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The Experience of Drugs

Utopian Imagination and Virtual Community in *The Rose Seller*

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It is close to midnight on 24 December, Christmas Eve, in the last scene of *The Rose Seller*, the movie from Colombian director Víctor Gaviria. In Medellín, people are happy; there are a lot of presents, Christmas lights, music and fireworks. But Mónica, the main character of the film, is alone and unable to celebrate with the others. She is afraid of a violent teenager named Norman, also known as 'Zarco', who wants to kill her. We see Mónica sniffing glue while she walks through the ruins of some recently demolished houses toward her grandmother's old home. When she arrives, the camera shows the door that connects her grandmother's destroyed room with the rest of the house, which luckily was not torn down. Mónica walks through the room, sits down below a demolished altar and starts to hallucinate. The atmosphere Gaviria establishes conveys the harshness of the material ruins but, paradoxically, in her hallucinations Mónica can feel the joy of her home again. In the first hallucination of the scene, her family has a banquet; they talk, dance and play games. The grandmother, who has recently died, is at the centre of the action, giving some food to the rest of the people. Mónica is excited and goes to her grandmother's arms, but she runs into a sticky shapeless thing that horrifies her and makes her scream.

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Mónica holds some sparklers in her hands and when she lights them the audience sees her hallucinations—but the joy ends as soon as the sparklers go out. In the second hallucination, the grandmother is standing at the door of the house and is calling her granddaughter. Mónica is completely happy. Then the camera shows the sparkler going out. In the next shot, Mónica appears sweating and her eyes are full of horror. Zarco enters the scene, approaches her, kicks the sparkler out of her hand, and gets ready to kill her. While Mónica is defending herself, she hallucinates that she gets up and walks toward her grandmother. Suddenly the hallucination stops and Zarco stabs Mónica. As Mónica is dying, she hallucinates that she walks toward her grandmother and they both hug each other. The camera shows Mónica closing her eyes and dying in her grandmother's arms. The camera then tracks upward away from the girl's body and shows the fireworks in the sky: it is midnight and Christmas has arrived.

At the very end of the movie, we realise that Mónica's dead body is lying in a different house and not in the ruins of her grandmother´s home. The scene described, however, shows Mónica's point of view: she thought she was in her grandmother's room while she was hallucinating. This confusion is important because it shows how the film uses Mónica's hallucinations to blur the distinction between fiction and reality. In other words, instead of being just a symptom of an immoral behavior or social decadence, drug intoxication becomes a means to reach a different realm of experience in order to enhance our understanding of the world and our own lives.

The representation of drugs in *The Rose Seller* is nevertheless quite complicated On the one hand, the movie does not idealise drugs; it clearly shows the personal and social negative consequences of drug consumption in Medellín. Drug trafficking involves extensive violence as we observe in several scenes; the children become seriously ill from abusing glue and some deliriums are quite violent. For instance, when Milton, one of Monica's friends, hallucinates, he sees a zombie that is insulting him and clumsily rushes to kill it. Here the euphoria of drugs becomes a means of death. During the fight, Milton does not care if his opponent is stronger than him or even if he dies; he just wants to kill and, even worse, he enjoys doing it. In other words, Milton's hallucination resembles his life. He knows the zombie will kill him,

but recklessly wants to fight. Milton's way of living—and by extension his drug abuse—where killing or being killed is very likely, is a form of suicide.

On the other hand, drug use creates a kind of community among street children who have otherwise lost a social bond and helps them to make more livable a world where death has become the norm. Hallucinations contain some of the most significant hopes these kids have. Although drugs are associated with survival in precarious social environment, they go beyond this goal because they appeal to an affective dimension that the street children of Medellín are not willing and cannot afford to lose. In an interview, Victor Gaviria notes:

> Previously I thought—and it is true—that the street kids of Medellín sniff glue to fight hunger and bleakness; I did not know that sniffing glue allows them to reach a different time and space than the here and now. I did not know it was a journey through emotions. Making the film, I realized that I was looking for those emotions and spaces where one is happy as well … According to these children, the use of glue produced hallucinations which restore some equilibrium to a mutilated place: the home that they do not have, the dispersion of the siblings, the broken family. Glue sniffing produces a memory about the lost family. In this memory, the figure of the grandmother replaces orphanhood, harshness, the coldness of the world.[1]

The use of glue as a drug allows the street children, as well as the audience of the film, to reach what Gaviria calls *a different time and space than the here and now*, those places where one is happy no matter the social environment where he or she lives. In the movie, drug intoxication becomes a journey through the emotions of those who are forced to live without the protection of a family or a home. It means that hallucinations are not lies or false consciousness. What the kids feel and see in them are not distorted images of life, so the film's representation of their hallucinations lets the audience become familiar with the street kids' illusions and, paradoxically, with their disillusions as well. Hallucinations show the audience those ruined homes that suddenly disappeared or were abruptly destroyed, but simultaneously allow the street children of Medellín to restore some equilibrium to their world and lives. Thus drugs are closely connected to the street children's utopian desire, which helps them remain alive. When the spectators see the kids' intoxication, they are able to reach an affective realm of experience that is usually

overlooked when we study the relationship between drugs and violence in contemporary society.

To address the utopian desire in *The Rose Seller*, I argue that the images of the grandmother in Mónica's hallucinations can be interpreted as what Walter Benjamin calls dialectical images. In the ninth thesis of 'On the Concept of History', Benjamin describes the angel's big eyes in Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* (1921). According to the philosopher, this angel instead of looking ahead—to the future—turns his sight backwards and looks to the past. Rather than the triumphal march of progress, history becomes a catastrophe since what the angel sees is a group of ruins. Each of these ruins shows a painful experience that should never have had to happen as it did. It means that the past is neither simple data nor empirical facts, but rather a memory that is still alive, demanding to be what it is was supposed to be. According to Benjamin, when this memory and present experience get mixed up, together becoming one constellation—a dialectical image—a powerful shock takes place that interrupts the disaster of history. Time is filled by *now-time*, in German *Jetztzeit*, and our existences recover the experience they have previously lost. Since the past constantly reemerges as brief images, which disappear as soon as they appear, it resembles flashes of lighting: 'the true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognizability, and is never seen again'. [2]

In his first texts, such as 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man' or 'The Origin of the German Tragic Drama', Benjamin recuperates images of Biblical Eden and the fall of Adam and Eve.[3] According to him, the world and its objects contain a memory that transports us to the time of creation depicted in Genesis: to the creating word of God. However, when Benjamin is talking about paradise, he is thinking about a time that is before or beyond history—an *ur-history*—since it has never really happened: the *not-yet existing*. Benjamin sees images of paradise as the ruins of failed experience, but these ruins exist inside the world—never outside—because paradise was never a historical fact. The past, *what has happened*, should not have happened as it happened and *what should have happened has not happened yet* since the promises of happiness were never fulfilled. It means that the Benjaminian images of paradise are not what took place, but rather utopian images or, more exactly, those utopian memories that demand to be what they should have

been, but could not be yet. However, this 'ahistoric time' of paradise is historic, not because it has occurred, but because its demands are the result of a failure that really happened.

Mónica's hallucinations are linked to the sparklers she handles. First, the hallucinations end as the sparklers go out. Second, if the sparklers are the keys to the hallucinations, the images of the grandmother resemble dialectical images because, as Benjamin says, these are images that flash up at the moment of their recognisability, but are never seen again. The light—shock—of these images interrupts Mónica's suffering and makes her happy, but the flash disappears as soon as the images come into sight and frustration returns. In order to bring her grandmother back, Mónica sniffs again and again, but she can only see her beloved relative for a few seconds. John Beverley, in 'Los últimos serán los primeros', suggests that the brief illumination of the fireworks also represents the street children's experience of life itself because those are lives without future.[4] It means that the sparklers—and by extension Mónica's hallucinations—become the bridge that connects the experience of the audience with the concrete experience of Mónica and her friends. The brief duration of the sparklers allows the spectators to feel the lack of future in Medellín: the street children will die very soon.

The images of the grandmother, as dialectical images, contain Mónica's and her friends' history—the catastrophe of global society—but it does not mean that the old woman should be confused as a real person. The image of the banquet and the grandmother are not the empirical history of Mónica's family, what we watch in Mónica's hallucinations are rather fragments of the *not-yet existing*. In *The Rose Seller*, the melancholy of paradise shows the rupture between how Mónica lives and how she should live, becoming a demand for social change. This claim of justice makes the future an open experience where what could not happen before might happen in the present. The images of the grandmother refer to an ur-history, to the ruins of a promise that were never fulfilled: a home for those children who are forced to live in the violent streets of Medellín.

The connection between the hallucinations and the demolished house represents the ruin of Mónica's personal experience, as well. Her home was destroyed and now she is forced to make a life in the extremely violent streets of Medellín, selling roses. That is why, in the scene, the external environments are

harsh. The atmosphere makes the characters and the spectators feel defenseless. By contrast, the interior spaces are very warm and represent the protection of the family. Mónica constantly hallucinates about her grandmother who embodies the protection she lacks, but craves. We know that the grandmother is dead and that Mónica identifies this terrible event as the main cause of her suffering. That is why, in the deliriums, the ephemeral presence of the grandmother transforms the hostility of the exterior into the friendly environment of the interior. Mónica's hallucinations are basically an attempt to restore the home she abruptly lost, but her hallucinations are dispersed and heterogeneous. In each hallucination, when the old woman appears Mónica has an ecstatic experience, which contradictorily is followed by great disillusion. As the sparklers burn out, the girl desperately asks her grandmother to take her with her regardless of the destination. The deliriums are very exciting, but frustrating as well. We can see this girl's utopias and her moments of joy; but, on the other hand, the hallucinations show her disillusions and pain.

For instance, the most joyful moment of the movie happens when Mónica is dying. Mónica can join her grandmother in her hallucinations just one time, in her agony, but this joining is very brief. As soon as she hugs her grandmother, Mónica dies. Mónica's existence stops in her hallucination and in reality as well, so paradoxically death is the point of connection between Mónica's utopian desire and her real life. It does not mean that Mónica wants to die or that she accepts death. On the contrary, the last hallucination shows the girl's drama: Mónica refuses to die even though she knows that the arrival of death is unavoidable. For her, the image of her grandmother means life. Monica is anxious to keep her beloved relative next to her, so when she hugs the old lady, she hugs life even when she is dying. Mónica is agonising every day because she faces death on a daily basis, but instead of resigning herself to death, she is constantly resisting it because she desperately wants to remain alive.

Idelber Avelar, in *The Letter of Violence*, reads Benjamin's ideas within a framework of mourning. In psychoanalysis, mourning means seeing the pain produced by a loss in order to overcome that loss and get the Self together. But Avelar avoids the excessive enthusiasm of mania, for example, idealising the modern subject and its narrative of success. His ideas suggest a therapeutic project that assumes violence as a constitutive element of modernity and language. It means that

the narrative of the subject or modernity is itself violent because it hides the painful experience of where it comes from. According to Avelar, it is necessary to create a language in order to communicate the pain. This is why he favours the creation of a virtual space—a third space—where we can give a name to the painful experience and overcome it as a collectivity. Following his line of thought, we can interpret *The Rose Seller*, especially Mónica's hallucinations, as a virtual space where the audience can bear witness to the street children's suffering.

Avelar also makes a connection between Benjamin's 'Critique of Violence' and 'On the Concept of History'. In the first essay, Benjamin argues that there is no link between justice and law and he proves that violence is the constitutive characteristic of law, which functions according to an ambiguous dialectic between *law making violence* and *law preserving violence*. Avelar studies Jacques Derrida's *The Specters of Marx* and 'Force of Law' in order to make the connection between the two essays of Benjamin. According to the Brazilian critic, the great deconstructionist misreads 'Critique of Violence':

> In differentiating law and justice, Derrida's work runs into Walter Benjamin, the thinker who had the revolutionary audacity to discern the legacy of mourning for the defeated as the only force capable of maintaining the future as an open promise. For Benjamin, as is well known, only a full confrontation with the imperative of mourning left by the miserable past can lead us to discern a true justice beyond the law. The remembrance of enslaved ancestors is the best inspiration for a democratic, radically open future.[5]

Avelar, however, suggests that Derrida follows a Benjaminian reading of history in *Specters of Marx*. The spectres are similar to the utopian gaze of the angel of history since they force us to look to the past in order to imagine a future that does not yet have a name. The spectres do not come from successful experience, but from the ruins of experience. It means that the spectres are the returnings of the oppressed experience that historicism hides in its narrative of success (the manic mood), but this painful experience remains alive and linked to the present since it always comes back as the Benjaminian images of paradise, the *not-yet existing*.

My reading of utopia follows the reading of Avelar, but goes beyond it. I think utopias cannot be reduced to a virtual space, where we can observe a painful

experience or oppression. In hallucinations, dreams or the images of paradise, we do not just witness suffering; we also see the possibility of creating solidarity and imagining a different kind of existence. The film shows us that the street children of Medellín can love and have fun among themselves; they have social agency. That is to say, the role of hallucinations is much more complicated than the representation of the characters' trauma. Mónica adores seeing her grandmother. She wants to get into the images, to hug her grandmother, as she did when she died. If this girl were not able to sniff glue and get intoxicated again, she would not have any contact with her grandmother. Without the hallucinations, the world would just be a hostile environment for Mónica and she would have no reason to continue living. Even though her hallucinations show clearly how precarious Mónica's social environment is, they go beyond this because they show the drama of the street children of Medellín: these children want to remain alive in a place where death is the norm. The film clearly recognises the agency of the characters and develops its critique of contemporary society from this agency as the characters struggle to survive.

Although the film becomes a third space where the spectators can bear witness to the failure of modern society, if we imagine *The Rose Seller* as a drug for the audience, it clearly wants the spectators to identify themselves with the characters and not just to observe their suffering. As a drug, the film wants us to enter the images in order to create solidarity with the actors. *The Rose Seller* tries to intoxicate the audience, making the experience of the spectators and the experience of the characters—by extension the experience of all the children that live in the streets of Medellín and of the world—mixed together. The film identifies isolation as the driving force of social exclusion, responsible for denying the future for too many kids. Putting together the experiences of people from different geographical or cultural contexts—the audience and the characters—is the best way to interrupt violence. The street children are not 'the other' of the spectators, but rather fellow human beings. When these kids die, humanity dies as well since what is lost are the lives of people, people who should be too young to die.

Fredric Jameson, in 'Politics of Utopia', considers the problem of utopia within the framework of class struggle. There is no universal utopia because each class imagines alternatives according to its own social position. According to Jameson, each image or utopian narrative is ideological and shows a class perspective. It

means that utopias are an accumulation of contradictory images that co-exist in the collective unconscious. Utopias, therefore, are in conflict among themselves, each utopia denies the other, and vice versa, because of its social class. Conflict resolution is, however, neither 'a choice between these extremes nor some "synthesis" of them but rather a stubbornly negative relationship to both'.[6] If we imagine double negation in relation to the utopian desire in *The Rose Seller*, we can think of the street children's utopias as a critique of the status quo from the lower classes. The image of paradise—the home that represents the grandmother—arises from the non-conformity of oppressed people—the street children—and shows how the narrative of economic success is an illusion, as well. The hallucinations of the street children of Medellín show us how the violence of consumerism wastes not only old commodities, but also the lives and bodies of many people.

The street children of Medellín have hardly any kind of protection; worse, they face death on a daily basis. These kids are the target of great amounts of violence, but also steal and produce a lot of violence. For example, the characters of Choco and Pepón use drugs because these substances help them lose control of themselves. When the two marginal teenagers eat rohypnol pills—they call them *roches*—and mix these pills with alcohol, they become extremely violent; they can steal or kill without any moral restrictions. The main victims of their violence are other street children or marginal people, such as the homeless man they kill or Mónica, assassinated by Zarco. Since the majority of the street children do not have a future, it is not enough to think of their violence as a negation of consumerism because its violence basically brings their own death. The violence in the streets of Medellín is not just the negation of the phantasmagoria of global capitalism, but the negation of the lives of the street children and the marginal people as well.

It is absolutely correct to think the utopian desire in *The Rose Seller* as critique of the nasty illusion of global economy, but the euphoria of drugs is not just the negation of painful experience. As Gaviria says, drugs allow these children to restore their homes; sniffing glue is important for Mónica and her friends because they find a way—in the realm of imagination—to return home. This feeling makes the world, if not beautiful, at least friendlier. When these children get intoxicated, they gain enough strength to continue living. When the characters are sober, everything is bleak and dangerous. Life defeats death in the realm of fantasy, while death is

stronger than life in the realm of consciousness. Drugs, then, are a matter of life for the characters of the film, rather than only a critique of contemporary society. The utopian desire we observe in Mónica's hallucinations is basically a reassurance of life—a demand for a future—in a society that has cruelly spread death, condemning a lot of children to die.

Bolívar Echeverría argues that 'On the Concept of History' is 'a radical, messianic correction to the Utopianism of revolutionary socialism'.[7] Echeverría thinks that there are two forces in tension in Benjamin's thinking. The first one is Western Utopianism, which considers the world as an imperfect reality at the same time that it imagines another world as a perfect place. This is the utopia of modernity. The second one is Judaic messianism, which sees history as a struggle between good and evil, since Jewish history is a catastrophe because evil always obtains a small victory over good. The expulsion from paradise makes human beings guilty creatures according to this tradition, and because of that, people are not allowed to live in complete joy. But the idea of the Messiah exists and He will reopen the doors of paradise and overcome the catastrophe of history.

The double negation between messianism and utopia avoids heroism or any idealistic nostalgia for the past. First, socialist revolution offered future promises but could not achieve these promises because its utopian revolution disregarded the experience of the present. The revolutionary movements of socialism, therefore, did not interrupt the heroic narrative of historicism or the myth of progress and became themselves oppressors. Secondly, the theological language of redemption and its image of paradise spread guilt all around the world. Since, according to Benjamin, the past still shines in the present as the memory of the *not-yet existing*, Benjaminian messianism does not discard either the material world or the future. The latter is the door where the *weak messianic power* appears in order to redeem the former. That is to say that Utopianism corrects theological messianism since the future will always remain open—not as the arrival of the Messiah—since there is not any guilt in nature to expiate and there is not any predestination in history.

In Mónica's hallucinations, we can see the double correction between Utopianism and messianism in global society. When the hallucinations demand to fulfill the promise of a home, they criticise that Mónica and her friends are going to die just because they were born and live on the streets of Medellín. According to

Hermann Herlinghaus in *Violence without Guilt*, the global geopolitical design produces social, economical and affective asymmetries. It means globalisation arbitrarily makes some places safe and others dangerous, protects the some bodies and disregards others. The war on drugs is an important element of global geopolitics that imposes a stigma—guilt—on drug intoxication. In this regard, drugs represent everything the modern subject rejects of itself (the lack of personal control or the 'undisciplined' realm of emotions), but projects on 'the other' to justify its so-called superiority.[8]

Benjamin, in 'Paralipomena to "On the Concept of History"', criticises myths because in their narratives the future is closed. In myths, he says, everything is written and there is no place for the *not yet existing* or any other kind of innovation.[9] If it is true that society should protect the lives of its own children and if we think of Mónica and her friends as not having a future, we realise that globalisation is an extremely violent myth. Mónica and her friends, as Herlinghaus correctly points out, carry upon themselves an absurd guilt, which is responsible for making their lives extremely precarious. But these children are not and never were guilty creatures. On the contrary, the rest of society owes them some protection, at least a shelter, there is not any reason for these kids to suffer as they do. The street children of Medellín, as any other in the world, deserve the protection of a home that was promised to them, but unfortunately has not yet happened.

Second, we know that Mónica imagines a different kind of existence when she is intoxicated. Mónica feels she was expelled from paradise and she wants to return to it. The place where she lives shows the audience the catastrophe of the material conditions of her life. Her expulsion from paradise condemns her to roam the streets of her city. Mónica's utopia does not look for a distant future. She looks towards the past—her grandmother—in order to open her future, but she does not want to make more sacrifices in order to achieve a great promise that will never arrive. Mónica has been living in agony all her life and does not want to suffer any more. Even though Mónica's hallucinations help her name the *not yet existing*—the protection of a home—her deliriums do not bring her the future—life—that she craves. The image of the grandmother always goes away leaving her granddaughter alone in the streets of Medellín.

Susan Buck-Morss, in *The Dialectics of Seeing*, suggests that Benjamin tries to connect two different kinds of thinking, theology and historical materialism, to oppose idealism, transcendental philosophy and pure theoretical thinking. I agree when she argues that Benjaminian philosophy suggests a radical materialism.

> Benjamin was reluctant to rest revolutionary hope directly on imagination's capacity to anticipate the not-yet-existing. Even as wish image, utopian imagination handed to be interpreted through the material objects in which it found expression, for (as Bloch knows) it was upon the transforming mediation of matter that the hope of utopia ultimately depended: technology's capacity to create the not-yet known.[10]

It means that the objects of everyday life are the basis of Benjaminian philosophy. This materiality, however is not simple realism, nor positivism. According to Benjamin, there is a double articulation between fantasy and the natural world. This articulation reaches its messianic climax when both instances become connected in *now-time*. In other words, Benjaminian messianic redemption does not occur in Mónica's hallucinations. Her euphoria of drugs contains her utopian desire and shows the experience of the oppressed, but it does not produce redemption by itself. In the film, the redemptive moment happens when the watchers are able to identify with the characters. This redemptive moment might never take place, but if it does it is because of the mediation of technology (the film itself), which recreates the utopian desire of the street children of Medellín and allows the audience to assume solidarity with Mónica and her friends.

The utopian desire of Mónica's hallucinations becomes a redemptive experience only if a new form of collective experience takes place. The painful experience of Mónica and her friends—without a future—would begin to change only when those who have a future—the audience—identify themselves with those who are in danger of death—the characters and the actors of the movie. When *The Rose Seller* depicts the hallucinations of the street children of Medellín, it becomes a drug, the purpose of which is to intoxicate the audience with the utopian desire of these children. The movie creates a new kind of community, between the audience and the characters, to reassure the quality of life of every human being.

This virtual community has difference at its basis. To defeat social exclusion or economic exploitation and open the future for every person, the audience should not

die nor become marginal or poor, nor should the actors become middle-class or upper-class. The experience that the spectators and the characters—and by extension the actors—might share is just an open interchange, which respects the individuality of each member of the community. We do not know how, when or if this new community (the *not-yet existing*) is going to happen. The audience may sympathise with the characters and redemption will take place, but then they might not identify with Mónica or they may even reject her, leading to no redemption at all. Nevertheless, as technology, *The Rose Seller* contains a redemptive power that at least would show Mónica's utopian desire, which still makes visible the claims for justice—a future and a different kind of existence—for those who are condemned to die very young on the streets of Medellín.

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that *The Rose Seller* is not a manual of morality or of politics. First, because it would deny the painful experience of Medellín to offer a promise of a remote future. Second, because this manual would sacrifice the present for a transcendental future that will never take place. Third, it would reify abstract and sociological explanations that could not respect the radical materialism of experience. It means that the main purpose of the film is to recuperate the voice of the children of Medellín to link their experience with that of the audience. *The Rose Seller*, rather than being just a negative critique of contemporary society, offers a new understanding of collective experience. The street children's hallucinations become an important tool to create this new community where the future remains open for everybody.

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[1] Carlos Jáurequi, 'Una entrevista a Víctor Gaviria', in Mabel Moraña (ed.), *Espacio urbano, comunicación y violencia en América Latina*, Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, Pittsburgh, 2002, p. 228. Author's translation.

[2] Walter Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History', in Howard Eiland and Michaels W. Jennings (eds), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings*, vol. 4, 1938–1940, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2003, p. 390.

[3] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, Verso, London and New York, 1998; Walter Benjamin, 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man', in Howard Eiland and Michaels W. Jennings (eds), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913–1926, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2004, pp. 62–74.

[4] John Beverley, 'Los últimos serán las primeros': Notas sobre el cine de Gaviria', in Duno-Gottberg, Luis coord, *Imagen y subalternidad, el cine de Víctor Gaviria*, Cinemateca Nacional de Venezuela, Caracas, 2003, p. 19.

[5] Idelber Avelar, *The Letter of Violence: Essays on Narrative, Ethics, and Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 88.

[6] Fredric Jameson, 'Politics of Utopia', *New Left Review*, no. 25, January–February, 2004, p. 50.

[7] Bolívar Echeverría, *La mirada del ángel, sobre el concepto de la historia en Walter Benjamin*, Editorial Era, México DF, 2005, p. 12.

[8] Hermann Herlinghaus, *Violence without Guilt: Ethical Narratives from the Global South*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2009, pp. 8–29.

[9] Walter Benjamin, 'Paralipomena to "On the Concept of History"', in Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (eds), *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings*, vol. 4, 1938–1940, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2003, p. 403.

[10] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing, Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, pp. 114–15.