role in their family.

I assert that these familial conflicts are present so that the audience may observe the role of the social in the private realm. Concerning personal matters of the individual, the family is considered just as social as the public sphere; family, friends, and strangers influence decisions, in this case those pertaining to gender. Could all of these situations have been a foreshadowing of what was to come in the younger generation (i.e. protagonists)? We maintain the stance that relationships, keeping in mind that they are variably defined, are intertwined with gender in that they lead, eventually and in part, to self-identification and orientation.

Relationships are noted here as a gender-related conflict. Although relationships are not traditionally thought of as damaging, we see the strong impacts that the interactions at play have on the participants. Regardless of said impacts being positive and or negative, they are influential moving forward in the course of the adult lives we see here. More importantly, each relationship is contextually marginalized. In other words, none of those listed is readily or willingly accepted outside of the private sphere as the ideal situation. However, as a citation from *Undoing Gender*

supports, relationships forged do not always include the familial and the social, but rather go undefined as the individuals involved try to navigate how it fits into their identity. "Sexuality becomes open to a number of social articulations that do not always imply binding relations or conjugal ties" (26). A sexual experience is often thought of as undergone in relation to another; such experiences can be exploratory in nature, avoiding the pitfalls of classification. We define three relationships as indicative of exploration to explain the impact of sexuality and whether or not it translates into an identity-impacting relationship. The latent attraction between Sor Juana and the wife of the viceroy is approached first as a meaningful friendship to both women. However, the intimacy and sharing of one kiss causes the relationship to straddle the line between platonic and sexual. When the ties between the two subjects are suspended, we see conflict in the form of character degradation; Sor Juana has lost intellectual support and the wife of the viceroy loses emotional support, both losses resulting in a weakening of a sense of self. Similarly, Amalia and Dr. Jano's interactions are based on attention; while theirs never becomes a relationship, both are looking to resolve sexual confusion. Amalia is undergoing a sexual awakening while Dr. Jano is sexually frustrated in that he seeks such satisfaction from several sources. The conflict is evident in terms of age difference as well as the marital status of the doctor. Finally, Alex and Álvaro take advantage of the equally felt vulnerability of their two identities. A relationship between the two means sexual exploration, but confusion in terms of gender choices.

Relationships become, almost, the metaphorical starting point for sexuality. Within interactions of all kinds, amongst family, friends, and those in the community, individuals are (in the most abstract sense) giving something of themselves and, hopefully, receiving something in return. In the transition between speaking of relationships and moving on to self-identification

and orientation, we include a quote from Lucía Puenzo as included in the chapter titled "Cinema and Society" from the previously cited book by Oumano; upon discussing her film, *XXY*, Puenzo says: "When I finally saw the film with intersexed people—heads of Argentina's intersex society, who could have destroyed the film—they politicized it. They found it incredible that the film makes the central issue for intersexed people not just the liberty to choose their bodies, but the demand to be desired by almost anybody" (215). We see the same feeling of "desire" as responsible for seeking out relationships and wanting to identify the self. In terms of gender, perhaps the best case scenario is compatibility among relationships/sexuality/and self-identification. Puenzo goes on to say: "Somehow, without realizing it, we were thinking the same way, that sex and desire are most important because they have such an important place in society now" (215). Understanding one's identity and orientation allows them to more appropriately search for the desire which they seek, often associated with intimacy and sexuality. Butler and Puenzo coincide on the fact that freedom/autonomy is a necessity for individuals, especially as they accept gender into their lives. We see how an existent community, that of the intersex, gives verbal approval of the cinematic portrayal of an issue, important and well-known to them, as constructed by another, that other being Puenzo. Whereas we have repeatedly said that flexibility in race and social class as categorical labels is not common, there is continued evidence of the openness that is practiced in questions of gender. In other words, gender as an open dialogue deems it even more so as a choice. That desire as shown through in gender performance is able to achieve individualized ideal outcomes. Moving forward, at the root of gender performance is the desire of how to self-identify and orientate.

Previously, we named the dichotomies of man/woman and masculine/feminine. Regardless of talk on whether or not to do away with having to make a decision, the fact remains

that the choice exists. Even if an individual chose not to participate in the decision between man/woman and or masculine/feminine, this opting out still places them on the outside. As Butler has said, gender is performative. And as Bourdieu has said, actions make up a habitus. Any desired identification of gender, then, can be achieved by way of a set of actions practiced by the individual. It seems relatively straightforward, yet it is anything but that. When will these actions be performed? How? With whom? How will they be perceived? Will there be acceptance? It is notable that identity has much to do with context, and we see the subjects in this next area of conflict as confused with how to maintain a desired identity which can potentially, or not, marginalize them.

To begin with Miss Mary is to focus on a subject whose situation is not so obvious. Superficially speaking, this middle age individual self-identifies as a woman. However, the confusion arises when she loses sight of her femininity; in other words, it is not a question of whether or not she is feminine, but rather why she chooses to ignore it. If we are thinking of Miss Mary performing her identity as a woman, she does little to showcase the fact. Besides the fact that she dresses in a dowdy fashion, dismisses any lewd talk, and shies away from discussion about her former lost love, she is markedly uncomfortable in the wake of male attention. We do not know the cause of this particular behavior, but we hypothesize the following. The only demonstration of her sexuality occurs in relation to Johnny. Barring the theory we proposed about reversing the loss of virginity, let us propose that being in Johnny's presence brings to life adolescent emotions. Why? Johnny brings her back to a place and time where she felt sexual: with that lost love, back home in England, years earlier.

Momi is one of the younger subjects whose identity we analyze, which makes her selection of self as man or woman one still in process. We are, however, aware of her tomboy

nature; short hair, unkempt appearance, and lack of interest in all things feminine suggest that her performance is not concerned with a female portrayal, not to mention the roughness of her actions. We reflect, specifically, on the scene where she jumps without hesitation into the filthy pool, almost in a defiance of what is expected of her. It is here that Momi struggles with her identity; apart from societal pressures, her mother projects expectations onto her daughter. And what's more, she insults Momi at every turn. The irony of the situation is that Mecha does nothing to facilitate the expectations she has for her daughter. In other words, Mecha is absent as much as a caretaker and role-model, a dual task fulfilled by Isabel. While Momi is not viewed as overtly sexual, as we discuss further on, the only intimacy she demonstrates is with Isabel, a connection whose nature is up for debate. Yet, returning to Momi's sexuality, it can be easily confused with the maternal affection that she receives from Isabel. In short, Momi remains ambiguous in the eyes of the viewers; there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that she is determinate in any one direction, besides the fact that her age and situation are limiting.

It is fitting to interject with Amalia's coming of age, since, she is much like Momi. Both at an influential stage in impending adolescence with emotionally absent mothers, they seek, most probably subconsciously, a maternal figure and/or guidance. The only adult, woman figure in her life is the religious education teacher; this woman, whose character is never fully developed during the film, is shrouded in mystery; we know little of her personal life, but it seems at odds with her job. It is hinted at that this woman is unmarried but enjoys the company of a male companion, meanwhile she tries, at times in vain, to get the girls in her care to focus on understanding their potential religious vocations rather than become preoccupied with their adolescence. Having been sought out by Doctor Jano, Amalia begins her sexual exploration alongside her religious exploration. The same male object (we say this because Dr. Jano is

notably devoid of emotions and/or character traits) serves to awaken Amalia's bodily awareness at the same time that he becomes her religious purpose. In two particularly poignant scenes, we see teenage, sexual experiences: Amalia masturbating in bed and Jose having relations with her cousin. These experiences are indicative of the adolescent girls' understanding of their bodies and their sexuality. Neither teen is sufficiently mature to definitively perform a gender, but rather the experiences they undergo contribute to their maturation.

The cases of Helena and Vero are significantly similar. While the other women/girls analyzed thus far have an innate sense of self, meaning that their desires have been identified if not acted upon, these middle-aged subjects have lost sight of themselves; let us be more specific. Helena, recently divorced and living an unconventional life in a hotel[39], seeks the affections of a man: one being her brother and the other being Dr. Jano. We get the notion that validation for her comes in the form of being noticed. Vero, on the other hand, is married but rather unhappily so. Her husband, physically present but emotionally unavailable, becomes the mark around which she goes through the motions of her own life. She seeks solace in the company of another man, via a relationship we can argue is not about sex but rather companionship. It is apparent that both women clearly identify as such and embrace a feminine lifestyle. So how is it that they become so emotionally confused?

Emotions are just as much a part of self-identity as performing as man/woman, masculine/feminine. In fact, dealing with emotions is part of the gender performance, at least according to what has been commonly taught. Women tend to be freer to express themselves emotionally whereas men are less likely to extreme displays of feeling. Ironically, what we have

---

[39] We cannot help but make the assumption that Helena's life has developed into a transitory one in the sense that she is unhappy/unfulfilled, leaving her without a well-defined identity and thus in a state of flux; she has decided to live out of a hotel room and is more concerned with her desires than her daughter's. It is not an unreasonable hypothesis to believe that she incapable of maintaining a stable lifestyle, resulting in confusion being projected onto Amalia.

in the cases of Helena and Vero is a repression of self. In a state where both women feel vulnerable, Helena because of her divorce and Vero because of the accident and successive mental breakdown, they take a different approach. Physically the women seek a connection, but emotionally they are incapable of it. And they are incapable because of the pressures they feel. There are hints that Helena feels like a failure in her personal life; without a stable relationship, home, or job, does she really feel deserving of happiness? She intends a passionate encounter with Dr. Jano only for her advances to be rejected; she proceeds in her pursuit of him in spite of his marital status. She almost intentionally sets herself up for failure. Meanwhile, Vero's behaviors are suggestive of a mid-life crisis; an affair, change in hair color, inability to focus on work/family. She is emotionally stifled by her life. The women feel marginalized, but it is largely psychological. Neither one finds herself on the outside, but they are not successful in reaching happiness on the inside. Their marginalization is emotional more so than gender-related.

Alex seems behaviorally confused; we accept that assumption because since she was born a hermaphrodite, why wouldn't there be indecision over which gender to embrace? However, she is not confused in the least. The confusion results from those around her; they project their biases, prejudices, fears, and insecurities on Alex, as if suggesting that the adolescent should feel that way. By 'they', we imply, above all, her parents and the community. If those around her were to pay closer attention, they would understand how the teen desired to proceed. In Alex's performance is the answer to her self-identification.

Therefore, we are left to respond to whether or not Alex identifies, ultimately, as man or woman and whether masculinity or femininity is favored. The answer is clear for us as an audience, but unacceptable for many. Alex is both sexes and neither gender simultaneously. Her parents feel emotionally distraught for not having chosen one sex over the other at birth. The

community is in disbelief, having to verify a singular sex as we see in the disturbing assault of Alex on the beach. Biologically, Alex is left to make the decision regarding sex; hormone treatment is both experimented with and abandoned. Identity wise, Alex does not favor either gender in dress nor appearance nor attitude. The only clear-cut display of sexuality is in her relations with Álvaro. The ambiguity of this film achieves what Puenzo spoke of in conjunction with the inter-sex community and what Butler supports: bodies are personal and social property. People can and do make decisions regarding their bodies, but society can never be refrained from exercising its judgment.

It is easy to contest the inclusion of Ailín in this category of self-identity confusion, but we justify otherwise. Rather than not displaying sexuality, we have an oversexed adolescent, but not by way of her choosing. There is scarcely a doubt that Ailín identifies as a woman, but there is doubt regarding the degree to which she suffers because of her strong femininity. When we consider all of the subjects collectively, Ailín is one of the most severely marginalized. Sexuality for her is not so much a choice as a learned habitus; she does choose whom she loves, but she was conditioned to act in the free-spirited, sexual way in which she does. Since late childhood/early adolescence, we observe a girl who has grown up physically and emotionally abused. The physical abuse gave way to emotional pain and suffering. With a deceased mother and then later raped and impregnated by her father, Ailín was not given familial love. We do, however, see that she is capable of giving that love as she profusely mourns the death of her newborn.

Here, gender means little to Ailín as she grows up more objectified than anything else. She tries to overcompensate for that lack of familial love in just about every interaction she has with another, often choosing those she knows are only using her so that she does not grow

emotionally attached. The fact that Ailín does not experience healthy relationships leads her to become sheepish and to mistrust the only person that is sincere, Lala. Can we say that Ailín purposely performs as an overtly sexual woman to protect herself emotionally? Absolutely, specifically for the two reasons we now list. As an attractive woman, she gains the physical attention she so desperately needs and lacked in her early years. As a sexual woman, she can physically attract others. In both cases we see a repetitive element: physicality. Ailín is never concerned with emotional health because it is something she has never known. The scene in which we see her imprisoned and visited by Lala, Ailín makes the conscientious decision to alienate her lover. Her reasoning for this is because being a lonely, emotionally disconnected inmate would be easier than having to relive any previous, dark part of her history in which she was mistreated as the object of someone's affection. What she does not realize is that much of the purpose for gender performance is that the end result draws us closer to a loved other and to ourselves. Yet, at the end of the film, we visually see Ailín's performativity do just that; she finds the love she gives to Lala returned, in favor, and a certain peace as she journeys back to her infant's grave. While several of the previous examples in the chapter have started positively and ended on a negative note, we see the reverse scenario in this particular film.

As any reader of this dissertation will note, it is the women that face varying levels of victimization when confronting gender. On the other hand, men undergo some confusion, but generally in relation to women. Why is this? Society views men as emotionally more resilient than their women counterparts. But, an equal amount of confusion exists among them as well, but demonstration of any insecurity is more so grounds for marginalization than an equal display by a woman. It is obvious that marginalization is gendered; there are different triggers for the sexes based on societal norms.

Our last area of gender conflict resides in orientation, meaning the attraction experienced both emotionally and physically by our characters. The previous two areas, relationships and self-identification, seem secondary to sexual orientation. When a third party is judging the other, a pre-assumption is made regarding biological sex before proceeding to discuss their orientation, as if the other's choice for a partner defines said other. In what this dissertation holds to be true, we believe that the relationships one keeps and the manner in which they self-identify are of more importance than personal preferences. Of course, to the casual observer, all of this information regarding gender should remain extraneous; in different terms, an individual should be considered based on their character above all else to avoid (un)intended marginalization. Being a male/female, man/woman, masculine/feminine, gay/straight does not have any bearing on public, social interactions. Though, unfortunately, race, social class, and gender have become grounds on which to base our further interactions with another.

Yet, of all three of our areas for marginalization, gender provokes some strong, personalized, specific reactions. I think the cause of the discomfort when another is 'gender-different' from us or our expectations is the fact that it forces us to self-reflect. This other acts as a mirror of humankind in which we have to confront why their choices make us uncomfortable, which might provoke unwelcome realizations of self. There is variability in race and social class; numerous races exist and differing levels of social class persist, but gender is still seen as definite. When an individual diverges from what we consider as normal in terms of sexual orientation, it is a natural reaction to view them as the other and not as another, without taking the time to understand the relationships and or self-identification issues that they have experienced up to that point, which may or may not be similar to our own. Continuing on, we dissect the sexual

orientation of select subjects and attempt to view them in the entirety of gender instead of by a fraction of the equation.

Attraction does not automatically imply a latent sexual desire and can just as easily be platonic instead of romantic. This is how we argue the case of Sor Juana, which is more complex than the rest due, in part, to her upbringing and life's work. In fact, we argue that she is asexual. For the majority of her life, education had been number one in her life; it is even personified to the extent of being that which brings Sor Juana pleasure, as evidenced by the scene when her room is barricaded per orders of the Church hierarchy. Instead of demonstrating sadness, annoyance, or anger towards the loss of these possessions representative of education, Sor Juana experiences a physical decline in health. Not permitted to maintain a relationship of affection with an earthly being, Sor Juana substitutes romance with education (i.e. sublimation); she is in love with what her books, telescope, and maps can afford her emotionally. Her attraction towards the wife of the viceroy is purely displacement as we explain in the following lines. The wife and her husband protect Sor Juana in the sense of intellectual freedom; they lobby for the nun to have the ability to voice her ideas, create, and continue in her pursuit of knowledge. For that reason Sor Juana is attracted to this woman; seemingly romantic gestures are displays of gratitude. How do we know the affection on behalf of Sor Juana to be platonic? We are sure because every interaction between the two women revolves around intellectual conversation. In light of Sor Juana's impending downfall, the nun withdrawals completely and breaks ties with the wife of the viceroy. In Sor Juana's emotional and physical world, all starts and ends with knowledge; religion is even secondary to this nun who is more in love with learning than life itself.

In contrast, the sexual orientation of the viceroy's wife is debatable. There is a transparent case to be made for her as bisexual. Clearly in love with her husband with whom she

conceives a son, she also feels an attraction to Sor Juana. Such attraction cannot be explained away with self-involved interests as is the case with Sor Juana. The nun can stand to gain protection from the viceroy and his wife, but what does the latter stand to gain? Attention, yes, but she already gets this from her husband, and intellectual stimulation, yes, but through friendship. Still, she continues to carry certain sentiments towards Sor Juana even after the political affiliation has ended, feeling any affront against the nun as a personal one. This case is suggestive, albeit to a weaker extent than those forthcoming, of bisexuality or at the very least bi-curiosity. The stronger probability is bi-curiousness given that acting on her desires at a solo point in the film does not lead to sexual relations or a sexual relationship. Lastly, it is of certain relevance to point out that any affectionate displays between the two women are confined to the private realm, referring to the time spent together. The women carry on their undefined relationship behind the closed door of Sor Juana's living quarters, amongst her possessions, paralleling the intimate moments reflective of a romantic relationship; unfortunately, no existent romantic feelings can be confirmed because they never come to fruition.

The reality seen between Isabel and Momi mimics that which we have just analyzed between Sor Juana and the viceroy's wife, diverging in one important aspect: maturity. Before going into more detail on this perspective, we consider the similarity in power dynamics. While socially the viceroy's wife is powerful, she is powerless in the presence of Sor Juana. The same is true in terms of Isabel and Momi, where the latter is, by association, the employer, yet the maid maneuvers the emotional strings. Now we named maturity as a point of difference due to the age of our subjects of focus in this paragraph; one girl is an adolescent and the other one is just barely so respectively. While they can, without a doubt, intuit how their needs can be fulfilled in the other, their relationship is not one based on motive. Instead, the girls are

performing in the sense of role-playing. Isabel is a stand-in mother, serving as the object of love and admiration by a younger, love-deprived Momi. Isabel plays her role well, caring simultaneously for the needs of the family as well as the dependency of her admirer. Momi displays her love starvation by way of her actions, which can be taken, we believe mistakenly, as sexual. We suggest that what seems to be a shared sexual orientation of lesbianism is nothing more than sexual experimentation. While Isabel is curious about the attraction maintained between them, she always cuts off their interactions at the exact point where sexuality could manifest itself. To exemplify this, we mention two contextually appropriate scenes, both occurring in bed. First, let us start off by reminding readers that Mecha's frequent location is her bed, a visual element supporting our underlying idea that Isabel is a surrogate mother to Momi. One scene finds Isabel and Momi in bed together, innocently, until José's phone call interrupts the girls and points out the sexual possibility in their location. Later, upon Isabel's preparations to leave, Momi tries to verbally plead and eventually physically restrain the former to stay. Any possible sexuality is, again, suggested then disregarded as Isabel leaves alongside her unborn child's father. We are reminded that attraction need not be sexual or lead to sexuality depending on the situation.

To continue in the same vein, we bring up Lala and Ailín, whose relationship situates itself as more extreme than that of Sor Juana/wife of the viceroy and Isabel/Momi. We see equal amounts of companionship, sexual attraction, and dependence among these particular subjects, resulting in the realization that sexual orientation is of utmost importance as it contributes to defining how the girls/women are connected; in other words, the revelation of orientation establishes the relationship as platonic or romantic. Just because orientation indicates direction, it does not imply that there are not deviations and/or exceptions. Lala and Ailín are at decidedly

differing points along the orientation spectrum, putting the true definition of their relationship in question. We observe, for the third time now, a role reversal in terms of power: the socially inferior subject, in this case Ailín, emotionally controls Lala.

Owing to Ailín's conflict-laden history, her sexual orientation is debatable, so we are forced to make assumptions by what we observe in her on-screen interactions. Although at least two of her encounters with adult men[40] are indicative of trying to overcome father-related abuse issues, we do witness her sexual attraction to men. Likewise Ailín seems to attract and be attracted to many since, on more than one occasion, Lala observes Ailín's interactions with people from whom she does not stand to gain anything in return. If we think of Ailín as bisexual, Lala's orientation is even more shrouded in uncertainty. Awkward in social situations and emotionally distant from both parents, Lala only demonstrates attraction, both platonic and sexual, towards Ailín. It is tempting to defend that the adolescents are friends, experimenting in the same way as Isabel and Momi, but they cross certain physical boundaries which support a theory otherwise: they are lovers. Two boundaries come to mind causing us to lean towards the homosexuality of both; we discount the physical and/or nude scenes between the teens as borderline experimentation. The themes of sacrifice and future are where we want to focus our attention. These are considerations that often factor into a healthy, mature relationship. The sacrifice comes into play when Ailín and Lala are saving money for their return to Paraguay in addition to the situation surrounding the death of Lala's father; the latter reference is the ultimate sacrifice as Lala kills for Ailín and Ailín accepts the culpability for the crime. Then, not only do the teens plan a future together, they also take the first steps towards fulfilling that mutual

---

[40] This refers to Ailín's interactions with 1) the mysterious man whose roles are many: Ailín frequents his residence, he cares for Lala's dog, acts as the get-away driver upon Ailín's escape, not to mention the much hinted at sexual relationship the two sustained at one time, then 2) Lala's father.

promise as they board the bus bound for that exact destination. Theirs is the strongest evidence of a homosexual orientation, not to mention that neither is wary of the societal implications of their actions.

Finally, in a separate classification we have Alex, but first we want to discuss the other half of this pairing, Álvaro. There is not much to say about the latter owing to the fact that he is steadfast in his biological sex and identification as man. His only confusion occurs as a result of his relationship with Alex. His sexual orientation is homosexual, but the biological sex of his object of affection, Alex, calls for a reassessment of his attraction; while this point does not concern Álvaro, Alex is not as decided. We want to stress the obvious: Alex cannot come to a coherent decision regarding sexual orientation until commitment is made on biological gender and identity. For that reason our statement that our subjects must be considered on the entirety of gender holds true: biological sex, identity, and sexual orientation must be mutually taken into account before a comprehensive gender decision can be made. For Alex, an ambiguous biological sex signifies divided desire. As we have discussed, desire is a motivation in and of itself capable of overcoming opposition, but it has to be clearly marked before going after its attainment. The pressures to define sexual orientation result in the eventual disintegration of Alex and Álvaro's relationship since both are hesitant to pursue a situation that may not last; in this respect, they are confronted with the threat of marginalization at every turn, including from parents, the local community, and one another.

So, how do we propose to unite the viewpoints of Freud and Foucault while justifying the importance of gender analysis in literary and cinematic studies? For one, let us start our unification by stating that Freud focused on the individual and Foucault on society, essentially deeming the two a whole of equal parts. Now, let us consider what this whole is; we said in this

chapter, essentially, that individuals are driven by desire. Therefore, to pinpoint the desire of gender is to define the purpose. Why cultivate relationships, why struggle to identify the self, why specify a sexual orientation? Quite simply, we propose that it has to do with human connection, for that desire to feel an unwavering acceptance in another. Cue Freud here, and in his essay titled "Degradation in Erotic Life" from which we take away something much more than the origin of the sexual life; we also understand the makings of a sound bond between two people. He traces the physical, in this case talk of impotence, to being emotional in nature. Freud presents a pathway to what he deems a healthy love, consisting of affection and sensuality; the former is developed as a child (first, in relation to the family) while the latter occurs during development (as it serves the reproductive needs of the individual) (174-5). Then, how do we make the leap from the self to society? If the key to that acceptance we spoke of is love and love is achieved by way of affection learned in childhood from the family, then the path seems pretty straightforward, yet it is not so.

> These fixations of the child's feelings of affection are maintained through childhood, continually absorbing erotic elements, which are thus deflected from their sexual aims. Then, when the age of puberty is reached, there supervenes upon this state of things a powerful current of 'sensual' feeling the aims of which can no longer be disguised. It never fails, apparently, to pursue the earlier paths and to invest the objects of the primary infantile choice with currents of libido that are now far stronger. (175)

Upon that transition from the affectionate stage to the sensual, the involvement of an outside party, i.e. another individual, is necessary in order to project said feelings and comply with the urge for self-preservation. Hence the involvement of society; an individual looking to follow the steps towards love must voluntarily immerse themselves in society to look for another. The aforementioned is the best case scenario, assuming there was no disruption in emotional arrival to puberty and then adulthood; add in that scarcely an individual makes such a smooth transition,

and we have varying levels of competence in terms of the ability to love. And, the method by which love is obtained is often measured against all things gender-related.

As Freud continues in the same essay, culture and society (by our association), is a large contributor to the success of love. He explains that the sensual life underwent a change when society redirected an individual's attention from the physical to the emotional; "In times during which no obstacles to sexual satisfaction existed, such as, may be, during the decline of the civilizations of antiquity, love became worthless, life became empty, and strong reaction-formations were necessary before the indispensable emotional value of love could be recovered" (183). In a counterintuitive way, Freud suggests that it is this taboo, this threat of being on the outside, this risk of following instinct that gives purpose to the process towards love fulfillment. However, as we now see when we cite Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, the road to sexual acceptance was and continues to be a long one. It is important to note here that Foucault focuses on sexuality, taking into account the individual and commenting on their involvement and the control of their body. By extension, we take Foucault's ideas to include Freud since love in the romantic sense cannot be achieved without a sexual element.

In *History of Sexuality Volume 1: Introduction,* Foucault recognizes sex as a responsible party in achieving desire on multiple levels. Yet, instead of viewing sex as latent, he considers it as active and manifesting itself as desire. He writes the following in his chapter titled "Objective":

> In point of fact, the assertion that sex is not 'repressed' is not altogether new. Psychoanalysts have been saying the same thing for some time. They have challenged the simple little machinery that comes to mind when one speaks of repression; the idea of a rebellious energy that must be throttled has appeared to them inadequate for deciphering the manner in which power and desire are joined to one another; they consider them to be linked to a more complex and primary way than through the interplay of a primitive, natural, and living energy welling up from below, and a higher order seeking to stand in its way; thus one should not think that desire is repressed, for the simple reason that the

law is what constitutes both desire and the lack on which it is predicated. Where there is
desire, the power relation is already present . . . .(81)

It is here, in this quote, that I think a connection can be made among Freud, Foucault, Butler, and Irigaray; each speaks of desire fulfillment, going about it from different angles, all including sexuality to some extent. In terms of this chapter and our subjects, as sexuality is understood, in terms of the body or power, it undergoes repression. Pleasure becomes the mediator between desire and fulfillment, but it is not always connected with sexuality. Rather, pleasure comes from gaining a sense of the self. To bridge some of the gaps between our four aforementioned references, we insert brief mentions of Jacques Lacan. Juan David Nasio, in his work *Five Lessons on the Psychoanalytic Theory of Jacques Lacan* has a lesson titled "The Unconscious and Jouissance"[41]: "Psychoanalysts are certainly interested in language, but they are only interested in the limit where language fails" (15-6). Sexuality as it relates to gender cannot be considered as independent from the self; it contributes to it, and thus any decisions made by the body achieve pleasure while moving one closer to desire fulfillment. And Juliet MacCannell explains in her article included in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Modern Criticism and Theory*: "While language . . . makes the subject's body into a *body-without-organs*, what it 'carves' off is something that only its action produces (and that is never fully lost): *jouissance*" (202). Thus, we take pleasure to be fluid in form, in this particular chapter taking shape in how an individual deals with gender and what comes along with it. Nasio continues:

> In order to take account of the Lacanian theory of *jouissance*, I must first recall the Freudian thesis of psychical energy . . . According to Freud, human beings are inhabited by an aspiration—always constant and never realized—to attain an impossible goal, that of absolute happiness, a happiness that takes different forms, including a hypothetical

---

[41] It is on this concept of 'jouissance' that we focus our attention because we wish to emphasize the importance of pleasure; all of the theorists allude to its underlying importance in any of our actions: Butler and Irigaray in terms of gender/sexuality, Foucault in terms of power, and Freud in being able to overcome repression. Lacan helps us to understand pleasure in a more neutral way.

absolute sexual pleasure experienced in incest. This aspiration known as desire, that élan born in the erogenous zones of the body, generates a painful state of psychical tension, a tension that is increasingly exacerbated as the élan of desire is stopped by the dam of repression. The more repression is intransigent, the more the tension is augmented. Faced with the wall of repression, the thrust of desire finds itself constrained to take, simultaneously, two opposing paths: the path of a discharge through which the energy is freed and dissipated, and the path of retention in which the energy is conserved and accumulated as a residual energy. (26-27)

There is a consistent push and pull between power and pleasure that can be read as occurring in a parallel fashion with society and psychology; an individual must gain power over themselves in order to function in accordance with the self and with society. Language is empty if the body does not give it meaning through its thoughts and actions. It is the search for pleasure that can find an individual simultaneously in control and subjected. Therefore, pleasure cannot be considered apart from marginalization; in fact, pleasure leads to and provides escape from being on the outside. The chase for pleasure often times leads to seeking answers from gender; sexuality as a means to an end is also exposed to power along the way. Sexuality, identity and orientation obviously included, are something that a person has to work at, a "performance" as Butler has so appropriately termed it. An individual cannot ignore sexuality because it gives, in part, definition to pleasure. Lacan's approach to pleasure makes the analysis of self mutually intelligible among Freud, Foucault, Butler, and Irigaray: pleasure defines the self.

We note that sexuality has played a role in humanity for years as outlined in Foucault's volume; yet, the interesting trend we observe is a gradual control over sexuality despite the freer status it had known in earlier history: "For a long time, the story goes, we supported a Victorian regime, and we continue to be dominated by it even today. Thus the image of the imperial prude is emblazoned on our restrained, mute, and hypocritical sexuality" (3). We pay particular attention to the last three adjectives that Foucault uses to modify sexuality as they relate to the present, ones with which we work in the subsequent paragraph as we relate them to Butler.

Sexuality went from something explored to something ignored. Perhaps for this reason there is such a taboo surrounding sex; the more forbidden an arena, the more attractive it becomes to onlookers. Unfortunately, this facilitates dishonesty as individuals do not want to openly admit their desires for fear of judgment. He continues:

> At the beginning of the seventeenth century a certain frankness was common, it would seem. . . . But twilight soon fell upon this bright day, followed by the monotonous nights of the Victorian bourgeoisie. Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. . . . On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. . . . A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom. (3)

Sexuality notably lost some variation of the mix between affection and sensuality, resulting in an almost obligatory act which brought with it a great deal of shame. As we read on, the public interference in personal sexuality is more noticeable: "In the eighteenth century, sex became a 'police' matter … A policing of sex: that is, not the rigor of a taboo, but the necessity of regulating sex through useful and public discourses" (24-5). Sexuality underwent a backwards revolution, from being an openly accepted, personal choice to one which has the potential to marginalize. The figurative introduction of power into the household, more specifically the parents' bedroom, did more than just influence personal behaviors; it admitted some practices and demonized others. Power was able to control sexuality, and still can, because it aligns itself with politics. That introduction of the social into the home created nothing more than expectations. Foucault explains how it did this in three ways: "Power is essentially what dictates its law to sex. Which means first of all that sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden" (83). This undoubtedly stirred a fear inside of individuals, probably even a hesitation to be sexually exploratory out of concern that they would be unlawful in their actions. "Secondly, power prescribes an 'order' for sex that operates at the same time as a form of intelligibility: sex is to be deciphered on the basis of its relation to law" (83); to be

more clear-cut, sex had to somehow serve for the greater good of society. "And finally, power acts by laying down the rule: power's hold on sex is maintained through the act of discourse that creates, from the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law" (83). What it all comes down to is that power can be held over sexuality (and desire) because it keeps them silent.

We stated that sexuality is a choice, but it is not one without limits created by power. Sure, biological gender can be seen as a limitation, but not one that cannot be undone; what cannot be undone, however, is society's perception and reaction (i.e. power) towards such a decision. Society needs a definite that holds true in every situation, and that is where gender as classification is born. Definitive lines make it easier for power to overshadow an individual. Freud was correct when he declared that sexuality is learned at home, taking meaning from child-parent and parent-parent relationships. Foucault was right when he claimed that power is exercised over sexuality. Butler is right when she says that gender is performative. Irigaray is right when she says that biology only signifies so much until further considerations must be taken into account to determine gender. Out of all of these perspectives and opinions, we glean the same message: sexuality involves, at the very least, another and more likely others. Sexuality, as dictated by power or as a decision, is always looking to (an)other(s) for finality; finality being in the form of acceptance and/or desire achievement. In *Judith Butler in Conversation*, there is an article written by the same titled "An Account of Oneself". She begins by quoting Adorno: "He writes, for instance, that 'it will be obvious to you that all ideas of morality or ethical behavior must relate to an 'I' that acts'" (19). This is appropriate to include because acceptable behavior starts with the self and how this self deals with repression and desire and fulfillment. Later, it can only seek acceptance in relation to a third party; "And yet, it is equally clear to him that there is no 'I' who can fully stand apart from the social conditions of his or her emergence,

no 'I' that is not implicated in a set of conditioning moral norms that, as norms, have a social character that exceeds a purely individual meaning" (19). Actions lose meaning if there is not a trickle down effect felt by (an)other(s); to take that one step further, gender would not matter if it were not for (an)other(s). Gender shapes identity while relating outside the self because it indicates guidelines; the trouble is when the guidelines become so restrictive that the self cannot be represented accurately. Thus we round out this paragraph by including: "Nietzsche did well to understand that I only begin my story of myself in the face of a 'you' who asks me to give an account. Only in the face of such a query or attribution from an 'other' . . . " (22). We observe immediately the problematic nature of not only gender, but the whole of social interaction; a choice is never really ours because there are subconscious limits at play, i.e. fear of judgment, non-acceptance, being erroneous. If a choice were solely personal, happiness and failure would be reflected back on you. But, there is a chain reaction upon decision-making; you become inter-connected with the people you already have or will meet, impacted even in the most minimal way by a decision you have made.

Luce Irigaray, in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, broaches this idea of individuality in terms of the risks associated with not putting it into practice. She proposes: "And how are we to prevent the very unconscious (of the) 'subject' from being prorogated as such, indeed diminished in its interpretation, by a systematics that re-marks a historical 'inattention' to fluids?" (107). We take this to mutually support what we have said about Freud, Foucault, and Butler thus far: the individual, be it emotionally, physically, or socially, is in constant evolution. This signifies that a definition of any category, especially gender, is not valid as a generality. Sexuality needs to be contextualized and understood for what it means in the precise moment. To say, for example, that Sor Juana, Momi, or Alex are bi- or homosexual implies that the label is static and will

remain unchanged in the years to come. What happens when they mature or find themselves in a distinct social setting and want to identify in another way? They will go from one cluster of marginalization to another. And, despite the fact that Irigaray focuses the majority of her attention on women, a quote located near the end of her aforementioned work is applicable in the case of all, regardless of race, social class, or gender: "If you/I hesitate to speak, isn't it because we are afraid of not speaking well? But what is 'well' or 'badly'?" (213). What Irigaray proposes is not so much the irrelevance of the political in structuring race, social class, or gender but rather the inutility in devising right or wrong solutions. She continues by expressing a thought which parallels Deleuze and Guattari's "bodies without organs" concept in the fourth chapter; "Stretching out, never ceasing to unfold ourselves, we have so many voices to invent in order to express all of us everywhere, even in our gaps, that all the time there is will not be enough. We can never complete the circuit, explore our periphery: we have so many dimensions" (213). The body carries the self and the self's functions are many.

What is the take away from these four contributors? Gender is not a constant and there are greater things which maneuver it. Freud, Foucault, Butler, and Irigaray broach this idea, albeit in personalized ways. The overarching message is that the similarity among our subjects and individuals, in general, is found in our differences, an idea insinuated by just about every philosopher cited in the dissertation thus far. The more attention that can be brought to differences, the less alien they seem and they do not become sensitized. The more diversified the definition of gender can become, the more beneficial the results; expectations and prejudices will persist, but their strength diminishes once they can no longer target a specific group. Our films and their directors demonstrate the power that visual, humanity-related projects have over combating marginalization. As it pertains to this chapter, gender is, as a matter of fact, not the

verbal focus of any one film, but rather as the audience relates to the plots and or subjects, they recognize themselves in these stand-in 'others'.

It is so that we reflect on our subjects and what caused the question of gender to surface. Couldn't the subjects have remained fluid? It is the appearance of the other that requires a performance. However, we do not just take the 'other' to mean one person, but rather the idea has many forms. The other does tend to aid in that fulfillment of desire to which we referred previously; the simple act of relating to another promotes understanding of want in relationships, the self, and sexuality. Collectively, the other acts as a tool of self-realization in terms of gender. As we wrote earlier, gender is largely silent in the films, and would be considered silenced if not for the human interactions; gender, regardless of its emotional elements, is largely social in that relationships, behavior, and orientation cease to exist without another (or several) to facilitate that exploration. We support this idea by quoting some closing lines from *The Fish Child*: "Only when the bus left Buenos Aires behind did they look each other in the eyes. They were sitting there but they were still running. … As the bus drew near the border, the air filled with the echo if other people's dreams, a stew in which, in the end, we all dream the same thing" (Puenzo 161).

To draw closer to a conclusion of this chapter, we want to present two quotes exemplifying artistic gender representation from the United States and Argentina respectively. What we have found with these particular examples is evidence, on an admittedly small scale, that gender (as well as race and social class) transcend physical borders. From an article titled: "Pageant Trouble: An Exploration of Gender Transgression in *Little Miss Sunshine*", we cite: "We argue that *Little Miss Sunshine* is an important text that needs to be theorized for its messages about normalized subjectivities and gendered expectations. Because of its popularity, this film serves as an important representation of cultural norms and ideals since it is through

popular culture we learn lessons about gender, race, class, and sexuality" (Happel 1). Unless we contextualize the referenced film, *Little Miss Sunshine*, the connection here fails to be made; this North American film explores the dynamics of an untraditional, dysfunctional family, touching on several of the issues with which we have worked. As the ending of the citation supports our initial starting point of this dissertation, film (i.e. the humanities) is, above all else, an educational tool to varying degrees; we are not the first to say it, nor will we be the last. And, this notion is not limited to the United States, as we see in the next quotation from "Two To Tango: A Reflection on Gender Roles in Argentina": "Art forms maintain a well-established history throughout the world. Each geographic region upholds particular artistic traditions, thus preserving local and national customs, conventions and practices particular to the art. … Dance, one art form, maintains a particularly rich historical tradition, grounded in the local environs of socially accepted norms" (Maslak 1). The saying 'art imitates life' could never be more valid: expression, read behavior, is explored through varying art forms, not limited to literature or film, but in this case dance, just as much part of the culture; "They [people] are shaped by ideas rooted in cultural traditions of maleness and femaleness. . . . They also socialize with each other on the dance floor upon greeting each other prior to the dance embrace, as well as in the embrace. In each case, there is a wide variety of expressions and actions assumed by both women and men" (Maslak 2). What we observe is that categories such as gender are observed round the world, only demonstrating strength depending on the situation. Paradoxically, at the same time that gender-related issues can create marginalization, awareness within the category diminishes the possibilities to be unaccepted. On that note, we finish here with words taken from Esther Ngan-Ling Chow's article "Gender Matters: Studying Globalization and Social Change in the 21st Century": "The omission of women and the incomplete understanding of gender in a meaningful

and systematic way as related to structural sources of inequality in most mainstream discourses on development, the world system and globalization are problematic. Including women and gender is critical if we are to amend inequality . . . " (455). This situates the category of gender and its residual issues on a larger scale, further reinforcing the need to include it in discussion.

It is relevant to recapitulate some main points regarding our corpus in order to get a sense of where desire originated and if it was fulfilled in terms of the protagonists. In *I, the worst of all*, the restrictions placed on women are most obvious; Sor Juana finds herself forced into a convent due to the habitus expected per way of her sex; her inherent options did not include education, but rather the role of wife and potential mother or religious devotee. To complicate her situation, Sor Juana was not conceived by a married couple and she was of mixed race, both of which worked to her disadvantage in society. It is a benefit that she becomes educated as a nun. Upon devotion of life to the church, sexuality becomes a non-existent life element; as Freud would agree, it is repressed. Yet since Sor Juana does not join the convent with the purest intentions, sexual repression is not something about which she is particularly preoccupied. Her sexuality exists, although it is somewhat latent for reasons already discussed. Fortunately, for her, this is not of much concern since her desire resides within education. She is sexually exploratory insofar as with the wife of the viceroy. The two share an ambiguous kiss, but the truth is never explored because it is not up for discussion; in part, the wife of the viceroy in satiated curiosity-wise but not sexually.

Just as Sor Juana, Charlotte is an educated girl not given the chance to explore her sexuality. Her marriage undoubtedly stifles her self discovery since we no longer see her receiving an education. We assume she grows through the wisdom of her much older husband, both worldly and sexually speaking. Until she realizes that her situation is not sufficient and

decides she stands to gain more via others in the circus, she denies her desire because she is not aware of what it is.

In *Miss Mary* and *Camila*, the performing of femininity leads to serious consequences but desire fulfillment. While it is not stated outright, the price of sexual exploration leads both women to be marginalized; this exploration is not innocent and is done in full consciousness. Mary's relationship with Johnny is inappropriate for the obvious reason and years later we see that the impact of that night has stayed with them; Johnny continues to desire in the form of his enamored state with Mary and the latter is dismissed from the family. Camila sees her desire in Ladislao. At first the attraction appears to be understood within the parameter of the situation: Camila and Ladislao had an undeniable personal connection with regards to ideals, one that would remain on friendly terms. Ultimately, it is Camila who continues in pursuit of Ladislao, though it does not take much convincing for him to take part. Their situation is reminiscent of how Freud stated that prohibition fuels desire. The internal struggle Ladislao feels with his desire is physically displayed in his constant prayers and self-inflicted punishment. Meanwhile, Camila does not seem to feel the same degree of remorse as her partner. As it concerns Miss Mary and Camila, it is the men who seem to be victimized in these scenarios, conduits through which the women come to terms with their still untouched sexuality, resulting in quite the inverse situation. In the end, though both women act in a morally questionable way by societal standards, they do not act alone and are encouraged by an outside party. Ultimately, it is the circumstances under which they explore said sexuality and desire fulfillment that causes their behavior to be so consequential.

Regarding Martel and Puenzo, we see a drastic change in age in terms of some of the protagonists, meaning that we are dealing with younger reactions towards gender and desire.

Why is this of worthy mention? A younger age group is more easily influential and can cast blame. Momi is coming of age and not readily accepted by her mother, a fact that I would argue is due in part to her mother's own mental instabilities. Also, let us add in the idea of jealousy by way of the mother. While surrounded at any given time with many people, Mecha is simultaneously alone. Her relationship with Gregorio has long since dissolved into living partners and no doubt she feels the lasting effects of his affair with Mercedes. In the meantime, she holds on to her relationship with Tali, one which closely mirrors how Momi and Isabel interact; Momi and Mecha depend on Isabel and Tali respectively, seeking in them happiness which they cannot find elsewhere. On several occasions, we see the ironic scenes where the children and Tali occupy Mecha's bed with her as it has become a gathering space, the same bed from which she dismissed Gregorio. Mecha has already ostracized herself from society, and surely that is the fate that awaits Momi if she does not modify her behaviors. The strong echoes of religion in the film, more specifically Catholicism, deem that sexuality be kept to a minimum and desires are not spoken of outright. In addition to possible repression brought on by the conservatism of the community, there is a total lack of relations between Momi's parents; in fact, her parents barely speak and have resorted to sleeping in different rooms. Logically, this adult relationship serves as a model, albeit subconsciously, for the younger generation living in the house. It is, without a doubt, responsible in large part for the cohabitation of the older son, José, with the former friend of his mother and simultaneous fling of his father. Sexuality is subtly explored under the guise of friendship, kinship, or familial love, all of which define the desire of the above-stated subjects; in their cases, it does not have to do with the act of sex itself.

Amalia is years younger, most probably around the age of Lilith. This young girl is seemingly curious about the opposite sex, but without that full desire drive. What put that

curiosity in motion are the perverted, desire-driven acts of the much older subject, Jano. This girl is no longer part of the innocence of her age group, but rather is marginalized in a psychological sense as she has transitioned into the thinking of an adolescent, trying to make sense of her impending sexuality which has been awakened. Until the scene where Jano rubs against Amalia in the crowded street, there is no real mention of desire arousal. Even after the incident, Amalia seems to be more curious about the man himself than anything else. The strong religious influence in her life causes her to view the acts differently than would another teenage girl. In essence, she wishes to get near the man albeit not in an overtly sexual sense. The curiosity remains just that since no relationship is ever solidified between the two; this even holds true for Jano, because despite his actions being lewd and considered an assault, he denies further desire even as Amalia makes her presence known. Lastly, Vero is more so an example of a body than a being in that she is devoid of emotions. In this way, she mirrors Amalia in lacking a desire drive. She is aware of sexuality but it does not play a large role in her life, nor do any relationships. She is sexualized by others (i.e. her husband and her lover), and the object of their desire, but has none herself.

Each of Puenzo's works deal with gender on decidedly different levels. The most innocent, naïve case being *Wakolda*, in which we again return to the interaction of Mengele with developmentally delayed Lilith. Here the relationship between young girl and older man is not as perverted as our prior example; Mengele is attracted to the unusual anatomy and biology of this girl while she enjoys the attention. In fact, there are no sexual implications between them. Lilith seems to view him as a parental figure and confidant. She is virtually portrayed as genderless due to her delays. Desire does not take a sexual form, but rather is based on a relational transaction: Lilith lends her body to science and Mengele provides his experimental growth hormones.

XXY is the film where gender and desire can be broached on all accounts. Born a hermaphrodite, fifteen-year old Alex must not only grapple with desire regarding her biological gender assignment, but she must make a choice as she begins hormone treatments. It comes to light later in the movie that Alex's parents did not make a decision to stunt the growth of one genitalia versus another, perhaps due to fear but also for ethical reasons: there is a strong sense that they desire for her to choose her identity as is evidenced by the talk that her father has with a hermaphrodite living in the community; said man praises the freedom to let Alex choose. All of this freedom is coupled with confusion regarding her sexual orientation. Alex and Álvaro desire to be together, but in differing ways, causing emotional distress for both and total fulfillment for neither.

Lala is reminiscent of Momi. Again, here, we have a teenage girl dealing with desire towards her Indigenous maid. The two teens from *The Fish Child* are marginalized in all three of the areas proposed for this dissertation: the mixing of European and Indigenous, experimentation with sexuality, and a mixing of upper versus lower class. These two subjects, as we stated earlier, may be the only case in which true desire fulfillment is achieved in regards to future and sacrifice. The intentionality behind these teens' actions, relationship, identities, and orientation is genuine within the scope of the plot.

All forms of desire trace back to acceptance found in another and a solid sense of self. Marginalization is found, but more so enforced, when the subjects feel abandoned per way of rejection. What was not said is that in the search for desire fulfillment, rejection is essential to eventual appreciation of happiness. Some of our considered subjects are further than others from the desire they seek, but the constant is the influence of society.

It is hardly an aside to reiterate the fact that all of the directors we are dealing with are women. Therefore, marginalization from a gender standpoint becomes very real as these women can speak about it firsthand. With regards to race and social class, perhaps the women are representing situations with which they have not had personal experience, whereas when dealing with gender, although representation is taking place, the women cannot entirely remove their role. As Butler states in *Bodies that Matter*: "Power operates for Foucault in the *constitution* of the very materiality of the subject, in the principle which simultaneously forms and regulates the 'subject' of subjectivation" (9). As was mentioned earlier, disruption in agreement between self-identified and biological gender is grounds for being marginalized. In *Gender Trouble* Butler explains: "Insomuch as 'identity' is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of 'the person' is called into question by the cultural emergence of those 'incoherent' or 'discontinuous' gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined" (23). It is precisely the identity of those 'who fail to conform' in terms of gender that most interested us in this chapter. Therefore, we focused on how our subjects biologically identify, how they portray themselves, and how they practice sexual orientation, all of which we saw were not without conflict.

The directors tended to utilize females as their protagonists and prominent cast, with the introduction of males often causing disruption; it is reminded that men are further marginalized in a sense because they are not afforded the emotional liberty that women have. The protagonists are moving in an environment where emphasis is placed on sex and gender. Under such pressure, they begin forming their identities relative (or not) to their biological sex. It is when the identity does not align with the anatomical gender or the behaviors do not align with society's

expectations that marginalization occurs. We can argue that none of the works could exist independently of the topic of gender. It is because of societal need for gender labels that a portion if not all of the plots exist to begin with. And within race, gender also holds some value, same as it does with regards to social class. Different races hold the notion of gender to a certain regard, and one's gender within a social class is telling as well.

Now, we question whether race and social class have any impact on the most influential area of the three, gender? It may seem a stretch, but there is substance in pointing out that certain races and/or social classes are more open to gender experimentation. So, as we have differentiated between sex as the biological assignation and gender as the portrayal, this already calls into question alignment with societal norms; if there is a need for distinction between the two terms then it supports the idea that sex and gender carry an equal weight in identity. As Butler points out in "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution":

> In Merleau-Ponty's reflections in *The Phenomenology of Perception* on 'the body in its sexual being,' he takes issue with such accounts of bodily experience and claims that the body is 'an historical idea' rather than 'a natural species.' Significantly, it is this claim that Simone de Beauvoir cites in *The Second Sex* when she sets the stage for her claim that 'woman,' and by extension, any gender, is an historical situation rather than a natural fact. (403)

We note the body as the starting point from which we build since birth. The metaphor of a canvas is useful because one can envision all of the different gendered possibilities reflected on it; the owner (i.e. self) makes the ultimate decision as to what remains and what is eliminated in line with personal and societal beliefs.

Therefore, have we established why it is that any misalignment between sex and gender is ground for marginalization? Because as long as there is the panopticon of society in place, there will be an opinion on the fact that one must adhere to standards or else be outcast. Portrayal of sex and gender in contrasting circumstances adds strength to the argument of doing away with

categories. Going back to the introduction of this chapter, we spoke about autonomy and the rights to one's body. In spite of all the conflicts that arise in terms of gender, especially those of the relational, self-identification, and orientation of an individual laid out in the chapter, Butler sums up the confusion surrounding gender in an eloquent way. In the same *Undoing Gender*, she writes: "My view is that no simple definition of gender will suffice, and that more important than coming up with a strict and applicable definition is the ability to track the travels of the term through public culture" (184). The advantageous side of gender is that it allows for maturity. There are stages of self-awareness that all lead to the decision of gender, although the answer is never arrived to in the same way or at all for that matter. Gender is in constant development, adding to the explanation of why it is so vulnerable to being marginalized.

CONCLUSION

María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo have provided us with insight into the Argentine culture, allowing us as consumers to consider it in comparison and in contrast to what is personally familiar. Through analysis, we have recognized that the social constructs of race, class, and gender blend together to create the social climate in which our films' plots are situated. Rather than comment on any one construct outright, each film opens discussion by showcasing differences; the more deviations there are in terms of race, class, or gender, the harder it becomes to act appropriately. Our collection of subjects functions as representations of the three social constructs. This leads us to the realization that with each new case, be it race, class, or gender related, an ideal becomes harder to define much less obtain. The only way in which to deconstruct and desensitize the constructs is by ridding them of their power; by giving a voice to the outsider, we shift attention to understanding of the other instead of marginalizing them.

As we have continually exemplified through our discussion of the cinematic subjects, existence is far from a static experience. The dynamic nature of identity does not rely solely on the self, but rather on its reaction to that which manifests itself around them. In short, as we have suggested, social constructs are responsible for giving definition to the individual; he/she becomes self-aware while in contact with others. Society, composed of others in relations to the self, is organized and then perpetuated by participation. We know that the way in which organization takes shape is by constructing meaning from situations. The result becomes categorical in nature as society tries to group individuals based on what is means to be a specific race, to belong to a specific class, and to practice a certain gender. Such strict organizational standards translate to exclusion, i.e. marginalization. Our subjects mirror reality as no person can

go through life without feeling the effects of marginalization to some extent. To not be marginalized means to accept the self and be accepted by others simultaneously, an impossible feat given the wide range of contexts present in the course of life. Thus, as our thesis proposed, literature and film provide a constructive outlet for representation of marginalizing situations.

Repression of desire has been a constant in the plots, and it has always taken place in correlation to race, social class, and/or gender. This is why our particular films/novels, amongst several others worldwide, dedicate their plots to these topics in order to give a voice to what is silenced. Subjects are not free to self-identify in relation to the three aforementioned areas, instead only societal intervention is guaranteed. However, in order to combat social pressures, discussion of marginalization deems it less of a threat and more of a commonly shared problem. All of the demands of race, social class, and gender are weakened upon being unified in accurate representation. There is a catharsis in verbalizing or visualizing individual experiences; differences are no longer a fact to suffer, but rather a fact in which to share.

It is fitting to quote an article by Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", as it addresses the psychological effect of a film and its subjects on an audience. It speaks to how film is a text, effective in narration. "The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic" (840). The form of representation, that being the body, allows for an easier way to internalize the sociological references conveyed in the films. We recall that notion of the body as projector; displaying expectations and reactions. Yet and still, this body is required to operate within the contexts of its situations and film (and literature) aid in that process; "Here, curiosity and wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the

human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world" (840). In what we have seen of María Luisa Bemberg, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo, their works are successful because the narrative is familiar to viewers; in other words, the audiences can connect on an emotional and physical level to what is being portrayed.

We summarize, now, what we have learned of marginalization in terms of race, social class, and gender, understanding that the individual is a product of each circumstance. It was acknowledged that race becomes a way of life; it shapes the physicality (race) of a person and initially, if not continuously, the behavior (ethnicity) of a person. Among all of our subjects, race and its implied ethnicity silently exert their influence without much input required of the affected individual. There is a distinct delineation of subjects based on bloodline, appearance, and living situation. Several subjects across the dissertation are representative of the European, fair-skinned, and hegemonic. In opposition are the other subjects[42], the Indigenous, darker-skinned, silenced peoples. However, the threat of marginalization prevails where race and ethnicity do not coincide; said more precisely, there is a desire to appropriate the other and, interestingly enough, this comes from both sides. Three of the most powerful cases in point are Camila/Ladislao wishing to ethnically assimilate to the rural community, Vero being attracted to the Indigenous sections of Salta, and Lala's desire to make a home with Ailín in Paraguay. Ultimately, we note that no matter the race/ethnicity, a desire (latent or otherwise) always resides in what the other has in order to make up for a lack in one's own life. Given the unique geographical and historic situation of Argentina, the racial/ethnic divide represented here is between European and

---

[42] For brevity, those subjects are listed here: the unnamed rural families in *Camila*, those not associated with Mary or her employers in *Miss Mary* (i.e. the inhabitants of the town, the loose women), Sor Juana, those in the circus in *We Don't Want to Talk About It*, Isabel and Tali and the townspeople in *The Swamp*, the indigenous subjects in *The Headless Woman*, Ailín in *The Fish Child* along with the people in Paraguay, in part Lilith and her family in *Wakolda* but especially her father, Enzo.

Indigenous. And the corpus of work we utilized showcases that the so considered 'privileged' races (in this case pertaining to the Europeans) are not saved from feeling the same jealousies as the 'lesser privileged' (Indigenous) and viceversa. The hope for coping with marginalization here resides in acceptance that each race/ethnicity is equal in their ability to offer something to society.

Social class was comprehended as the differing strata divided by virtue of money and corresponding behaviors. The various subjects were grouped by the ideal of the class to which they belonged, i.e. upper, middle, lower class. However, the reality of their situations did or did not rise up to meet that ideal. Thus, behavior became the mediator between ideal and reality and was responsible for perception. While movement between social strata seems common, we realize that marginalization is a more recognizable reality; an individual is brought up in a specified class and those behaviors of which we spoke are learned. The subjects all inhabit a social space and exclusion based on misbehavior is a constant. The consequences of behaving outside of rank are apparent in terms of: Camila, Ladislao, Mary, Sor Juana, Charlotte, Momi, Dr. Jano, Vero, Lala, and Eva. In fact, each time there is conflict, even in the slightest, it stems from stepping over some invisible boundary that the subjects should have intuited as part of their social circles. The take away from social class marginalization is the fact that each stratum has an inherent set of rules necessary for its maintenance; in spite of divisions, there is always a collision between one stratum and another, thus calling for a mutual set of guidelines applicable to all strata instead of particularization.

Lastly, the question of gender is perhaps the most pressing as it demands specification from early on despite having its origin in the equalizing experience of birth. The difficulty here becomes the narrowness of choice, and the marginalization that results if the decision does not fall within permissible guidelines. Some of the elements involved here are as follows: the male

or female sex is chosen, there is a decision to appear as a man or a woman, a masculine or a feminine persona is adopted, and an attraction to the same or opposite sex is formed. Gender encompasses all of these decisions, and seems to have expectations of following in a certain vein; for example, female, woman, and feminine, attracted to men. This is because the body belongs to us and to others (i.e. society), and there are expectations. The marginalization in our film plots surges when the vein is broken, or in other words, when there is deviation between sex/gender/and orientation. Sor Juana, Momi, Alex, Álvaro, Lala, and Ailín are the strongest examples. However, one must not forget that behavior also plays a role, and many subjects do not adhere to the expected behaviors of all that is implied by gender. As we analyzed in the previous chapter, there is an ever-growing way in which to consider the individual in terms of gender; instead of applying one definition, there is a call to expand the definition and allow for its variations so as to recognize all the exceptions, lending less potential for marginalization.

This underlying need for connection within the social is found as a subconscious drive. Race, social class, and gender are informed by the variations of the "panopticon" (i.e. school, church, social circles, society at large). Any desires become repressed based on how things should be rather than how an individual wishes they were. Comparisons and idealizations of the other sever connections and encourage marginalization whereas acceptance acts to the contrary. It has been the goal of this dissertation to argue that film and literature bring attention to the destructive capability of comparisons with the aim of softening the impact. Mulvey continues in the same, previously cited article:

> Jacques Lacan has described how the moments when a child recognises its own image in the mirror is crucial for the constitution of the ego. … Important for this article is the fact that it is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the 'I,' of subjectivity. This is a moment when an older fascination with looking (at the mother's face, for an obvious example) collides with the initial inklings of self-awareness. Hence it

is the birth of the long love affair/despair between image and self-image which has found such intensity of expression in film and such joyous recognition in the cinema audience. (840)

Upon gaining access to the cognition of comparison and awareness, it is not enough to know that the other exists. Everyone from the child, to the adolescent, to the adult desires validation from others. But not just any validation is allowable for a healthy emotional and social life, rather we need acceptance. And we need the reassurance that those others experience the same feelings.

Film is advantageous for its audience; we recognize comparisons in the plots, we find acceptance in the subjects, and we gain reassurance in our viewing of the work. From Oumano's previously quoted book, we cite Martel as saying the following: "Cinema and literature need to suture breaks in the integration of the social texture so we can rebuild a community that was lost. In a way, cinema has become our collective memory, because the entire world has undergone degradation, and we need to work at rebuilding" (224). To analyze Martel's words within the context of marginalization, the lost community begins with the loss of the self; no stable social space can be constructed with a metaphorically solid emotional base. For that reason, film with the dual function of mirror and narration goes about solving the problem of degradation by starting with the individual and being relevant to the social. To further exemplify what we have just stated, we consider Bemberg's perspective as included in Estela Erausquin's article from 2002 titled "María Luisa Bemberg entre lo politico y lo personal". When asked what subject was most revealing of her self: " . . . I'm Charlotte. Charlotte is a metaphor for anybody that's different: a dwarf, a black person, a young homosexual, even a big, fat, ugly woman, who like anyone else has the right to a place in the sun'" (46-7). The effectiveness[43] of film to speak to the

---

[43] We do not deny that all of the different elements of film are influential in the final outcome, especially as it pertains to production (i.e. lighting, sound, etc); these are all at the directors' discretion and serve to enforce their message.

individual does not come solely from the director's ability to imagine and invent their respective subjects or plots, but as we saw in the first chapter, the narrative comes from a more personal place. Bemberg self-identifies with the most unlikely of her subjects because she sees in that artistic representation a metaphor for what she has gone through. As I want to include a quote by Lucía Puenzo to ensure that a complete overview of the three directors is given, I came across a somewhat striking response causing me to consider, in a new way, the intentionality of directors; we mention the subsequent question from José Solís and answer from Puenzo as they discussed *The German Doctor* in a published interview. "How do you make a film that doesn't feel like it's delivering 'a message'? The story is very intimate, it's four people stuck in a hotel, despite the historical context. I wouldn't know how to tell a story with a message, the very idea would paralyze me" (1). As we have said, the directors intend to work with certain topics, but Puenzo's words served to reiterate the fact that audience's perception is beyond a director's control; by perception, we mean how an individual relates to the film and understands it. Upon answering this question: "*The German Doctor* explores themes very similar to those you dealt with in *XXY*, that is we have two girls with physical disorders whose lives are changed by strange doctors, what attracts you to these subjects?"(1), Puenzo replies: "When I was writing *The German Doctor* I didn't even realize how similar it was to *XXY*, it was only after I published it that many people brought this up. Obviously now I can see those similarities, but I think many authors and filmmakers tend to revisit the same themes over and over during all their life. They must be very deep obsessions that come out without you realizing it" (1). Directors find purpose in telling a story, i.e. narrative, but not necessarily in assigning it a task to accomplish; put another way, directors arguably find satisfaction in the individualization that viewers apply to the respective films.

This final conclusion reflects on a dissertation that has ultimately been an analysis of the complexity of acceptance. The discussion of race, social class, and gender as labels is indicative of the pressure to define the self; this realization of self is the key to accessing or not acceptance in its varying forms, more specifically for our case psychologically and sociologically speaking. During the negotiation of acceptance, we have seen by way of our subjects that marginalization is often experienced. These ten films and their respective directors have opened a dialogue about what it is to be on the outside, insisting through these narratives that marginalization is not an absolute, but rather a transitory state eased by way of understanding the comparisons that lead there.

Individuals are comfortable with the familiar and tend to distance themselves from the unknown. However, in order to get an individual to think beyond compatibility, i.e. am I the same race, do I come from the same social class, and do I practice the same gender performances, they must have honestly defined the self and reconciled the result both emotionally and in relation to others. In this way, acceptance is a two-part process. Thus, accomplishing the "autonomy" of which Judith Butler spoke as mentioned in the previous chapter, is as much about being at peace with the self as with others. She explains the following in *Undoing Gender*: "To say that the desire to persist in one's own being depends on the norms of recognition is to say that the basis of one's autonomy, one's persistence as an 'I' through time, depends fundamentally on a social norm that exceeds that 'I', that positions 'I' ec-statically, outside of itself in a world of complex and historically changing norms" (32). The self is constantly in flux among situations and within contexts, hence the evolution of Winnicott's "true and false self". The handling of these two selves represents the resilience of the mental in reacting to the social. "In effect, our lives, our very persistence, depend upon such norms or, at least, on the possibility

that we will be able to negotiate within them, derive our agency from the field of their operation" (32). In the end we note that achieving desires of the body requires "autonomy" of the self. "In our very ability to persist, we are dependent on what is outside of us, on a broader sociability, and this dependency is the basis of our endurance and survivability" (32). Despite the fact that all of our subjects survived marginalization to differing extents, this does not mean that they achieved this autonomy or acceptance in its entirety since it is a long mental, physical journey; autonomy and acceptance can be achieved in spite of others, independently, but it requires an acknowledgement of repressed desires.

There is a certain freedom in viewing the body as excess, material, unessential. As we have seen and as we revisit the notion of the body as a pawn in the management of power, we keep in mind that control can be forcefully exerted on the body but not the mind. And that is why we say that the three subjects of Camila, Isabel, and Alex are resolute, meaning in the emotional sense. Their bodies are subjected to power but they are mindful of the situations at hand. Camila chooses to rebel. She is physically jailed, mentally challenged, and eventually killed. Even in death we hear her pledge her love to Ladislao. Next, we see Isabel choose to walk away. She is rejected by Mecha, blamed by Momi for leaving, and left without a home or job. Alex chooses to be ambiguous. She is controlled hormonally by her doctor, physically abused by classmates, and mentally divided. They all choose to be resolute, choose not to be determined by labels, choose being on the outside; thus, they are the epitome of autonomy, albeit emotionally speaking. The acceptance they experience comes from within, proving that marginalization is not absolute. Butler states in *Undoing Gender*: "What might it mean to learn to live in the anxiety of that challenge, to feel the surety of one's epistemological and ontological anchor go, but to be willing, in the name of the human, to allow the human to become something other than what it is

traditionally assumed to be?" (35) This quote suggests that in the face of (un)acceptance, individuals can revert to separation of mind and body, since, bodies 'may or may not be their own' as Butler also pointed out. In this way we make our transition to the discussion of power.

If we view bodies as just that, marginalization and the effects of power are effortlessly applied. But, to survive being on the outside because of a power beyond our control, mind and body have to work together to achieve that simultaneous autonomy; we appropriate the mind and follow with the body. Race, social class, and gender are groupings in which individuals are placed, maybe to exert a force of power, maybe to keep order, or maybe for no reason other than the continual belief in ideas already years old; the signification of labels cannot be held true if there is nobody to believe. The setting for the plots of our corpus of work is Argentine society. However, it is doubtful that the three women responsible for these works restrict their artistic representations to being a study of solely Argentina. More probable is that the focus of their works is really to study people. We have already answered the question proposed as the thesis statement: we know what happens when an individual does not or cannot belong to a group. They are marginalized, affecting their psychological and societal identity to varying degrees. The effects, more often than not, are negative, although on many occasions there can be some good salvaged from the situation. Though I cannot speak as to why the women decided to deal with such topics, I theorize that they do so because it is not possible to escape marginalization at some point in life. There are too many people, too many categories, and too many blurred lines which do not allow for labels not to exist. Now, being aware or not of marginalization is an altogether different area. Frequently the word itself implies a process with a negative ending; undoubtedly, there exist cases were one can be happily marginalized, often of one's own choosing, as we saw via the description of our three autonomous subjects.

Now, being that we have addressed the importance of mind and body in terms of dealing with (un)acceptance, we gather some remarks from Freud which we deem appropriate in drawing this dissertation to a conclusion. In an essay titled "The Resistances to Psycho-analysis", he develops the idea of 'novelty' and 'primitive reaction' in the opening pages. We consider these two points as relevant because they speak to what occurs mentally when children, adolescents, and later adults experience when practicing comparisons and why they are even practiced to begin with. "The source of the unpleasure is the demand made upon the mind by anything that it *new*, the psychical expenditure that it requires, the uncertainty, mounting up to anxious expectancy, which it brings along with it" (163). This unpleasure can be a step in the right direction of understanding and easing marginalization; it explains why comparisons make for uncomfortable situations. When an individual experiences something else, thinking in our way of race, social class, and gender, that newness has potential to create negative feelings because it is filtered through emotional instability. Thus, a healthy approach to difference is allowing it to process before judgment. As we see in the continuing statement by Freud, reactions when confronted by newness are variable, creating the necessity to gauge individual approximation to comparative practices; "It would be interesting to devote a whole study to mental reactions to novelty; for under certain, no longer primary, conditions we can observe behaviour of the contrary kind—a thirst for stimulation which flings itself upon anything that is new merely because it *is* new" (163). Accepting the new and viewing it as a positive is favorable in reducing marginalization; yet, another factor causes such an approach as we have suggested to be challenging.

In another of Freud's essays, "One of the Difficulties of Psycho-analysis", he speaks about "narcissism": "Thus we look upon the development of the individual as a progress from

narcissism to object-love; but we do not believe that the whole of the libido is ever transferred from the ego to objects outside itself. A certain amount of libido is always retained in the ego; even when object-love is highly developed, a certain degree of narcissism continues" (349-50). Definition of the self requires an individual to go beyond the internal world and look on the outside; we envision an insect putting out its feelers to get a sense of its whereabouts. Once it does so though, it must always retreat with the new information in order to reconcile that with the self. Individuals are at once independent and dependent, causing power and marginalization to work well as they manipulate all of the self and its interactions. Overall, awareness becomes of the essence; specifically awareness achieved per way of cinematic subjects and audiences.

In the second chapter, we posed the question as to whether the detection of marginalization was purposeful or a coincidence. As we have already supported, the directors are not trying to superimpose ideas; instead, their films are open dialogues between the artistic representation itself and the audience. Marginalization is not coincidental because its triggers amongst the corpus reflect the same origin: society. Societal input is the common thread running throughout the plots, implementing comparisons, i.e. pressures, where none need to be. Race, social class, and gender do not hold weight in the successful functioning of society; they are subjective, society can and would continue to run without their existence. They are not measurable in importance against food, water, love, in other words three things necessary to survival.

We have proved that all of these films present marginalization by way of tracing the categories of race, social class, and gender as influential with regards to subject identity construction as well as (un)acceptance amongst others. We have also proved that these categories are applicable outside of film and literature as we extensively referenced research done on them

and the directors' objectives to deal with them. It was argued that our subjects are representing varying aspects leading to the outside. Their cases bring attention to unnecessary comparisons while exemplifying to audiences in what ways coping is possible. We quote Kristeva as writing the following applicable lines in *Strangers to Ourselves*:

> On the one hand it is pleasant and interesting to leave one's homeland in order to enter other climes, mentalities, and governments; but on the other hand and particularly, this move is undertaken only to return to oneself and one's home, to judge or laugh at one's limitations, peculiarities, mental and political despotisms. The *foreigner* then becomes the figure onto which the penetrating, ironical mind of the philosopher is delegated—his double, his mask. He is the metaphor of the distance at which we should place ourselves in order to revive the dynamics of ideological and social transformation. (133-4)

The take-away from the aforementioned lines is the importance of being able to distance oneself from a situation in order to look at it more objectively and from all angles; to react appropriately. Film and literature have the ability to capture the dynamic nature of (un)acceptance. The subjects represent the angles from which race, social class, and gender can be approached and or considered. At the same time, they afford the audience the safety of observation through a third party, creating the self-reflection and awareness so key in emotional and social connections.

We very probably will always deal with marginalization, and its existence throughout the corpus is largely forced on rather than happily chosen by those that it impacts. For that reason, the works are so meaningful. Happiness implies that there is no conflict, force implies that there is. All over the world, the ever present, careful dance between belonging to the 'in' or the 'out' crowd takes place at several points within the day. In the community, at work, at school, with friends, with families, in the presence of strangers, there are opportunities for an individual to find themselves on a continuum of acceptance. The pressure to belong should not exist, and then maybe there would be less bullying, less intolerance, more respect, more understanding. As a society, when we see something of shock value, it causes us to, at the very least, consider making

a change, and at the most, to actually do so. These women, through movies and literature, and those of us in the humanities, are trying to start a peaceful movement towards acceptance.

REFERENCES

Adorno, Theodor W. *Introduction to Sociology*. Edited by Christoper Gödde, translated by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford University Press, 2000.

Andermann, Jens. *New Argentine Cinema*. I. B. Tauris, 2011.

Ansell, Amy. *Race and Ethnicity: The Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2013.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Second Edition, The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Arnheim, Rudolf. "The Making of a Film." *Film Theory and Criticism*. Edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Camila. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, GEA Cinematográfica S.R.I., 1984.

Miss Mary. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, New World Pictures, 1986.

Yo, la peor de todas. *[I, the worst of all]*. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, GEA Cinematográfica, 1990.

I don't want to talk about it. *[De eso no se habla]*. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, Aura Film S.R.L. and Oscar Kramer S.A., 1993.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices [1994]."
http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1458086.files/Bourdieu_structure%20habitus.pdf

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. Routledge, 2004.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.

Butler, Judith. "An Account of Oneself." *Judith Butler in Conversation: Analyzing the Texts and Talk of Everyday Life*. Edited by Bronwyn Davies. Routledge, 2008.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter*. Routledge, 2011.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." pp. 401-417.

Chow, Esther Ngan-ling. "Gender Matters: Studying Globalization and Social Change in the 21st Century." *International Sociology*. Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 443-460, 2003.

Deleuze, Gilles and Féliz Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Donoso, Ángeles Macaya. "Orthodox Transgressions: The Ideology of Cross-Species, Cross-Class, and Interracial Queerness in Lucía Puenzo's Novel *El niño pez* (The Fish Child)." *American Quarterly*. Vol. 65, No. 3, 2013.

Erausquin, Estela. "María Luisa Bemberg's Revolt." *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*. Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 45-57, 2002.

Erausquin, Estela. "María Lusia Bemberg entre lo politico y lo personal." *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*. Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 45-57, 2002.

Foster, David William. *Contemporary Argentine Cinema*. University of Missouri Press, 1992.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Random House, 1995.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. Random House, 1978.

Freud, Sigmund. "Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-analysis (1938)." *Collected Papers: Volume V*. Edited by James Strachey. The Hogarth Press, 1953.

Freud, Sigmund. "Negation." *Collected Papers: Volume V*. Edited by James Strachey.

The Hogarth Press, 1953.

Freud, Sigmund. "Why War?" Collected Papers: Volume V. Edited by James Strachey. The Hogarth Press, 1953.

Freud, Sigmund. "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process (1938)." *Collected Papers: Volume V*. The Hogarth Press, 1953.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Resistances to Psycho-analysis (1925)." *Collected Papers: Volume V*. Edited by James Strachey. The Hogarth Press, 1953.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Unconscious" in *Collected Papers: Volume IV*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1957.

Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny'" in *On Creativity and the Unconscious: Papers on the Psychology of Art, Literature, Love, Religion*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Unconscious." *Collected Papers: Volume IV*. The Hogarth Press, 1957.

Freud, Sigmund. "Contributions to the Psychology of Love, A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men (1910)." *Collected Papers: Volume IV*. Translated by Joan Riviere. The Hogarth Press, 1957.

Freud, Sigmund. "Contribution to the Psychology of Love. The Taboo of Virginity (1918)." *Collected Papers: Volume IV*. Translated by Joan Riviere. The Hogarth Press, 1957.

Freud, Sigmund. "One of the Difficulties of Psycho-analysis (1917)." *Collected Papers: Volume IV*. Translated by Joan Riviere. The Hogarth Press, 1957.

Freud, Sigmund. "Contributions to the Psychology of Love: The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life (1912)." *On Creativity and the Unconscious: Papers*

on the Psychology of Art, Literature, Love, Religion. Harper & Row, 1958.

Gabbard, Glen O. "Introduction." *Psychoanalysis & Film*. Ed. Glen O. Gabbard. Karnac, 2001.

Gasparini, Leonardo. "Monitoring the Socio-Economic Conditions in Argentina: 1992-2006." http://www.depeco.econo.unlp.edu.ar/cedlas/monitoreo/pdfs/argentina.pdf

Graham, Richard. "Introduction." *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*. Edited by Richard Graham. University of Texas Press, 1990.

Happel, Alison and Jennifer Esposito. "Pageant Trouble: An Exploration of Gender Transgression in Little Miss Sunshine." *Gender Forum*. No. 46, 2013.

Helg, Alice. "Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Politics, and Popular Reaction." *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870- 1940*. Edited by Richard Graham. University of Texas Press, 1990.

Holub, Robert C. "Karl Marx: 1818-1883)." *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Modern Criticism and Theory.* Edited by Julian Wolfreys. Continuum, 2002.

Irigaray, Luce. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. Translated by Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill, Cornell University Press, 1984.

Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill, Cornell University Press, 1985.

Irigaray, Luce. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. Translated by Carolyn Burke and Gilliam C. Gill. Cornell University Press, 1993.

Irigaray, Luce. *thinking the difference: For a Peaceful Revolution*. Translated by Karin Montin. Routledge, 1994.

Irigaray, Luce. *This sex which is not one*. Cornell University, 1985.

Jorrat, Jorge Raúl. "Clase, Identidad de clase y percepción de las sociedades desde elitistas hasta igualitarias: Argentina en un contexto comparativo internacional." *Desarrollo Económico*. Vol. 52, No. 205 (abril-junio 2012), pp. 63-93.

Kivisto, Peter and Paul Croll. *Race and Ethnicity: The Basics*. Routledge, 2012.

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia University Press, 1991.

LaBrada, Eloy. "Categories We Die for: Ameliorating Gender in Analytic Feminist Philosopy." *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. Vol. 131, No. 2, pp. 449-459, 2016.

Lane, Jeremy. *Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction*. Pluto Press, 2000.

Lewis, Daniel K. *The History of Argentina*. Greenwood Press, 2001.

López, Fernando. "M.L.B. desde la cámara." *La nación*. 1997
http://www.lanacion.com.ar/211272-maria-luisa-bemberg-desde-la-camara

MacCannell, Juliet Flower. "Jacques Lacan (1901-1981)" in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Modern Criticism and Theory* ed. by Julian Wolfreys. Continuum, 2002.

La ciénaga. *[The Swamp]*. Directed by Lucrecia Martel, INCAA, 2001.

La niña santa. [The Holy Girl]. Directed by Lucrecia Martel, INCAA, 2004.

The Headless Woman. [La mujer sin cabeza]. Directed by Lucrecia Martel, Aquafilms, 2009.

Maslak, Mary Ann. "Two to Tango: A Reflection on Gender Roles in Argentina." *Gender Forum*. No. 36, 2011.

Marx, Karl. *The German Ideology*. ElecBook, 2000.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume I*. ElecBooks, 2000.

Mörner, Magnus. "Historical Research on Race Relations in Latin America During the
National Period." *Race and Class in Latin America*. Edited by Magnus Mörner.
Columbia University Press, 1970.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism*.
Edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Nasio, Juan-David. *Five Lessons on the Psychoanalytic Theory of Jacques Lacan*.
Albany : State University of New York Press, 1998.

Noriega, Chon. *Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video*. University of
Minnesota Press, 2000.

Oumano, Elena. *Cinema Today: A Conversation with Thirty-Nine Filmmakers from
Around the World*. Rutgers University Press, 2010.

Oxhorn, Philip. "The Social Foundations of Latin America's Recurrent Populism:
Problems of Popular Sector Class Formation and Collective Action." *Journal of
historical sociology*. Vol. 11, Issue 2, pp. 212-246.

Rank, Otto. *The Double*. Trans. Harry Tucker, Jr. Chapel Hill: The University of North
Carolina Press, 1971.

Pick, Zuzana. *The New Latin American Cinema: A Continental Project*. The University
of Texas Press, 1993.

Pick, Zuzana and Julianne Burton-Carvajal. "An Interview with María Luisa Bemberg."
Journal of Film and Video, Vol. 44, No. 3/4, Latin American Cinema: Gender
Perspectives (Fall 1992 and Winter 1993), pp. 76-82.

Portes, Alejandro and Kelly Hoffman. "Latin American Class Structures: Their
Composition and Change during the Neoliberal Era." *Latin American Research*

Review. Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 41-82, 2003.

XXY. Directed by Lucía Puenzo, Pyramide Distribution, 2007.

The Fish Child. [El niño pez]. Directed by Lucía Puenzo, Historias cinematográficas, 2011.

The German Doctor. [Wakolda]. Directed by Lucía Puenzo, Samuel Goldwyn Films, 2013.

Puenzo, Lucía. *The Fish Child*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2010.

Puenzo, Lucía. *The German Doctor*. London: Hesperus Nova, 2011.

Rodríguez, Paul A. Schroeder. "Little Red Riding Hood Meets Freud in Lucrecia

Martel's Salta Trilogy." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media*

Studies. Vol. 29, No. 3. Duke University Press, 2014.

Russell, Dominique. "Lucrecia Martel- a decidedly polyphonic cinema." Jump Cut: A

Review of Contemporary Media. No. 50, 2008

http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc50.2008/LMartelAudio/text.html

Salas, Hugo. "Some Girls Are Bigger than Others: María Luisa Bemberg." *Senses*

of Cinema. Vol. 22, 2002.

Salles, Walter Jr., et. all. "Walter Salles Interviews Four Argentine Filmmakers."

Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media. Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 64-69. Latin

American Film and Media, 2003.

Scherer, Fabian. "El otro ADN de Lucía Puenzo." *La nación*. 2015.

Solis, Jose. "Lucía Puenzo Discusses Her New Film, 'The German Doctor'."

popmatters.com. 2014.

http://www.popmatters.com/post/181175-lucia-puenzos-the-german-doctor/

Suites Mor, Jessica. *Pitt Illuminations: Transition Cinema: Political Filmmaking*

and the Argentine Left since 1968. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, and Dialogues.* Edited by Sarah Harasym. Routledge, 1990.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty. Oxford University Press, 1988.

Stantic, Lita, et. all. "Working with María Luisa Bemberg." An Argentine Passion. Edited by John King, Sheila Whitaker, and Rosa Bosch. Verso, 2000.

Sutton, Barbara. "Contesting Racism: Democratic Citizenship, Human Rights, and Antiracist Politics in Argentina." *Latin American Perspectives*. Vol. 35, Issue 6, 2008.

Vacs, Aldo C. "Argentina." *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Vanden, Harry E. and Gary Prevost. *Politics of Argentina: The Power Game*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Virgilio, María Mercedes di, et. all. "Estrategias habitacionales de familias de sectores populares y medios residentes en el área metropolitana de Buenos Aires (Argentina)." *Revista de Estudios Sociales*. No. 44, pp. 158-170, 2012.

Wagner, Berhard and Kenneth McLaughlin. "Politicising the psychology of social class: The relevance of Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* for psychological research." *Theory & Psychology*. Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 202-221, 2015.

Williams, Linda and Michael Hammond. *Contemporary American Cinema*. Open University Press, 2006.

Winnicott, D.W. *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies*

in the Theory of Emotional Development. The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-

Analysis, 1965. http://www.abebe.org.br/wp-content/uploads/Donald-Winnicott-The-

Maturational-Process-and-the-Facilitating-Environment-Studies-in-the-Theory-of-Emotional-

Development-1965.pdf

Wolfenstein, Eugene Victor. *Psychoanalytic-Marxism Groundwork*. Free Association

Books, 1993.

Wolff, Edward N. and Ajit Zacharias. "Class Structure and Economic Inequality."

Cambridge Journal of Economics. Vol. 37, pp. 1381-1406, 2013.

"El extraño mundo de Lucrecia Martel." *La nación*. 2008.

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1040986-el-extrano-mundo-de-lucrecia-martel

"Lucrecia Martel: 'es fácil soportar la estupidez machista si uno la reconoce como

estupidez'."*La Gaceta: Salta*. 2015.

http://www.lagacetasalta.com.ar/nota/28382/espectaculos/lucrecia-martel-es-facil-

soportar-estupidez-machista-si-uno-reconoce-como-estupidez.html

"Faculty: Patricia Aufderheide." http://www.american.edu/soc/faculty/paufder.cfm

"Harvard at the Gulbenkian 4.2." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFxoAb_UQVs

"Inadi: 'Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenophobia y el Racismo.'

inadi.gob.ar/salta/

"Definition of 'native'." Oxford dictionaries. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/native

"Definition of 'society'." Dictionary.com. http://www.dictionary.com/browse/society?s=t

ABSTRACT

THE NARRATIVE OF THE OUTSIDER: MARGINALIZATION IN THE WORKS OF MARÍA LUISA BEMBERG, LUCRECIA MARTEL, AND LUCÍA PUENZO

by

NATALIE NAGL

August 2017

Advisor: Dr. Jorgelina Corbatta

Major: Spanish

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Through film and literature, my dissertation explores the representation of race, social class, and gender in the works of three Argentine directors. These social constructs have become so ingrained in interpersonal relations that there is rigidity in how they are considered. Therefore, those individuals who do not think and interact appropriately with the constructs occupy the outside. The possibility of marginalization adds another layer to the constructs by sensitizing them to the point that they affect the individual and their relationships (i.e. psychologically and socially). However, several representations, such as those that make up our corpus, challenge the definitions of said constructs. In essence, as each representation (case) moves further away from the ideal, it is recognizable that an ideal can no longer be clearly defined.

My decision to use Argentina as the target country was done intentionally to serve as a microcosm of a culture other than my own. Upon analysis of the corpus, the majority of which is situated in Argentina, comparisons and contrasts can be made between that country and the United States. We conclude that the sensitive nature of race, social class, and gender is caused by the existence of the outside; however, representation is challenging and redefining that outside.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Since high school, the Spanish language played a consistent role in my education; however, it was not until my undergraduate experience that it took precedence over all other areas. Always passionate about education, I wanted to find a way to incorporate my affinity for languages into experiences as an educator. During my last year at Oakland University, I studied abroad in Rosario, Argentina for a semester long program. Upon my return, I received by B.A. in Spanish and minor in English, graduating cum laude in December 2011. Not only did this experience encourage me travel abroad, but it also impacted my subsequent career path and brought me to Wayne State University.

In January 2012, I was accepted into Wayne State's Spanish Language and Literature Program and simultaneously began teaching language courses. I graduated with my M.A. in 2014 and chose to pursue my interest in contemporary Latin American literature and film, with a focus on the Southern Cone, specifically Argentina. Within those media, I explore social issues and how those impact the individual and relationships.

I continue to instruct Spanish courses at the University and plan to pursue a career in academia. My research concentration will continue to center on race, social class, and, especially, gender. Future projects include comparison and contrast amongst Latin American countries as it pertains to said issues as well as between Latin American countries and the United States.