

English translation by Margaret Cerullo:

Still full of the emotions provoked by these stupendous short films that we had the great luck and privilege to see, I write to thank you: in a special way to thank Anto for sharing with us; Margaret and Sujani for having made it possible; and Edith and Michelle for their company.

I couldn't let it pass without offering my thanks for something so special, and for the following reasons-- messages from the heart to the brain.

The first thing that I appreciate and value is the collection in its entirety, ie., the precise, sensitive, and intelligent manner of ordering the films so that the whole is a collection that flows in its similarities and differences, bringing to mind the Zapatistas' "We are the same because we are different." From the telluric dimension in the Atacama desert—that since *Nostalgia For the Light* (but not only) is more than only a desert--to the end where the new generations are represented in the testimonios of the three or four voices returning to reencounter Chile waking up, again. And, more still, the first fleeting images arrive with a message from the depth of the earth, in a *deja vu* of the first times to shake us out of the arrogance of believing that we are the masters and lords of the earth we inhabit.

In successive images, the trace of the human can only be glimpsed in the garden bed shaken by countless winds. Nothing else. It is the earth, not Planet Earth. The human comes after, manifesting itself as history in Chile, which is already to say, in struggle. And from there, the shorts, some more than others, follow the unceasing clamour of a people, though unceasing as well is its negation: repression. The contrasts between the people in the street, bearers of dignified rage, and the uniformed forces there to kill and repress, reveal the Chilean Calvary--from the massacre of Iquique, through Pinochet, to our own day. The brutality doesn't cease, but neither does rebel dignity. This is shown in a profound way both by banners and the voices of women: "This is not the way." Then, in the same register of contrasts, the now, woven from the before and after, in the format of cellphone recordings when they didn't exist but through the genius of the young men or women who record or edit the images, the times crisscross in the same streets, crowds and repressions, remembering in all those present those who were piled up in the past: "This isn't the way," señores, this is not the way to treat life." As at the beginning, instantaneous images and lighting flashes bombard La Moneda. My heart weeps. And these aren't special effects a la Hollywood where everything is fabricated, including emotions. No. This is the aesthetic of an ethics that shakes the conscience. Or the ethics of the aesthetic because those who manipulate the camera or the cell phone create from indignation these small monumental works of art that awaken memory. And from the everyday, where dignity becomes habit, in the middle of the supposed looting, just evil cops twisting reality--all captured by the camera.

As if each short was a chapter of something greater, the images follow one another kaleidoscopically. When recalling them one loses the sense of each one. You would have to watch again one by one, separately, allowing for pauses and silence to digest them and immerse oneself

in the fullness of each one.

From the vantage point of age, I see a fast flowing river of short films. I am on the shore but I want to submerge myself in their waters, then Violeta, the anxiety of Violeta in all that the images capture: what will the father say? The magic of the short film is that with Violeta mediating, images are released in black and white that show us and continue showing us what we are somehow already aware of: the absurdity and irrationality of power. But the shorts never remain only at that, or they do so in a way in which the political, in a fresh and profound way, recuperates us. There above, all evil is minimized, for sure. And, by chance the Zapatista word for those who same ones who minimize our existence jumps to mind: “And what of the dead, our dead, so mortally dead of “neutral” causes, ie., of measles, whooping cough, of dengue, cholera, typhoid, mononucleosis, tetanus, pneumonia, malaria and other gastrointestinal and pulmonary niceties? Our dead, so many dead, so democratically dead of shame because nobody did anything, because all the dead, our dead, just departed like that, without anyone keeping track, without anyone saying at last ENOUGH! (“What do they have to pardon us for?” EZLN, January 1994)

And haven't we already seen what it cost Salinas de Gortari in Mexico who tried to minimize the Zapatistas?

The images in the shorts of the ways power minimizes us are in the same moral registrar. It is said that beauty resides in being able to reveal the profound through simplicity. Each one of the shorts is like that: simple and conclusive. Never straightforward, nor complicated. With its varying rhythms, its rhythmic culture is more like rap, it is its “rap episteme,” that constructs these visual works of art. And so much adrenaline that even the X-rays are put in evidence and everything passes through them in a metaphor of the reality that culminates with the wounded eyes. Paradoxes of rebellion!! Now they don't only see, but they look.

Didn't they get a lump in their throats when they counted the 43? The solitary choreographies, walkers through streets and desolate alleys. That desolation of gray cement that crosses its existential meaning, always forward, without stopping; evoking the hurry of the modern or postmodern individual, or whichever, but also Kafka's dead end that we all carry within. After, we are no longer, or in the emptiness, we give space to our ghosts. Uninhabited world which is another way of saying only inhabited by Me. And so between these images and those of the end there isn't a great difference. Do we inhabit the void or does the void inhabit us? It is more than a disturbing metaphor.

Night time. As its name indicates, or what the image indicates.

But also October, with all of its rebellious, unruly charge (if Chile was and continues to be rebellious, the same October in Ecuador was unruly). And the most human in the gesture of solidarity: the mothers provide food for their children in the “primera linea.” Whoever made that short wonders whether hope awakens us? At this point in this overflowing river of shorts, hope is the wind that lifts the sails.

Before it became populated, the world was chaos, “in those times when there wasn’t yet time” but after, we were born. We were made from corn, says the Popol Vuh in these Mayan lands shared with our compañeros de HIJOS Guatemala. And the Mapuches! From what did their gods make them, so that liberty and dignity mean the same as to the Mayans? In the few images, the Mapuches say it without hesitating, provoking in my mind the magic of the image of the woman who dances alone surrounded by so many people, a wise woman. It is not a man. She composes everything around her in the sacred ceremony. The images are eloquent and don't need an anthropologist. The images call to us, touch our hearts, not our minds.

Finally, in my way, I have made my own interior ceremony, thanks to this collection of shorts. It steps in my heart nourishing my mind, and for this KOLAVALIK! (thank you in tsotsil)