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Argentine "Dirty War" : Human Rights Law and Literature

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The Argentine "Dirty War": Human Rights Law and Literature

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LL.M Thesis 1997

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LL.M in International Legal Studies
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"Everyone who has worked for the struggle for human rights knows that the real enemy is silence." - William Barker

INTRODUCTION

In 1973 Gen. Juan Domingo Peron was voted into office as President of Argentina after an 18 year exile. He died the following year in 1974 when his second wife, Isabella Peron, served as his successor. In 1976 the military overthrew Isabella Peron as part of their "calling" to restore law and order to a chaotic Argentina. To do so, the military declared an all out war on any sectors of life which could be viewed as a threat to the maintenance of military rule. This objective, officially known as the "Proceso" but dubbed by the public as the "dirty war," lasted from 1976 to 1983 when democracy was finally restored to rebuild the aftermath of the Argentine economy, society and morale caused by the Malvinas/Falkland Island defeat by Great Britain. It was the most abusive regime to rule Argentina in its history. During its course, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Argentines including women and children of all walks of life were "disappeared" by the military dictatorship led by the government of Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla.

"Disappeared" is a euphemism for being kidnapped and imprisoned for life or killed "unofficially" by clandestine paramilitary death squads. The jails of Argentina were full of innocent political prisoners who were being held without trial and subject to torture sessions which aimed to extract confessions of subversion or information of the opposition movement. There were no public records of the imprisonments and deaths and the majority of the victims were not given reason as to why they were being detained.

During these years of violent suppression, the military government operated under the assumption that "anyone who makes demands or speaks out against the state or who is thought to clash with the authoritarian nature of the government and/or overshadow it must be subject to a systematic persecution of dissenters." Most of these victims were well respected, scholarly, outspoken individuals who either publicly or

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2 *From Dependency to Development*, p. 141; hereafter cited in text as *FDD*.
privately identified (or were thought to identify) with attitudes and opinions that go against the military regime in power. Consequently, many "intellectuals:" students, professors, authors, social workers and a host of others were murdered on the mere suspicion that they would one day threaten the regime.

*People were aware of the fate of the prisoners but they would have preferred not seeing them, just as the majority of the people were lost in the silence that no one dared break.*

Today many Argentines are too ashamed to face the atrocities that persisted in their country. Many deny that the "dirty war" ever happened. Unlike all other Latin American nations, Argentina is composed largely of a white European population. When the Italians and Spaniards settled the nation they killed off virtually all of the indigenous population and brought Western culture, values and institutions to Argentina. Consequently, the population is exceedingly ethno-centric on a whole and considers themselves to be socially, culturally and politically superior to their "backwards and primitive" indigenously populated neighboring nations. The Argentines considered themselves "civilized" and above being capable of committing massive, barbaric atrocities on a national scale. With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand why the Argentines try to deny this unfortunate chapter in their history. Those who do/did protest what was and is a reality are in the minority. For example, Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (The Mothers), who to this day organize and protest regularly the disappearances and demand to know what happened to their disappeared sons and daughters and their whereabouts (whether dead or alive) are viewed by the majority of the Argentine public as "communists," "trouble makers," and "hot heads."

*If we recognize a certain continuity between the stage of domination and the stage of liberation in any social-historical process, then why deny the importance of literature in its possible revolutionary functions of exploring, rebelling, and disseminating our true identity or its thousand possible projections (TWAHR, p. 15).*

Fighting against the wind of an apathetic, ashamed and feeble public, many writers of Argentine descent and elsewhere have boldly struggled to "tell the truth" through their novels. Julio Cortazar, Manuel Puig, Humberto Constantini, Luisa Valenzuela, Jacobo Timerman, Haroldo Conti, Lawrence Thornton, Andrew Graham-Yool, 

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3 *We Love Glenda So Much,* p. 37; hereafter cited in text as WLG.
Marta Traba, Alicia Ortiz, Griselda Gambaro, Marcos Aquinis and many others have used literature to combat the greatest enemy that still lingers in and threatens Argentina: a continued silence.

It is the goal of this study to understand the "dirty war" in Argentina through an exposure to and understanding of the myriad of "social protest literature" and the development of human rights legislation both within Argentina and on a world scale. Not only is it important to the reader and his larger society to gain exposure to the truth behind history and humanity which is mirrored through such laws and works but, on a larger scale, such a reflection will hopefully illuminate how crucial a role law and literature plays as the central nerve cell of the living memory of a people as it is passed down from generation to generation. "To enter one's country," states human rights activist and author Mumtaz Soysal at an Amnesty International convention, "the only pass that literature needs is to be in someone's memory" (THWC, p. 96).

This essay will focus on a number of legal treaties, conventions, court decisions, legislation and authors and their works which tell the truth of the "dirty war." It will discuss not only collective and individual themes found in such a diverse body of law and literature, but it will continue to focus on the development of such human rights laws as well as styles, narrative points of view, literary techniques, and the significant effects of these works. How does the author help shatter the silence through his work(s)? What laws have come about because of this tragedy that will place a barrier to human rights abuses within Argentina and the international community at large? These and a variety of other crucial issues will be addressed in the following study of contemporary human rights law and literature of the "dirty war" in Argentina.

The laws and works reviewed for this study vary greatly in format, length, intention, style, impact, sociopolitical orientation and point of view. The one common denominator among them is that they all deal with the same subject matter in their effort to break a dangerous silence. Ultimately, the understanding of these laws and the techniques and themes which persist within "dirty war" literature will be analyzed on a larger scale which distinguishes social protest laws and literature in favor of human rights in Argentina from all other bodies of law and literature.

I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS: WITHIN ARGENTINA AND WITHIN THE WORLD COMMUNITY
The "Dirty War" was made possible in part due to a dearth of human rights laws both within Argentina and throughout the Latin American regions. It is unfortunate that such vile human rights abuses such as the disappearances were necessary to later bring about such laws. The following will consist of a historical outline of the framework of post "proceso" human rights laws and legal issues which have followed from this tragic episode. From the regional treaties ratified soon after the military dictatorship to the March 1997 arrest warrant of General Leopoldo Galtieri issued by a Spanish judge, we see that the legal effects of this dark period are still in motion and will continue to develop into the distant future.

A. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The horrors of the dirty war helped pave some very crucial international treaties supporting human rights. For example, the Vienna convention on the Law of Treaties was concluded in May of 1969 but not ratified until January of 1980, shortly after the international community's discovery of the human rights abuses by the Argentine military.

Ironically and perhaps not coincidentally, The Vienna Convention on the Succession of States in respect of Treaties was entered into in 1978 during the proceso. Again, many scholars believe that this was facilitated by those diplomats with knowledge or at least suspicion of the human rights abuses in Argentina at that time.

A more direct international decision stemming from the proceso is found in the 1980 United States Federal decision of Filartiga v. Irala, 630 F.2d 876(2nd Cir.) In that decision the courts examined political prison conditions in Latin America (focusing mostly on Paraguay and Argentina) to hold that torture may be considered to violate the law of nations for purposes of the Alien Tort Statute. This decision in part was handed down in an effort to strengthen the impact of the Universal Declaration on the Protection of all Persons of 1975 which was ignored by the junta in Argentina. This court mandated that this would no longer be the unfortunate case as the court stated "A declaration of the United Nations is a formal and solemn instrument, and can be considered an authoritative statement from the international community."

Just as in the aftermath of Nazi Germany, following the Proceso, the world was issued a harsh "wake up call" in which the international community through decisions like Filartiga and the Alien Tort Claims Act, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Accords as well as the U.N. Charter which stress that no State nor government is
above these Human Rights agreements and that the international community simply will not and cannot accept breaches of such again.

From this, it appears that the message the international community has delivered in the wake of the disappearances is that today, Human Rights laws presuppose that it is dangerous and unacceptable to allow a State to have exclusive review of their own Human Rights policies in lieu of an international review in accordance with the accepted treaties and provisos. This is evident in the issuance of the recent Draft Articles on State Responsibility proposed by the International Law Commission.

Recent ratifications by Argentina of the International Covenant on Economic Cultural and Social Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Racial discrimination have demonstrated that world pressure and possibly a bit of a conscience has pushed Argentina into accepting obedience of international human rights standards. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, founded in large part as a watchdog to prevent a repeat of the dirty war in Argentina or anywhere in the Americas, has reported that Argentina has made great strides towards fulfilling its international human rights obligations. Somewhat recently, the acceptance on the part of Argentina of the 1987 Declaration of the Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religious beliefs show that this trend has continued for the past decade.

Article 19 of the Articles on State Responsibility deals with International Crimes and Deeds. It has been considered to be the most controversial article. This article is harsh but necessary. It simply declares that any State which breaches an interest which has been spelled out in an internationally recognized Human Rights which involves the commission of an act which is considered as a crime by the international community at large, is a wrongful act which constitutes an "international crime." The article goes on to cite aggression, colonial domination, apartheid, human rights violations and even pollution as the undesirable products of such a breach. Therefore, the article contains built in justifications for its own existence.

Article 19 is just a draft provision at the time of the writing of this essay. Today, the U.N. charter is silent on abduction/extradition matters to enforce penalties against violators. The above mentioned treaties are what have "teeth" today. Also cases such as Filartiga and even Sanchez-Espinoza v. Reagan 586 F. Supp 596 (D.D.C. 1983) in which the U.S. court held that agents of a state may not inflict physical suffering of a detainee or else a customary international rule has been per se violated.

The fact that the U.S. courts in such cases seem to be the vehicle which mandates adherence to human rights abuses apart from the few well entrenched treaties such as the
U.N. Charter and the Alien Tort Act, this leads to many complex issues. Is the U.S. court to be a world moral check? Does the U.S. Supreme court take on the character of an international tribunal? Is this court best equipped to foster world policy by its precedent settings? Many critics contend that the answer to this should be "yes" due to the U.S. courts ability to serve as instigators of public awareness due to the constant and pervasive world media attention attached to it. Others contend that this is not the role of the U.S. or any one state as it leads to ethnocentricity and a dearth of plurality of "voices" in the international arena and that the U.S. simply has no valid claim to act as the self-appointed foreign policy coordinators to the world at large. This inquiry leads to a discussion on jurisdiction of the U.S. courts, the Argentine courts and the international tribunals.

B. JURISDICTION OF VARIOUS TRIBUNALS OVER ARGENTINA

Since Nazi Germany, it has been commonly accepted that strictly territorial rules, under which nations may take actions only with respect to persons/conduct only within their borders serves no one in the prevention of human rights abuses. This is because the notion of Human Rights has gained firmest ground in the West and the corpus of human rights law exists there. When General Videla came into power in March of 1976, he voided all previous constitutions which promised that "personal liberty was inviolable." In such an instance, without being amenable to the jurisdiction of the West (or any other such jurisdiction) the population of Argentina is virtually unprotected from 1930's style ruthless fascism and horrific abuse. This is precisely the atmosphere that allowed the human rights abuses to continue in Argentina. Besides, the nature of the crime of "disappearances" was such that the constitution may have been ineffectual had it retained its mandates. After all, these people who were "disappeared" never officially existed, so any constitutional protections were inapplicable to these "non-beings."

It is important to remember that like Nazi Germany, when Argentina stripped its citizenry of its constitutional protections, it was not a "third world" or sparsely developed country. Argentina was among the more prosperous and industrial societies. At one point, before the proceso, it was the richest country on earth. If such an advanced society cannot find itself with laws to protect its citizenry in a time of crisis and implementation of draconian military rule, than how can it be said that no reciprocal or even unilateral jurisdiction with the West could be healthy for such a state?

The elimination of human rights internally from the reach of the populace spun a devastating downward spiral for the country's citizenry. The new military courts interpreted the new "non-rights" of the public in its own draconian tradition. "When courts apply the law of the authority from which they draw their own power they derive
their authority from the same source as does that evil government and may not practically end up ruling in the contradiction of that state of authority. In sum, no checks and balances paves the way for horrific human rights abuses. Amenability to outside jurisdiction was all that the Argentine citizens had to save them.

In the West, the importance of any state making itself come within the jurisdiction of a historically progressive and free state with a good human rights record was emphasized in the U.S. decision of United States v. Aluminum Co. of America, 148 F.2d 416 (2d Cir. 1945). In that decision, the court declared that it is indeed a sticky interpretation when it comes to jurisdictional problems between states, but in the end all states are safer and benefit from reciprocal jurisdiction. The International Courts followed suit in The S.S. Lotus case in which the Court of International Justice held that there was no principal of international law which precluded one state (Turkey) from prosecuting a person from another state (France) for committing an offense that had negative effects in the first state's (Turkey's) territory. However, when the effect of the malevolent government is totally within Argentina, the appropriateness of outside jurisdiction becomes much more tenuous.

Even assuming there is the sufficient nexus to prosecute Argentine war crimes in a state abroad, the reality remains that it is very difficult to compel Argentine defendants to participate in these proceedings as we will explore in the contemporary cases of French, Spanish and U.S. plaintiffs against Argentine human rights abusers. Another example of this is the continuing failure of the U.S. courts to prosecute successfully the DeBeers diamond monopoly under Antitrust violations of the diamond trade. Further, should a state succeed in obtaining jurisdiction over the Argentine defendant, that defendant may make an argument that the law of the military during the proceso is the law that need be applied to the case!

The court in United States v. Fawaz Unis, 924 F.2d 1086 (1991) has held that it is against well settled international law to allow a state to deny extraterritorial effect of its criminal jurisdiction. That same year the court expanded on this theme in United States v. Humberto Alvarez-Machain, 112, S.Ct. 2188 (1991). In that case, a drug smuggler refused to surrender to S. jurisdiction pursuant to an extradition treaty. Thus, U.S. authorities abducted the defendant and he contested the abduction on the extradition preclusion ground and lost. The court declared extradition does not prohibit abduction. This decision helped facilitate the "hunting" and bringing to justice both Nazi and Argentine military war criminals.

Interestingly, 1989 and 1992 saw two major international jurisdiction decisions involving Argentina. The Supreme court hear the 1988 case of Argentine
Republic v. Amerada Hess Shipping Corp., 488 U.S. 428 in which a Liberian corporation chartered a vessel which was damaged during the Falklands/Malvinas war. Plaintiff sued Argentina for the damages. The court held that the Alien Tort Statute does not confer jurisdiction over foreign states and that Argentina can claim immunity under the Sovereign Immunities Act to suit in a U.S. court. Of course, this hurts the chances of bringing human rights abuse cases against Argentine defendants in Argentina by plaintiffs who have been exiled or have left that country. Later, in Republic of Argentina v. Weltover, Inc. 112 S. Ct. 2160 (1992) the court faced the same issue but as pertaining to a civil dispute in which it was claimed that Argentina did not make good on its bonds. In that scenario, the Supreme Court made an exception to its decision in Amerada Hess and declared that the Argentine government may be sued in a U.S. court because this was a civil matter and had a substantial effect in the United States. Of course, these elements do not help in the processing of a claim for human rights violations by one residing in the U.S. as against a former military human rights abuser from the dirty war.

Although on balance, jurisdiction is not favorable to an outside plaintiff claiming human rights abuse by the regime, these cases today have posed some of the most fascinating legal issues on international jurisdiction for human rights abuse to date.

C. RECENT EXAMPLES OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN OUTSIDE JURISDICTION AND ARGENTINE DIRTY WAR ISSUES

Those whom seek legal recourse against the human rights violations of the military rule between 1976-1983 in Argentina do not look to the "unfriendly" Argentine courts. This is largely due to the fact that the current Menem government discourages debate and inspection of this dark period. The Menem administration has repeatedly failed to comply with the call from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to account for the estimated 30,000 "disappeared". Further, Mr. Menem enacted several laws and decrees between 1989-1991. Today, all but the highest ranking members of the proceso have been pardoned.

In light of the government's policy of turning a "blind eye" on this episode, most victims who seek redress are doing so through courts of other states. Of course, jurisdiction is a large issue here. Nevertheless, some notable plaintiffs have met certain success attacking the Argentine military government of the late 1970's and early 1980's. These cases are: The Jose Siderman case, the "French Nun Murder Case," The Spanish Defendant Class Action against the Military and the 1997 arrest warrant of Leopoldo Galtieri. The following will consist of an examination of each of these current episodes.
1. Jose Siderman v. Argentina, No. Cv 82-1772. One week after the military seized power in Argentina in 1976, they came after Jose Siderman. Mr. Siderman was a prosperous 65 year old Jewish businessman at that time. Mr. Siderman and his family were abducted and tortured for seven days. He was beaten, deprived of food and water, given electric shocks, insulted, threatened with his life and blindfolded the entire time. During this time, the government seized all of his assets including vast real property and his family run business, a multi-million dollar flooring company, total assets seized by the junta were valued at over twenty-six million dollars.

The Sidermans were a nonpolitical family. Their only concern was their business and their well-being. Why were they targeted? "I have no doubt that this disgrace happened to us because we were Jewish," said Siderman from his Southern California home. Amnesty reports and documentation collected by the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" a group of mothers and grandmothers of the disappeared dedicated to this day to demanding information about the whereabouts of the remains of their loved ones whom had "disappeared," indicate that Jews were a particular focus of the military dictatorship. The military commonly referred to the Jews as being subversive and that the Jews had a "secret plan" to create a Zionist movement in Southern Argentina.

Ironically, Siderman, who was referred to in prison only as "the dirty Jew," came to Argentina with his family from the Ukraine as they escaped the anti-semitism of imperial Russia. When Siderman was released (actually dumped in a rural field near a firing range) from captivity and torture, he was not "disappeared" it is believed due to the attention given to the arrest of such a prominent businessman, he found a note in his blood-soaked pants which read: "Leave or be Killed." Siderman and his family quickly fled to the United States as Asylees to join their daughter in California.

Once in California, Siderman spoke out against the proceso and secured human rights attorneys to help him fight the deathsquads from abroad. The military fought back and tried to detain him through contacts in Italy as Siderman traveled there and upon his return to the United States the Argentine military had served an extradition request against him citing "serious business violations in Argentina" and even issuing an international arrest warrant against him. He was also served with civil pleadings while in the United States. These attempts by the military proved to be Siderman's downfall. Through these papers, Argentina had established the "minimum contacts" to fall within the jurisdiction of the United States courts.

After over 16 years of legal arguments back and forth on the jurisdiction issue, the court finally ruled in favor of Siderman, A Los Angeles County Superior Court in 1981 held that such contacts constituted a waiver on the part of Argentina of the Foreign
Sovereign Immunities Act. The Ninth circuit and later the United States Supreme Court twice affirmed and also found that the Sidermans confiscated properties included a hotel which accepted American Express credit cards, thus also creating a sufficient contact nexus to confer jurisdiction. Siderman then received a default judgment for several million dollars in compensatory and punitive civil damages against the Argentine government (in 1996) which was vacated by a district court. Siderman, then 85 years old, appealed to a Federal court situated in Los Angeles. Argentina settled with him for an undisclosed sum (reportedly in the millions) in order to "save face" from being the first foreign government to be tried in the United States for human rights abuses committed in its own country.

The settlement was offered by the Solicitor General of the Argentine Treasury, Rodlofo A. Diaz, who was not involved with the military junta and in fact was detained at the same time as was Mr. Siderman (but not remotely in the same conditions). He and other Argentine officials actually flew to Los Angeles to deliver Siderman a settlement check. Legal scholars have already proclaimed this settlement to mark a landmark civil rights victory. It is the first time that a lawsuit in the United States has led to a foreign government being held accountable for abuses that have occurred abroad and shattered a hushed silence about the abusive regime.

2. France v. Astiz: 1990 French Supreme Court ruling in Absentia. Since the late 1970's, France has continually tried to convict Argentine Navy Captain Alfredo Astiz in the murder of two nuns, Leonie Duquet and Alice Domon in 1977. Astiz steadfastly denies the accusation and claims the efforts on the part of France are nothing more than a "witch hunt."

Astiz was part of a covert unit that kidnapped suspected leftists and took them to a Navy training center which was refurbished into a Nazi-like death camp. Astiz ran these camps. France had campaigned for his extradition since the early 1980's when he was taken to Britain as a prisoner of the Falklands/Malvinas wars. He was released in accordance with the Geneva convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. Due to the pressure, just last year in 1996, Astiz gave up his military career in Argentina.

The two nuns were volunteers working with the poor in the Chacras region of Argentina. When they noticed the disappearances, they began to help the families of the disappeared locate their lost loved ones. These acts were quickly deemed "subversive" and shortly after the two nuns "disappeared". It is presumed that they were drugged and thrown from a military helicopter into the Rio Plata.
In 1990 Astiz was sentenced by a French court for the murder, in absentia. Astiz has yet to travel to France to face the charges and argues that the Menem exoneration and the rule of obedience demonstrate his innocence. Astiz has never expressed remorse and has told the press "I can only say that I was following orders and that I agreed with those orders." Civil suits have also been filed in which the petitioners seek production of the death certificates of the nuns in order to bring closure to their fate.

In 1994 when the Menem administration agreed to indemnify families of the disappeared in Argentina, many military defendants today claim that this constituted a settlement and that they cannot be held liable in a civil or criminal court with regards to the disappearances.

The French are relying on Nuremberg type jurisdiction arguments to extradite Astiz and bring him to justice. Also, an Argentine judge in Buenos Aires did not discount the possibility that the case could be reopened in Argentina. The grounds for this lie with the fact that should France succeed in extraditing Astiz, it is nearly certain that he would successfully appeal against the extradition citing that he could not get a fair trial in France. Of course, Astiz claims that Argentina cannot prosecute him as he falls under the law of Due Obedience passed by the Raul Alfonsin administration.

3. Ker v. Illinois, 119 U.S. 436, (1886). The world has been watching the U.S. courts to see if an Argentine war criminal will ever stand trial here. Of course, the Siderman settlement is as close as anything has come. Absent a Siderman type of minimum contact on the part of Argentina, which is extremely unlikely to repeat itself, it is dubious that the sufficient nexus granting jurisdiction will appear within the United States in the near future.

The decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in Ker, stands for the ability of the U.S. to assert jurisdiction over any foreign criminal defendant by way of forcible abduction as a way around prohibited extradition. In that case, Ker was convicted of larceny and embezzlement and went to Peru to avoid prosecution. When extradition was met with legal resistance, U.S. authorities simply forcibly abducted Ker and the Supreme Court held that the forcible abduction was not reason to allow Ker to avoid answering to the criminal charges against him.

The trend, however, in these days where human rights are more and more highly regarded and observed, the trends seem to go against a Ker "kidnapping justification," and in dicta and dissent more and more judges are expressing the opinion that international human rights laws prohibit kidnapping and forcible abduction is a form of kidnapping.
Few judges will cite Ker in the face of international agreements which take precedence over all law barring the U.S. Constitution.

4. Forti v. Suarez-Mason, 672 F.Supp. 1531 (N.D. Cal 1982). This relatively recent case was the first "test case" of a man extradited to Argentina. Once there, a multi-million dollar civil judgment was entered against him by an Argentine court. When this defendant did not satisfy the judgment, the courts upheld his challenge of jurisdiction based on emerging international standards of human rights abuse laws. Many scholars feel this case, more than any other, demonstrates the courts' softening of the Ker standard.

5. U.S. ex rel Lujan v. Gengler, Lexis 3211278. In this case, an Argentine man was abducted and brought to the United States to face civil and criminal penalties and Argentina did not object the extradition.

Because there was no objection by the extradited country, the U.S. courts refused to allow the U.N. charter to control in defendant's jurisdictional arguments. The courts held that a forcible abduction committed in Argentina violates the laws of Argentina only, and only Argentina can demand return of the abductee. Because it did not in this case, the court refused to look further into the defense brought forward by defendant/abductee.

Oddly enough, the only time Argentina made an "international splash" about an abduction of a human rights violator or any other criminal was when Israel abducted Nazi leader Adolph Eichmann out of Argentina where many Nazis were and still are in hiding. Argentina asked for Eichmann's return and for punishment of the abductors. Argentina did not want Eichmann back, they simply wanted their sovereignty respected. Israel responded with a letter of apology and nothing else. The case was closed. Of course, this case demonstrates that should the U.S. or other state succeed in obtaining jurisdiction over a "dirty war" criminal, resistance from Argentina as a sovereign will likely be minimal. Eichmann was executed in Israel for human rights violations during the holocaust.


The Spanish High Court sided with the Spanish Peace and Justice Service and agreed that the warrant was "necessary to enforce international agreements against human rights violators. When Alfonsin passed the 1986-1987 General Amnesty Act, Galtieri
was freed from serving a twelve year prison sentence in Argentina for his role in the proceso. He had only served five years of the sentence.

It is believed that over 300 Spanish nationals disappeared with the 30,000 other victims of the "dirty war." The conviction against Galtieri was obtained on grounds that he ordered the death of a Spanish citizen, Victor Labrador and his two Argentine born sons in 1976. The Spanish High Court found that such a mandate over a citizen of Spain conferred jurisdiction over Galtieri in Spain.

Nevertheless, Argentina maintains that it cannot extradite Galtieri according to its own amnesty law, but it is implied that the country would not challenge a forcible abduction in the same vein as the inaction it took against the abduction of Eichmann.

From the above listed cases, it is evident that the trend is to promote the bringing to justice of abusers of human rights while at the same time respecting the sovereignty of the state of the abductee and promoting/adhering to international agreements. This is a delicate balance and it is once that is forever evolving in the U.S. courts as well as courts of other states and in international tribunals.

D. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAWS AND INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN ARGENTINA PERTAINING TO "DIRTY WAR" CRIMES

Argentine courts have long been grappling with their duty (or lack thereof) to punish war criminals of the Proceso. Different administrations since 1983 have wavered in their diligence to accomplish this end.

Prior to the Amnesty by the Alfonsin administration, judicial declarations of responsibility for human rights violations on the part of former members of the armed forces failed to advance investigations into the "disappearances." To date, it is the grassroots Mothers of the Plaza De Mayo whom have achieved the most successes in investigating these crimes.

Seeing how ineffectual and controversial judicial declarations were, the Alfonsin administration narrowly passed the amnesty Law of Due Obedience which was also dubbed "The Full Stop Law." The public had minimal voice in this passage of this law. At this time, Argentina was experiencing skyrocketing hyper inflation and the general opinion was that this amnesty allowed the country to "move on" and focus on its economic troubles.

The International community at large did not agree. The UN Human Rights Committee commented on such laws and found that this amnesty was inconsistent with the requirements of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In its recommendation, that Committee urged Argentina to continue to investigate the
whereabouts of the "disappeared" persons. It also urged that the government work to uncover revelations of other crimes committed during this period.

This recommendation prompted Alfonsin to launch a campaign in congress to approve the Inter-American Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons. This resulted in some groundbreaking progress in the effort to bring the military war criminals to justice. In 1996, for the first time ever, high-ranking officers admitted the Argentine Armed Forces responsibility for Human Rights Violations and apologized for such acts.

Former naval officer Adolfo Francisco Scilingo stated in March of 1996 that he had personal knowledge of the torture of over 2,000 people in a secret detention center at a Navy training school. He further testified that many had been sedated and thrown into the River Plate from military aircrafts. Three other confessions by fellow military commanders later corroborated his story.

These revelations instigated a number of petitions filed in the Argentine Federal Appeals Court to reopen past cases closed for lack of evidence. This controversy led to the Full Stop Act and froze these appeals in their tracks.

Nevertheless, some provincial judges had acted in contrast to the Full Stop Act because in Argentina provincial judges are given much autonomy within their jurisdictions. In June of 1996, one such judge ordered the arrest of police doctor Jorge Berges who helped forge birth documents of children born to prisoners and placed in black market adoptions once their birth parents were murdered. Unfortunately, a higher court halted this trial as it found the statute of limitations had expired on this "fraud" charge.

In response to the Argentine courts' failures to prosecute "dirty war" criminals, Amnesty International issued a report entitled Argentina: The Right to the Full Truth which made a plea to the international community to come together to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared" and to public disclosure of all internal investigation findings.

Currently, the biggest problem surrounding the bringing to justice of the war criminals apart from the General Amnesty and Full Stop Act is the intimidation and violence directed at those who attempt to break the silence and uncover the truths. The government has continued its efforts to silence critics and the independent presses. The Menem administration, despite widespread but non-vocal opposition to these amnesty laws, continues to defend such laws in the name of "national reconciliation." Menem has also been uncooperative with outside courts such as those of France, Spain and Italy in their attempts to bring justice to the war criminals whom harmed and/or killed their citizenry during the proceso. Menem has actively precluded extraditions and discovery on
Argentina soil by members of foreign courts. Because of these acts, in 1995 Mr. Menem was expelled from the non-governmental Permanent Assembly for Human Rights of which he was previously an honorary member.

There are, however, glimmers of hope for the struggle to punish the war criminals in Argentina. In 1994 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights established an arbitration award against the government and to be paid to documented victims of the "dirty war" and their immediate family members. There have to date, still been delays of these remunerations. Recently, an Argentine Federal Court decided to assist the French investigation of the "disappeared" French social-worker nuns in Argentina. The court promised anonymity to anyone who would come forward with new information. The government also forced the Navy official charged in France with the disappearance of these nuns into an "early retirement."

The Constitution was amended during the Menem administration to allow him to serve three consecutive terms and in the process, many believe to justify the amendment, strong language was inserted prohibiting torture. The criminal code penalizes those who torture to the same extent as it does murderers.

However, the repression and overall desire to "forget the dark past" overshadows the glimmers of hope for the fight for justice in Argentina. The amnesty remains strong. There have been violent attacks on independent journalists whom investigate the dirty war. In 1996 a reporter was beaten by three men in hoods. A left wing vigilante group, the People's Revolutionary Organization attempted to kill a former police doctor from the proceso in retaliation.

In February of 1997, a news photographer covering the disappeared was brutally murdered. He was found shot and handcuffed in his car. This had been the trademark of the murders in Argentina during the regime. Five suspects are currently in custody for that murder. A storm of protest from worldwide journalism organization has since ensued. Thousands have also rallied against human rights abuses at the offices of the photographers magazine. Also, it prompted a national strike. Over 91 percent of the population polled believed the murder was directly linked to the Argentine government.

This outpour demonstrates that despite the governments attempts to "forget the past" and promote a silence through amnesty laws, the collective memory of Argentina lives on and possibly becomes stronger as time continues.

E. CONCLUSION

Like Nazi Germany, the Argentine proceso led to the existence of many historical international conventions and treaties promoting human rights such as the ratification in
1980 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties in 1980, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Article 19 of the U.N. Charter. Likewise, jurisdictional issues have evolved in foreign courts, most notably within the United States Supreme Court, which in light of the softening of the Ker decision have paved the way for the bringing to justice of war criminals whom are hiding behind amnesty acts and extradition treaties. Most importantly, as the Argentine government attempts to enact legislation to assist in the "forgetting" of this dark episode in its history, the opposite effect is seen as voices within Argentina and the international courts communities at large become more aggressive in their efforts to bring justice to the victims of the "dirty war" and to shatter the silence.

II

THE SHORT STORY
(Introduction)

By far, the greatest abundance of "dirty war" social protest literature lies within the realms of the short story. Looking back over the short stories of social protest dealing with the "dirty war" over the past decade and a half, "one is impressed by the wide variety of themes and techniques as well as the generally high quality of the genre." 4 In keeping with the traditions of the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges, the undisputed greatest Latin American writer of all time, nearly all contemporary Argentine authors who have gained international recognition have published the majority of their works in the form of the short story. This study will now concentrate on various Argentine short story writers: Luisa Valenzuela, Alicia Ortiz, Haroldo Conti, Griselda Gambaro, Marta Traba and Julio Cortazar. All of whom utilized the short story format efficiently to exercise their commitment to the betterment of their underdeveloped, strife-ridden country and to vent their renunciation of inhumane, savage crimes against humanity on the part of the military.

The short story format has a strong "punch" to it. It is known as one of the oldest and most widespread literary forms. It is a work of prose fiction that differs from the novel in that it has a different structure of anecdote, or rather it is a simple and

4 *The Latin American Short Story,* p. 125; hereafter cited in text as *LAS.*
unelaborated narrative of a single event. The short story organizes the action, thought, and interaction of characters into the plot. In nearly all cases, the story begins close to or on the verge of the climax. The central incident carries maximum significance and in the case of "dirty war" literature, it is almost always a direct confrontation or attack on the nature of the military's sadistic bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. The short story was both financially and time consuming easily accessible to all literate sectors of the Latin American public. Usually the characters, themes, metaphors, and symbolism that ran throughout these short stories of no more than twenty-five pages acted to promote and define the ideological commitments of these writers. These works are short but robust bursts of sound amongst an apathetic, self-interested society of silence.

(LUISA VALENZUELA)

The short story is known to be a literary aesthetic which conveys with great clarity and force, "the unstable nature of Latin American man's contemporary experience in a culture degraded by the inescapable facts of political life." One noted Argentine author whose "fictional documents" illuminate the tragedy of daily life as defined by a coexisting and corrupt political entity is Luisa Valenzuela. Born in 1938, Valenzuela became a journalist at the age of seventeen. At only twenty-one she published her first novel. After the 1976 coup in Argentina, her works were blacklisted by the military and labeled "subversive" as were those of many of her contemporaries who also worked to break the silence of the horrors of the Proceso. As fellow journalists and authors were quietly "disappearing" all around her, Valenzuela fled to the United States in 1977 where she published three novels and many short stories, most of which are still banned in her native Argentina.

"Namelessness" is one of the key themes that spans Valenzuela's narrative. In nearly all of her short stories the character, places and significant objects are denied names and referred to as "him," "her," "there" and "it," respectively. Valenzuela deems it useless to name anything in her books since people were seized during the Proceso and robbed of their identity. Names are superficial. If others have the authority to strip a person or places of their identity from behind a gun, then why bother naming things at all? It would be like building a sandcastle just as the tide rolls in. In using this technique, Valenzuela's writing show a consistent interest in the nature of the abuses against her fellow countrymen and countrywomen and the resulting impacts upon them. She highlights the domination of a citizenry (Argentina) and a gender (female) through

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5 Studies in The Contemporary Spanish American Short Story, p. 122; hereafter cited in text as SCSAS.
the ambiguities in her texts which allude to the similar ambiguity of the weapons that must be obtained and used to combat the silence. Hence, the "social protest literature" and the reader together must recognize their dual responsibility to utilize such weapons and break the calm quietness. Of her many works that deal specifically with the kidnapings, imprisonments, torturings and murders carried out by the military, three short stories (all written while she was in exile) most movingly illustrate the aforementioned techniques and themes which appear in Valenzuela's writings. They are: "Change of Guard," "The Word Killer," and "Fourth Version."

One of Valenzuela's most explicit and widely read short stories is "Change of Guard" which appears in her anthology of short stories entitled Other Weapons. Representative of the majority of her short stories, "Change of Guard" adheres to a belief in the productive union of a political commitment and a striking literary structure. Written while Valenzuela was in exile in the United States and still banned in Argentina, "Change of Guard" epitomizes the struggle between individual freedom and despotism.

"Change of Guard," which also appears under the title "Other Weapons" in many sources, is an omniscient third person narrative of a young woman's daily existence as a sexually abused political prisoner. "She" as the woman is referred to throughout the text, has been beaten or brain-washed to the point of amnesia and doesn't even know her own name. Hence, her identity has truly been robbed as she has disappeared from society as well as from herself. The protagonist is locked in a nicely furnished room daily. She is forced to be a sex slave to a high ranking General who uses her as he pleases. The others (the military men) call her "Laura" but she is not sure if that is really her name, she thinks it is just "part of the haze in which her life drifts by." 6

The so-called Laura has no name to give the General who abuses her. She calls him Hugo, Sebastian, Ignacio, Alfredo and other names throughout the story and he responds to each of these names. "Laura" convinces herself that when her head aches, "that is the only thing that really belongs to her and that she can communicate to the nameless man of countless names" (OW, p. 107). Laura is tended to by a maid who is ordered by the general to fulfill all of her desires as long as they do not aid in refurnishing her memory or her freedom. The one request that "Laura" asked of the maid is to have a plant:

In fact, when the plant finally arrived, it looked artificial, but it was alive and growing; the flower was already wilting but that was also a part of life. That, above all, was life: an agony from the very start with some splendor and a fair dose of sadness (OW, p. 112).
The plant is an obvious metaphor for life in Argentina. The plant, like "Laura" is a prisoner. It exists in artificial confines for the pleasure of a nameless other. Through the "sad" plant, "Laura" contemplated her unfortunate existence. In the next portion of text sub headed The Mirrors, "Laura" is forced to see the reality of her imprisonment. While the General is sexually violating her, he forces "Laura" to watch the ordeal in the mirrored ceiling above the bed. "Open your eyes and see what I do to you. It's going to be well worth seeing" (OW p. 114). Watching her body, "Laura" notices how it is like the plant, beautiful, almost artificial and it belongs to her. While this is happening, guards are watching through a peephole and "Laura" realizes the extent of her subjugation by the military. She yearns for "him" to come to her, not for sex but rather to cover her body with his from the sights of the invisible onlookers:

She thinks of the crowd of people watching out there - watching her and she calls him to her side, for him to cover her with his body. Cover herself with his body like a glove. A body she can use as a screen, as a mask to face others. Or maybe not: a screen so she can hide from others, disappear forever behind or under another's body.

Valenzuela skillfully fuses the images of unnatural imprisonment and death with the natural act of love making. "Laura" wants her body to be invisible to the others. It is not only the General's body which she disappears into from the sight of the onlookers, but it is his body which has caused her to disappear from her previous life. It is this body and its political authority that has robbed "Laura" of her identity, memory, and pride. The passage is ironic in that those killed by the military during the Proceso were hidden in mass unmarked graves as bodies were piled up over others in a similar formation to the one mentioned above which likewise finalised the ultimate disappearance of the prisoners.

At the conclusion, "Laura" is confronted with information that fills "the black hole of her memory," as the General returns to her with her handbag which was confiscated when she was detained as being a Montonero. She is showed the gun she allegedly tried to use to kill him. He has taken revenge by forcing her to depend on him. He explained this "truth" to her while telling her over and over, "I've got my weapons, too" (OW, p. 135). He then tells her he is leaving her and that she'll be free the following day. As he

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7 The Montoneros were leftist peronist guerillas (mostly university students) who violently opposed the military regime with acts of violence and kidnappings. The majority of those "disappeared" by the military regime were done so under the conviction, accusation or pretense that they were members of this terrorist resistance.
leaves, she begs him not to go. When he does, however, she lifts the gun and aims it at him. (It can be easily speculated that this action will lead to the possible death of the General and to the certain death of "Laura.")

"Change of Guard" examines imprisonment on a variety of levels. It raises many questions as to the nature of struggle. Is the gun or the human memory the determinant of war and human oppression? What weapons do men and women use to confront each other? And how do these conflicts result in the evaporation of identity?

These are the themes that seem to encompass nearly all of Valenzuela's works. "Change of Guard" allows the reader to examine the weapons of war in Latin America. Not just the war between the military and its opposition, but the psychological war between the role of man versus woman in a paternal, male dominated society. Valenzuela does not divorce the evils of the military from the evils of her country. The continued rape of "Laura" is indicative not only of the armed forces raping the country of its resources and the people of their human rights, but it is also addressed as a crime in and of itself: the male exercising his physical and social influence in order to dominate the woman. During the time of the military regime, women's groups and mobilization efforts were banned. In this type of domination, the woman is robbed of her identity as she is in Latin American society dominated by "machismo."  

On a more personal level, Valenzuela defines the true weapons of war. These weapons are not guns and prisons but rather they are made up of the ability of authority to dispose of identity. The real enemy is the dictatorship that is empowered to promote dehumanization. "Laura" is diminished by such forces to that of an object: a plant, a show for uninvited onlookers. Both the forces of male domination and brutal imprisonment work against Laura whose only weapons are her memory and identity which have been stripped from her. This is illuminated by her position as a "first rate" prisoner with maid service and who is not subject to physical torture (rather psychological torture); however her freedom is as violated as any other prisoner. Similarly, in Argentina during this time, when the authoritarian leaders invited society to "participate" in politics, the public, like "Laura," soon learned that such participation only meant that they were free to passively acquiesce (not denounce) the institutions organized by these leaders. In short, the imprisonment of "Laura" is not only representative of the prisoner/oppressor

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8 "Machismo" is the term given to the dominant social ideology in much of Latin America that maintains the male is the superior gender that carries authority and honor while the female is the subordinate who should be relegated to the roles of a domestic capacity, bearing children and providing for their husbands.
relationship in Argentina, but it is equally symbolic of the male/female and state/civilian relationships as well, all of which are scarred by corruption and coercion and are shameless disposers of identity.

"The Word Killer" is a story about another lethal relationship between the innocence of feminism and the savagery of masculinity in war. It takes place in The Bronx, New York in order to show the reader that relationships such as those between "Laura" and the General have no geographical or sociopolitical boundaries. They can be found everywhere. Again, the two "lovers" in this story are nameless. "She" falls in love with a 28 year old street tough Vietnam war veteran who has spent the vast majority of his life in war and rehabilitation institutions. He has lived on the streets and in the battlefield and has killed in both places, even worse he enjoys bragging and joking about these crimes. She, on the other hand, "could not kill a spider or a cockroach and left the loveliest shell on the beach because a hermit crab was living in it" (OW, p. 67). She is intensely physically attracted to him but is in constant conflict with herself for carrying on her (mainly physical) relationship with a killer. She is always fearing that he will one day beat her or even kill her yet this fatal attraction seems to fuel her lust for him:

My lover. He's a leopard, a panther, the most graceful of all felines. . . And the astonishment of realizing she has finally acknowledged that word to herself: in her thoughts, she has uttered the word killer. . . but it hasn't dropped out of her mouth, or maybe her mouth lacks the courage it takes to articulate it. (OW, p. 69).

This story explicitly refers to contemporary "democratic" Argentina, where the military regime has been ousted and a popularly elected President resides in the Casa Rosada. However, the killers from the "dirty war" still roam the streets free. Top officers were tried in a tribunal and received between ten years to life for their actions in the "dirty war" (and later were granted full pardons in 1989 by the Menem administration). However, none of the lower level officers who actually carried out the torturings and "disappearances" were tried. The story poses the question: Should the public forgive and forget such ruthless murderers or should it confront them? Should such barbarians, raiders of libraries and liberties, vandals under the spell of Fascism, Nazism and Marxism be excused? Should we continue to be contributors to the silence? Valenzuela poses these questions to her readers through the predicament of the protagonist.
who wonders, "What do you do when you know something that's too hot, that you can't digest" (OW, p. 73)?

Although, "he's woven into her life forever" (OW, p. 75), the heroine finally sides with her integrity as she ultimately gains the voice and courage to shout the truth in his face:

**KILLER**

*She shouts. And the voice finally manages to bolt out of her and she isn't calling out or accusing: in fact, she's giving birth* (OW, p. 78).

Valenzuela, through the ultimate courage displayed in the climax of this short story, is making a plea to her reading public to find this same courage within themselves. She, as an author, is giving birth to a new societal calling. Argentine society must be purged of those who committed the heinous deaths and torturings of the "dirty war." Once the people gain the strength and courage of Valenzuela and her protagonist to renounce the silence they will, in effect, be giving birth to a new spirit of justice and vengeance. They will help give birth to the faint voice of "nunca mas" (never again) that is not yet at an audible level in a timid and complacent society.

Yet another short story by Valenzuela that advocates public condemnation of the horrors of the "dirty war" by contrasting them with the theme of male/female relationships and faceless prot-agonists, is "Fourth Version" which is her longest short story. The story is narrated in the third person, omniscient, however it is frequently interrupted with first person, singular authoral intrusions by Valenzuela herself. These interruptions, which make up at least a quarter of the text, are often apologies or explanations as to why she chose to present the story as she did. In fact, the text starts out with the author's confession that the beginning was difficult to choose:

*I hit upon different beginnings. I study them in a mad attempt to put the puzzle back together... the story of those who are no longer themselves... one of many beginnings (a false one, perhaps?) is as follows: (OW, p. 4).*

This insight into the experience of writing launches the story about Bella, a "faceless" lady who meets and falls in love with Pedro, an ambassador of a "nameless" European nation who has the power to grant political asylum to a limited number of Argentines that seek refuge from their own murderous government. Bella, who was an
active member of the opposition, lives with Pedro as his mistress and as his refugee. Again, the woman protagonist is both politically and sexually represented as being dependent on the dominant male figure of the story. Throughout the story, the definition between a political refugee and a political prisoner is a fine line: "[the] refugee is suspended in the non-place, the embassy. Within those walls, he cannot receive letters or telephone calls. He can never see his friends again..." (OW, p. 23). Pedro continually ignores his refugees and his responsibilities towards them in order to spend as much time as he can winning and dining Bella. Ultimately, he is called back to his country once his superiors learn of his irresponsible actions. Bella begs him not to go but the best he can do for her is offer to throw her the an ornate and grand farewell party in the embassy. She agrees that this will compensate for his departure and invites all of her friends, most of whom are subversives. The story ends when the national guards burst into the party and end up shooting and killing Bella.

The plot and thematic structure of this story is nearly identical to that of "Change of Guard." The major difference being that the male figure operates with good intentions towards the heroine, but the ending result remains the same. From this, we can conclude that the military regime is wholly corrupt and all that it touches cannot escape from its coercion and abuse. This shows that all who do not actively oppose the human rights violations being committed around them, the silent ones, are unknowing abettors of oppression. Pedro's main concern is his romantic flings with Bella which makes him a metaphor for the silent middle-class masses in Argentina who are fundamentally concerned with preserving their own privileges by shutting their eyes to the truth. Hence, Pedro's relationship with the Argentine government, his own government and with Bella demonstrates "the hypocrisy of an unofficial war that served the interests of the men in power at the expense of a citizenry only plunged deeper and deeper into despair."  

The aspect which most notably sets "Fourth Version" apart from "Change of Guard" and other similar stories is the presence of Valenzuela's authoral intrusion. By admitting to the reader her hopes, problems, actions and intentions of her text within that very text she brings the relationship between author and reader, or rather text and reader, to mind. This uncommon "personal touch" that breaks the flow of the story continually reminds the reader that it is his or her responsibility to interpret the text and contemplate its significance. Indeed, stories about the "dirty war" are rarely read for pleasure or entertainment since they are of exceedingly morbid and depressing realities on a whole. Valenzuela uses this literary device of intrusion to remind the reader of his role

9 Augusto Roa Bastos, p. 55; hereafter cited in text as ARB.
and of the fact that, "reading is an interpretive process which is guided by and simultaneously influences social, moral and political outlook on the world and how they react to it."  

Even the most haphazard and historically naive reader will pick up on the themes of social protest that the story alludes to because Valenzuela comes right out and tells her reader what themes are important in the story:

> What bothers me most about this story is... what isn't being told. (It is not) ... sex that is being concealed, as is usually the case. It's... the political refugees. Although they are only mentioned in passing. Pages and pages collected, first, second fourth version of the events attempt to clarify this situation. This seems to be a story about what is left unsaid. And here I am trying to rescue all that's been covered up because it has to do with a more general deceit: the laws of political asylum. (OW, p. 23).

The main irony of the story is that Bella, a Montonero, and Pedro, the ambassador, slowly shirk their commitments and responsibilities to the cause of fighting the silence and horror in Argentina as they get emotionally caught up in each other, the reader also forgets about the important tragic figures of the novel, the refugees, as he or she too gets emotionally caught up in the romance. By intruding into her own text and actually reminding the reader what the important elements of the story are, the reader realizes how easy it is to fall into the trap of apathy, diversion and silence just as Pedro and Bella did: "... suffering is never placated when the lovers are together, it runs down other paths and can only be expressed when they are able to freeze it in anecdote" (OW, p. 47). As a reader, it is easy to read social protest literature such as that of Valenzuela's and pick up on most of the symbolism, irony, metaphors and other little literary gadgets. After putting the puzzle together, it is even easier to recognize that these authors have boldly spoke out where others stood in silence. It is almost an immediate reaction to scorn those cowards who stood by and did nothing while such atrocities existed. The reader says to him or her self, "I would never be a silent coward! I would stand up for the persecuted and the innocent! I would never let another Holocaust happen!" However, after reading "Fourth Version" and falling into the trap of sensationalism and steamy romance that easily diverts one's attention and sight from the integral issues at hand, one cannot but admit, "O.K. you caught me" and in doing so, realize how acutely conscious one must be to avoid the difficult trap of diversion, silence and apathy.

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10 Literary Theory: An Introduction, p. 78; hereafter cited in text as LT.
Luisa Valenzuela is, by far, not the only Argentine woman writer who published while in exile in order to manifest through the written aesthetic the degradation of culture and society caused by the grim facts of political life in Argentina under military authoritarianism. Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, an Argentine novelist and journalist who was exiled to France under the regime, addresses many of the same issues as does Valenzuela. In particular, she focuses in her short stories, poetry, and in her three novels on the responsibility of the public to make a choice. They can either cowardly remain silent to the horrors and join the unaffected masses or they can become activists against injustice. Ortiz believes that there is no "middle ground" and that those who are only ideologically committed to alleviating the horrors yet do not take action in doing so are hindering the chances for justice more than do even the silent.

Ortiz's most read and banned prose is her short story entitled "Courage of Cowardice?" In it, she traces back her Russian, Jewish heritage to the town of Monguilev in the year 1890 where the story is originally set. Sara Brun is told that each immigrant to settle in Argentina is given three hundred hectares of free land. This causes Sara to insist on migrating to Argentina. She tells her grandfather, "We'll return to the land, Samuel, we'll free ourselves from the intellectual chains, we'll work with a plow and sickle..." 11 It is this first connection with Argentina and the "liberation of the intellectual chain" that started the systematic persecution of the learned scholar during the Proceso and it similarly foreshadows the ominous events that have yet to transpire in the story.

The story takes the reader across the sea to Argentina via a boat carrying sickly looking immigrants where Samuel and Sara are among the tattered packs. The natural elements in the new land are ominous and telling of the tide of hate that will strike intellectuals and Jews such as Samuel (an intellectual and a Jew) as can be seen by Samuel when he is confronted with the common sight of a cow in the pampas:

In Russia the cows live with the people in the house, they practically greet you in the afternoon while you have tea... .
He stood watching the [Argentine] cow thinking, Yes, it's a cow. But it's not a cow. It had a furious, stubborn

11 You Can't Drown The Fire: Latin American Women Writing in Exile, p. 94; hereafter cited in text as YCDF.

Samuel and Sara are plagued with problems in their new lives on the pampas. There is a severe locust invasion and the theme of persecution and Jewish suffering surfaces even more vividly. At one point Samuel exclaims, "Here the pogrom is natural: it's not of man, it's of elements" (YCDF, p. 99). Time passes and Sara marries an Argentine and has a son named Carlos. The misfortunes persisted as Samuel found out that his son, Sara's father had been murdered by the Nazi pogrom. With each stroke of bad luck, Samuel would ask himself whether suicide was the way out: "Is suicide courage or cowardice" (YCDF, p. 101)? Carlos grows up and lives in Uruguay. At the story's climax and ending, Samuel travelled there to ask him if suicide takes courage or cowardice. Carlos answers that it takes cowardice and Samuel goes straight back to Argentina to ask Sara who maintains that it takes courage:  

She won. He went to the room and fired into his body a shot that echoed infinitely. Somebody can still hear the prolonged sound. . . Samuel is the legend of a thoughtful man who meditates on his problems, examines every angle, and finally resolves them.

Whether suicide takes courage or cowardice is of secondary important to the message in the story. What is important, however, is the fact that Samuel was able to recognize the pogrom around him (whether it be one of nature or of man) and he was able to actively put an end to this misery. Many may claim that his actions were the "easy way out" and others may insist that he pursued a noble action. Nobody, however, can deny that he did resolve his problems and succeed in ending the misery of the Argentine experience that robbed him of his intellectualism. It is this stance that Ortiz advocates to the silent majority in Argentina who do nothing about the pogrom. They must make a decision to take action and act upon their decision. Just as Ortiz was "not born under the sign of passivity," (YCDF, p. 12) neither was her character who embodies the spirit that must be adopted to overcome the tyranny.

The broad time span of several generations in the story is also of significance. It is the eldest member of the family that takes action. Being the authority, he sets an example for the generations below him and of him. It is no coincidence that the character of authority is the one to take action. Not only can Ortiz imply that the activism she advocates in her story is reliable and experienced advice, but she also illustrates that those who are activists are of the last and dying breed - a breed that can only continue to
thrive if others examine their roots and understand the sufferings which go back
generations and act today to prevent the repetition of a destructive past. It is evident that
the new generation did not follow the example of Samuel as is illustrated with the change in
attitude of Carlos who differs from his mother and grandfather in his belief that suicide is
cowardly. Ironically it is his generation that failed to understand and/or learn from the
actions of the past (his grandfather's suicide) and consequently, because of its cowardly
silence, it is forced to live amidst the inhumanities of the "dirty war."

_The one who dreams us puts pieces of wood in the fire to
test. He blows. He suddenly notices that he can blow more
fire in one place than in another. As if, there in that spot
was a wound, which he keeps fanning until the sore becomes
a flame. The flame that must pass forcefully, to a new piece
of wood (YCDF, p. 102)._  

In this brief epilogue, the image of the fire spreading from one log to another
after being blown and nurtured is fitting. As an author, Ortiz is blowing on the wood to
create the flame that she hopes will spread to others. She is isolating the wounds from
the past and blowing on them, causing them to glow, to illuminate. One can learn from
the past. The Russian Jew is especially an appropriate character to make such a
realization as it is he or she who knows of the horrors of the Holocaust, and must blow on
the wounds of that period to spread the fire of prevention from a trag-edy such as that
from repeating itself. Ortiz is blowing on our wounds, which have plagued all, if not in
our own lifetimes then in the lifetimes of our ancestors. We cannot ignore these wounds
for if we did they would only haunt us later in life. We must respond to the painful
blowing of Ortiz and spread the fire that cries out "nunca mas" once and for all to the
evils repeated throughout history.

(HAROLDO CONTI)

"In any war there are people who disappear." - Gen.

One man who was aware of the sad truth to the timid response made by the
General who ultimately led the military to its final collapse in 1983 when asked to
comment on the disappea-rances under his regime, was Haroldo Conti. Conti, aware of
the constant threat of "disappea-rence," chose courage over cowardice as he refused to
stop writing about the crimes against humanity committed by the Proceso in his stories
and essays. The Argentine playwright, critic, novelist and short story writer paid the
ultimate price of resisting censorship as he was dragged out of his home by a group of armed men on May 5, 1976 and then "disappeared." Although his detention and death was never officially acknowledged by the military regime until 1981 when it did not admit responsibility, a released prisoner testified to having seen him in a secret detention center in Argentina where he was tortured to the point where he no longer possessed the motor skills to eat nor speak.

Nevertheless, Conti was not silenced. His works circulate today as more and more people of all nationalities open their eyes to the truths for which this martyr died. Born in 1925 in the rural district of Chacabuco in the Argentine interior, Conti pursued his interest in writing at the University of Buenos Aires. He wrote a best selling novel entitled Mascaro el Cazador Americano (Mascaro, the American Hunter). However he never lived in public to see it reach such popularity as he "spent his last years in Buenos Aires tormented by the suspicion that his literature was politically useless" (TWAHR, p. 15).

Like the short story writers studied thus far, Conti's literary contributions to Argentina and the world are living proof that social protest literature is a form of action and a terminator of deadly silence. The last literary protest Conti produced before he was dragged off into an awaiting green Ford Falcon (the car most commonly used by the military kidnappers) is his shortest yet most powerful piece of literary aesthetic condemning the Proceso to date. The one page narrative entitled Like A Lion which was written the same year the prominent and courageous artist was "disappeared."

The short work consists of a first person, singular narrative of an Argentine teen who gets up out of bed every morning after saying to himself, "Get up and walk like a lion." He imparts to the reader how he is misunderstood by many including his mother:

*She believes I'm never thinking about anything. Nobody who looks at me has any idea that so much travels through my mind. However we are a family of thinkers.* (TWAHR, p. 250).

The nameless narrator continues to tell the reader how he thinks of his brother who had been killed by the military. After he had identified his brothers corpse he recalls:

*My brother was so full of life and I don't believe that a pair of uniforms could have finished him off. It wouldn't surprise me that he would appear some day in some way... For me he is still as alive as ever. Maybe more* (TWAHR, p. 250).
The short narrative ends when the narrator realizes that it is his brother who tells him "from the shadows" every morning to "Get up and walk like a lion."

The irony in this story is that today Conti is viewed by his reading public and his fellow literary artists as the narrator views his brother. The memory of this man is their main inspiration to denounce the corrupt power of the military through their works. It is Conti, known to many as "a humble magician whose stories made life happen" (TWAHR, p. 16) who in effect posthumously told other authors to "Get up and walk like a lion" and break the silence with a bold roar through the written aesthetic. Just as the narrator's brother gave him courage and inspiration, Conti too proved to "appear some day in some way," as his image and plight backfired against those who aimed to silence him in that he inspired a growing cult of "lions" who in his honor and that of their beloved country choose courage over cowardice and denounce the atrocities of the Junta. Addressing the living spirit of Conti that today triumphs in the restoration of democracy in Argentina, Mumtaz Soysal notes that the attempt to silence the courageous will always prove self-defeating for "the uniforms": "Imprisoning writers is counterproductive. They [oppressive governments] have silenced some, but when they do so, humanity shouts at them." Indeed, humanity did shout at the military (unfortunately not yet sternly enough) for their crimes against humanity. By doing so, the omnipresent and inspirational soul of Conti can rest at ease having refuted his once pestering preoccupation that his literary works did not and would not reflect his political will or prove useful.

(JULIO CORTAZAR)

In Cortazar's novels, a fictional world exists in which a handful of characters who are all characterized by a deep interest in human experience are caught up in a strange pattern of events and driven by human self-awareness to try to make some sense of this pattern, only to realize that the pattern is beyond their control, the individual is insignificant.13

13 Currents in the Contemporary Argentine Novel, p. 130; hereafter cited in text as CCA.
Julio Cortazar is considered to be "the most talented Spanish American writer of short fiction to appear on the literary scene since Borges" (LAS, p. 112). Born in Brussels in 1914 to Argentine parents, Cortazar had been interested in literature from the time of his childhood to his sudden death in Paris in 1984. At the age of four, he and his family moved back to their native Argentina where Cortazar studied to be a teacher of literature. In 1944 he began teaching at several schools in the interior for five years and published various short essays and stories simultaneously using Borges, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf as his stylistic inspirations. As he slowly gained more and more recognition and praise, the up and coming author, poet, translator and amateur jazz musician published his first novel, *Bestiario*, and immediately followed with *Final de Juego*, which he published when he moved to Paris in 1951, where he was to remain until his death. Until 1981, when he retired from writing to lecture throughout Europe, Cortazar was publishing a novel at the rate of nearly one per year. His most important novels, *Rayuela* (1963), *62, Modelo Para Amar* (1968) and *Libro de Manuel* (1973) have received international recognition and have all been translated in fourteen different languages. His works fuse the culture and society of Argentina and France into a colorful web that depict the anguish and joy of being human. Such works are also unique in that their abstraction and renovation of text make the reader embark on a quest for meaning from the pages.

Of all the great writers in Latin America, Cortazar is the most consistent master of the short story. Cortazar has been dubbed a "magical realist" because his novels excel at presenting real characters, who lead common, humdrum, everyday lives, in a magical web of fantasy and surrealism that illuminate these characters and show how unique everyman's common human experience can be. His works do not bog themselves down in the stream-of-consciousness mode that tends to dominate Argentine fiction, rather he uses simple language for his simple characters. Renowned Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes underlines Cortazar's mastery of this technique:

* Cortazar pulls Latin America out of its discrete compartments and hurrs it out into the world... his works attest basically to the fact that Latin America is in want of language, and therefore it must be constituted. To do so, all genres and traditions must be blurred to create a new order... and constitute a new Latin American language which simply and directly reveals the falseness of what traditionally passed for 'language' amongst us.*

14 *Borges and His Fiction*, p. 45; hereafter cited in text as *BHF.*
Of his many short stories that embody the structural qualities as described by Fuentes, surprisingly only two are written to directly address the "disappearances:" "Graffiti" and "Press Clippings" both of which appear in Cortazar's last work, a collection of short stories entitled *We Love Glenda So Much* (1981) are two powerful short stories which serve to simultaneously mystify and clarify the relationship between the victim and the criminal in the "dirty war."

In "Graffiti" the narrative is in a singular, removed, omniscient one-way first person dialogue by an unknown individual to the protagonist of the story: a nameless, drunk and depressed graffiti artist who risks his life nightly, defying military restrictions, to draw images on the city walls during curfew. Contrary to most graffiti artists during this era of repression and political strife in Argentina, the boy is not originally concerned with channeling his art as a protest to the military rule. The irony, however, is that regardless of their impotency, his works were treated as forbidden protest merely by the fact that they were graffiti:

> It wasn't really a protest against... the curfew, the menacing prohibition against putting up posters or writing on walls. It simply amused you to make sketches [and] to be a spectator of the municipal... workers as they erased the sketches. It didn't matter to them that they weren't political sketches, the prohibition covered everything *(WLG, p. 34).*

Everyone is affected by the military regime. Whether one is politically active or not makes no difference. The suppression of one is the suppression of all. When the artist once experimented and deviated from his usual drawings to write a phrase, "It hurts me too," the reader learns that it did not last two hours because, "the police themselves made it disappear" *(WLG, p. 34).* The boy's work is not a direct protest against the military, yet the police dispose of it anyhow, just as had been done with the lives of so many students, authors, journalists, and even innocent bystanders who were killed for no reason other than because they were suspected of holding subversive attitudes or experimenting with alternative political views.

The boy suddenly begins to notice on the following days that someone else has been following his route and has been creating additional works of graffiti next to his which serve to complement his works. He begins fantasizing about who this person could be and he convinces himself that because of the soft colors and graceful curves of the pieces, it is a beautiful woman. He starts going out at all odd hours to paint his graffiti in hopes of
capturing a glance of her. The boy becomes infatuated with this mysterious artist, "you told her everything that came into your mouth, you pictured her as dark and silent, you chose lips and breasts for her, you loved her a little" (WLG, p. 35). After establishing her physical identity, the boy stumbles upon a "confused crowding" of police trucks and people and then witnesses the girl he has imagined being pulled into a patrol wagon and taken away. From that day on her drawings stopped and he knew that the urban patrol had taken the girl who complemented his drawings.

The omniscient, first person, removed narrator, who at this point of the story may or may not be the author, forces the boy to see himself as one of the silent masses who repeatedly turned away from the truth of the military inhumanities and instead stared into the bottom of beer bottles or into the image of the woman he had created for himself. The boy is made to see how he, a graffiti artist who should be using his works to denounce such atrocities and to vent the silent conscience of society, impedes the true calling of his profession by being just another of the intimidated populace, turning his head away from the truth:

You knew it quite well, you'd had more than enough time to imagine the details of what was happening at the main barracks; in the city everything like that oozed out little by little, people were aware of the fate of prisoners, and if sometimes they got to see one or another of them again, they would have preferred not seeing them, just as the majority were lost in the silence that no one dared break (WLG, p. 37).

The boy blames the woman's death on his cowardice and misuse of his works. Furthermore, he convinced himself that the reason she was caught in the first place was because she was scouting for one of his pieces in which she could supplement. Exceedingly disturbed, the boy quits his job and takes to the street on a full time basis. He goes back to the place from which the woman was abducted and creates a passionate sketch of a "red flame of recognition and love" for her. Early the next morning the boy goes back to his sketch and remarkably it is still there. To his surprise and horror, he finds one of her sketches there complementing his:

You saw the orange oval and the violent splotches where a swollen face seemed to leap out, a hanging eye, a mouth smashed with fists. I know, I know, but what else could I have sketched for you? In some way I had to say farewell to you and at the same time ask you to continue (WLG, p. 38).
The reader learns several things from this concluding passage. Primarily, it is revealed that the narrator is the woman. The reader is shocked in the discovery that the woman is in fact the one telling the story just as the boy must have been similarly shocked to discover the continuation of her sketchings. Fittingly, the readers' eyes are opened by this revelation which causes him or her to view the story from a different angle - through the eyes of the victim instead of the fugitive. The reader, in a sense, becomes the victim and feels the bite of the crimes against her in a first hand way that hits unexpectedly and with great impact. This woman is not only the narrator but the victim as well as the embodiment of the will and conscience of society. It is the horror of her fate that is the final step in convincing the boy to continue with his writings. By 'continue,' it is not implied that he should resume his endeavors out of boredom but that he should work to break the silence and use his talents and passions to denounce the societal corruption. The fact that a beaten apparition must mirror her scars and actually horrify the boy into fighting the dictatorial power of the military is a commentary on just how far society in general must be pushed to actively speak out against the military. They literally have to "see a ghost" to be persuaded into action. This is reminiscent of the Holocaust where worldwide denouncements and condemnation of the extermination of entire races did not surface until the horrors of the death camps were exposed by the media after the war's end. The battered sketch on the wall is a plea to the boy, begging him not to wait until it is too late to redirect his art to a useful protest against the continuing tragedies.

Like the bulk of the short stories examined thus far, "Graffiti" employs many of the themes and techniques common in the Latin American short story. The story denounces the silence of the oppressed people and details the crimes of the government. The characters are faceless and are ever too easily diverted from sympathizing with the plight of the political prisoner until he or she is actually personally affected by the crimes against these people in some way. Just as Valenzuela tricks the reader into forgetting about the political prisoners in "Fourth Version," Cortazar similarly tricks the reader into remaining distanced from the woman in his story until it is learned that she is the one telling us the story and not just a crazy fantasy within the boy's head. Cortazar masters this weaving of fantasy and reality in his works. By suddenly interchanging these two realms of awareness, the reader loses track of which is escape and which hard reality. Consequently, Cortazar's fiction itself can be disguised as a reality and, like the case of the woman, the plight of the character suddenly presents itself as a chilling tragedy that hits close to home.
Although Cortazar has mastered this ability to cause his reader to scramble the codes the text translates into meaning, he did not invent this literary device which restructures the abstract levels of any given text and the mental readings that they elicit. There is a term for this, it is called ecriture. Ecriture is the level of abstractness in a literary writing which formulates the specific text to be recoverable by the reader who must make sense out of the text. In short, ecriture is more or less a measurement of the approachability of a text. It is the balance between the roles within the text (plot, themes, irony, narration) and the overall structure of the text. An author must always keep in mind that he or she will have a varied audience and must try to write in a language and incorporate themes which are not alien to most readers and will succeed in causing the text to draw the images and statements and meanings for the reader which were intended to be created by the author. No two readers will ever draw the exact same perceptions, feelings and meanings from the same texts. This is so because of ecriture which is the abstract level of a literary text and how it is perceived with respect to a reader's background, values, political ideologies, personal experiences and other factors which influence a reader's interpretation of a text.

Cortazar does not write "accessible" stories in that all readers, despite their back-grounds, will get equal meaning from them. In fact, Cortazar himself has proudly referred to his writings as the "least literary possible." Surely an Argentine Montonero would be influenced by "Graffiti" differently than would a North American law school student, for example. Cortazar understands this and does not water down his writings by trying to make them generic and accessible to all. Instead, he provides the common denominator by doing just the opposite. He creates "anti-literature" as he plants unexpected, creative and unique surprises, technically known as "linguistic ruptures" in the narration and structure of his texts which catch all of his readers, regardless of their backgrounds, off-guard. The character of the story that emerges to be the narrator in "Graffiti" is just one of many examples of this "technique that involves complex literary structure that permits a profound appreciation of a work's narrative art" (SCSAS, p. 29). In fact, this trend in his works has spread to be a literary norm in Latin America and has caused many critics to claim that Cortazar has paved the road to a "new Latin American Fiction" known in its Castellano translation by Latin American scholars as the trend of the "nuevo cuento hispanoamericano."

Yet another "new fiction" text which is characterized as so because it is "unreadable" in that it does not cater to any particular value or social system and "largely evades, parodies, or innovates upon prevailing conventions, and thus persistently shocks, baffles, and frustrates standard expectations in the process of a
reading." 15 Is Cortazar's undisputed most gripping short story of social reality in Argentina which is imparted to the reader through structures of fantasy, chaos, nonsense and other "unreadable" structures. This story is none other than "Press Clippings." In this mesh of reality and fantasy, Cortazar adopts his trademark abstract narration that allows "chaos" to be the organizational common denominator of ecriture in this lively, ironic-fantastic creation.

"Press Clippings" is a moving short story which fuses fantasy, reality and the unexplained to create a unique blend of narration that highlights man's instinctive inhumanity towards his fellow man. In this story, Cortazar succeeds in dissolving the stereotype that it is the military soldier who is the "bad guy" and who is ruthlessly inhumane by virtue of his professional position and indoctrination into the armed forces. Cortazar underscores the fact that all human beings who are able to imagine and visualize evil are equally capable of executing inhumanity towards others and even enjoying such a deed in the process.

The story's point of view is presented in a first person, singular, limited narrative and testimony of Noemi, a renowned Argentine writer living in exile in Paris in 1978. She agrees to meet with a fellow Argentine artist exiled in Paris who is a sculptor who has asked her to compose a text for a picture book of his most recent works, "a series of small pieces whose theme was vio-lence in all the political and geographical latitudes that man inhabits as a man/wolf" (WLG. p. 82). The two meet at the sculptor's flat in Paris late one weeknight. Since both artists are committed to denouncing the military breeches of human rights in their homeland, they begin to dwell on the topic of violence. In the course of their discussion, Noemi shows the artist some press clippings she had received by mail from some friends in Argentina. The clippings were taken from a recent edition of the Buenos Aires based newspaper, El Pais, and are graphic testimonies of the fate of many "disappeared" by their relatives. (It should be noted that one of the two clippings in the story is an actual clipping and not the invention of Cortazar). Cortazar breaks with textual tradition as he splices the clippings between the dialogue of the two characters. As the two vent their feelings of helplessness against the current happenings in Argentina, the reality of these happenings is shoved in the reader's face as the gruesome and real clippings appear in parts throughout the text:

My daughter was kidnapped and taken to the military headquarters of the 601st Battalion. She was tortured... and shot on Christmas night. I received official notice of my

16 Modern Latin American Literature, p. 263. Hereafter cited as MLA.
daughter's murder in the city of La Plata... at the Lanus police station where... all they would show me of my daughter were the hands cut off of her body and placed in a jar that carried the number 24 (WLG, p. 85).

The reality of these clippings causes the two to realize how powerless they are in Paris where they are removed from the scene of these crimes and lack the political, social and geographical connections to break the criminal silence. They feel as if they were nothing but small spectators of an overwhelming circus and their protests are not sufficient and superficial since they are so hopelessly removed from the heart of their struggle:

"You can see that all this is worth nothing," the sculptor said... "I've spent months writing this shit, you write books, that woman denounces atrocities..., we almost come to believe things are changing, and then all you need is two minutes of reading to understand the truth again."

"I'm thinking that way too... But if I accepted things like that... It would be like sending them a telegram of support and... there never will be any reason to be silent." (WLG, p. 86).

Such dialogue reflects the inner struggle of all who strive to protest the inhumanities of any repressive power, whether the individual is a political activist through the form of art, legislation or militancy. The sculptor's feelings of powerlessness are constantly combatted by the realization that inactivity is the only thing worse than the feeling of powerlessness because silence is consent and inactivity is support. It is better to try and fail then not to try at all. It can be reasonably assumed that is the daily struggle that Cortazar himself and his fellow contemporaries committed to protest literature face each and every day. Like the technique implemented by Valenzuela in "Fourth Version," Cortazar utilizes the predicament of his characters to show the reader the difficulties he encounters in creating works such as the one being read.

After their long meeting, Noemi wanders out into the dark Parisian street hoping to find a taxi home. She stumbles across a crying little girl who is sitting on a porch besides a path that leads to a small hut. The girl tells Noemi that she is crying because her father is "doing things" to her mother. Noemi follows the girl to the hut where she witnesses a naked woman tied and gagged and being burned with a cigarette. Noemi picks up a nearby stool, hits the man with it and knocks him unconscious, frees the woman and together they both undress the man so that the mother can take revenge by burning him
with the cigarette. Noemi is unsure of whether her actions were appropriate. For all she knows, maybe the father was taking revenge on the mother who had previously abused him and Noemi had reversed such a justice. Regardless of who is taking revenge on whom, Noemi wonders if, by blindly promoting the sudden turn around of events and watching the father be tortured, she is playing a role which is equally sinister to that of which she first wit-nessed as she asks herself, "what was my right and my part in what was going on under my own eyes" (WLG, p. 93)? She realizes that by prompting and finding a sense of justice and fulfill-ment in the torturing of a fellow human being, she is no more humane, good natured, and respectful of human life than is the most sadistic Argentine torturer in the Proceso.

This revelation reminds her of a passage from a Jack London story about a trapper who has been captured by a tribe and is being tortured by the women of the tribe. London does not describe the detail of the torture because as an author it is too graphic for even him to put on paper and he does not feel obligated to describe the scene because he is sure that the any human reading his text has the capacity to both visualize for himself as well as commit such an act. Noemi goes against all she has struggled to achieve through her works by siding with the evil in her by instinctively assuming the role of the torturer. By doing so, she realizes why Jack London did not need to illustrate the cruelty of the tribeswomen in his text which is "exquisitely refined in each new variant [of torture] but never described... London's imagination must have seen and remembered what his hand was incapable of writing" (WLG, p. 93). Noemi is exposed to what Jack London attempts to demonstrate in his text, namely that evil is naturally within everyone, and like any other emotions of love, sadness, happiness, etc... it is a human characteristic that needs not be detailed by an author or artist for one to understand. This causes Noemi to wonder if her ability to visualize human savagery has completely overcome her to the point where the wolf in the human man/wolf alter ego structure has dominated on the side of darkness and caused her to imagine the morbid scenario surrounding her. Furthermore, whether her experience was one of reality or fantasy is of secondary importance because, regardless, she was on the side of evil when she aided in the torturing and was content and convinced that it was at that time the side of humanity on which she belonged. Like the military officers in Argentina who believe that the acts of cruelty they inflict on the prisoners are acts of justice and goodness in the name of mankind, Noemi had been similarly persuaded to numb her humanity to the point of letting her human, killer instinct overcome her in the name of justice and goodness:
Who knows whether... [the experience] was gusts of night, pieces of images coming back out of a newspaper clipping... I though I was on the right side... how could I accept that I too was there on the other side from the cut-off hands and the common graves (WLG. p. 94).

The next scene jumps to the following day where Noemi is still unsure if what she encountered was in fact reality or some kind of outer body experience or hallucination instilled within her by the grotesque press clippings she had been reading the previous night. She called the sculptor to tell him of her story. A few days later, he sent her a letter which included the actual news article of the event that she had described to him. According to the article, which agreed with her story and even contained a photograph of the exact shack Noemi had encountered, the event took place in Marseilles, a city far from Paris and impossible for her to have been at when the torturings took place. The sculptor triumphs in his discovery which disclaims Noami's claim to have witnessed such an event and he is amused by the fact that she makes such a claim. He scribbled on the article, "here is the source of your remarkable personal experience," (WLG. p. 95).

Ironically, the sculptor had mishandled the article when putting it in the envelope and had accidentally ripped it, failing to include the latter portion of the news article which went into detail about the nature of the torturings. However, as it is learned through the aforementioned passage of the Jack London story, one does not need the details to be imparted because all humans are capable of imagining and therefore committing heinous acts of savagery against one's fellow man:

The clipping broke off when the sculptor had licked the envelope too abundantly... he had done the same thing as Jack London (WLG. p. 95).

The ripped article is the height of narrative irony in the story. Just like London's readers, Noemi needs no further details of the gore described in the press clipping because she has already demonstrated to herself that she can envision it. Cortazar more or less "ironizes irony" by demonstrating the superficiality of the clipping. It does not matter how much of it is omitted, the mere mention of the word 'torture' is all that is needed for one to instill an accurate understanding of the circumstances.

Now the experience of Noemi can be further questioned. How could such an impossible awareness exist? As Noemi wonders the same things, she resorts to returning to the street by the sculptor's flat where she does not recognize any porch nor the hut that she had previously visited. The facts indicate that it is impossible for Noemi
to have physically been at the scene of the sensational crime but how could she have known its details even before it was reported in the newspaper? Apparently, Noemi had experienced a spiritual linkage with one suffering elsewhere. She had relieved her sense of helplessness and distance from the abused by traveling impossible distances through some kind of inexplicable outer body experience. This can be the only explanation. This spiritual merger indicates the reality that Noemi, and every human being, are but stars in a constellation that are interconnected in a similar orbit in a common universe.

Leaving the reader with no other choice but to accept the fact that Noemi had experienced a sort of spiritual travel, Cortazar employs his skills to once again create a world of surrealistic bizarreness and playful fantasy which represent reality. In keeping with his commitment to ecriture, Cortazar employs an abstract textual and plot structure to highlight the message he wishes his text to convey. Again dream and reality are reversed and interchanged so that the themes they highlight become the focus of the reader's attention and what is real or not is only the concern of fictional pursuits, not thematic ones. By confusing reality and fantasy and the possible with the impossible Cortazar uses "confusion as the goal of his narrative structure which challenges the competence of a reader of texts that cannot, by virtue of the literary act, offer unambiguous meanings and pre-programmed interpretations" (LAS. P. 100). In short, the ecriture of "Press Clippings" is constructed so that the more the reader strives to make sense out of the bizarre story, the more he will unavoidably be exposed to the overall societal commentary Cortazar is trying to make.

What is the "point" Cortazar is trying to make with this work? Like the sculptor, Cortazar shows the reader that everyone is a "man/wolf." Evil and cruelty are natural instincts in every human just as are love and charity. Cortazar himself follows the pattern of Noemi who first realizes this fact of nature through her extrasensory experience and her ultimate understanding of Jack London's coming to terms with the lack of necessity to illustrate human pain and misery and its implementation to the reader who instinctively can elicit such natural images from his or her own imagination. Noemi ultimately agrees with Cortazar as well as London that it is her mission as an author to demythologize the popular belief that some people are good and others evil. The story concludes with her immediate embarkment on finishing the text for the sculptor so that he can publish his book which preaches the unpleasant reality that all are part savage:

I wrote the end of the text and went to slip it under his door, it was proper that he should know the ending, so that
In the same vein, "Press Clippings" which is Cortazar's "sculpture," his piece of art that depicts the "man/wolf" split-persona of all humans, is complete once the reader realizes cruelty is within us all. Cortazar specifically makes this point to clarify the stereotyped images of the actors in the "dirty war." In a nutshell, the military officers are generally considered the ones who are cruel and inhumane criminals while the civilians and prisoners are considered to be the innocent and undeserving victims. However, through Noemi's role as an actor who helped the victim in the hut turn around and assume the role of the torturer, it is quickly apparent that no one is wholly good or evil regardless of their role in society, all people possess and are capable of exercising both traits. Commenting on "Press Clippings," Cortazar admits that the story serves to illustrate his conviction that "all antifascists have an internal fascism hidden within them" (LAS, p. 103).

Hence, what Cortazar maintains is a revolutionary stance in social protest literature written about the "dirty war." He says that the military is not the source of evil, human nature is this source and the military was just utilizing it as does everyone else. Cortazar makes the reader realize that the military is composed not of sadistic monsters, but of your average person with average human strengths and weaknesses. Upon completing much reading of social protest literature, the reader is likely to acquire a view of the military as subhumans and of a different breed than "normal, caring and sensitive civilians." However the fact is: anyone could be in the military and could be easily convinced that the torturings, imprisonment and death are being done for the good of the whole, the reason being that the victims are evil and the side of humanity is taking control of and eliminating such dark forces. Noemi is an accomplice to the torture of the father and she feels no guilt, sympathy nor mercy towards him because she is convinced that he is evil and what is being done to him is justice. Likewise, the military personnel are convinced of the same as they execute violent forms of restraint against a sector of the public who they believe are an evil threat to society and goodness in general. The prisoners, most of whom were accused of belonging to the Montonero resistance, were believed by the military as well as certain sectors of Argentine society to be merciless and immoral terrorists who thrived on murder and destruction. The military honestly believed that any form of suppression against this group, no matter how violent, was an act of goodness and humanity. Who's to say who is the "good guy?" Both sides are doing what they believe is right. Both sides are capable of evil as well as good and can
righteously justify both. Why should any side, then, be considered to be of a different breed or value than the other? Cortazar argues, quite effectively, that the military is exercising its innate powers of evil just as any other faction of society can utilize these same instincts. It is not the military that is particularly evil, it is man who is an inherently evil/good, man/wolf being.

"Cortazar's obsession is the contradictions between the imaginary and the seeming world, in short, he is fascinated by conflicting realities." 16

Cortazar's most noted trait is his mastery of ecriture through his usage of the intermixing of fantasy and reality in regards to every day life. Cortazar, who has been quoted as saying, "reality appears fantastic to me" considers his inability to distinguish the real from the imaginary his greatest strength. It is the images he provokes through his writings which invari-ably center around very real, common, and even mundane places and characters that are subjected to small doses of the fantastic, which makes Cortazar the widely respected, international literary figure that he is today. Not only "Graffiti" and "Press Clippings," but the vast majority of his works in which dream and reality are reversed and indistinguishable are considered surrealistic and profoundly absurd, yet each succeeds in metamorphosizing such fantasy into a very concrete message from Senor Cortazar to his bewildered yet enlightened reader. Like a magician, Cortazar entertains his audience while dazzling them with surprising bursts of the unknown and the ambiguous. In trying to figure out just how this magician manages to produce these amazing illusions before one's eyes, one strives to understand the entirety of the trick. The role of the magician and his fantastic world is viewed as is the real world of the spectator. Although the amazed audience may not be able to discover the tricks used by such a skilled magician, it is guaranteed to learn a great deal about his world, their own world and, most importantly, how these two worlds function together.

THE SHORT STORY (CONCLUSION)
To a greater degree than the longer fictions, the short story can combine the universal and the particular in a short space, so that each enhances the other.\textsuperscript{17}

The short stories reviewed thus far have all made significant contributions to the study of Argentine social protest literature of the "dirty war" and have helped to disrupt the silence that had previously prevented an international awareness and a public denunciation of such a tragic period of Argentine history.

By mediating these texts between their ecriture and their corresponding features of inscription, the reader is faced with an image of reality. This image is reflected by the language, style and themes common to all of these works. They are linked together by commonly denouncing the silence by alluding to nameless characters who must sift fantasy from reality. These wandering figures searching for their identity represent the nature and extent of human suffering in a world that denies them their very humanity. The short story strives to link the real world to the fictional world (and, in many cases, intentionally confuses the two) in order to attract the reader's attention to relevant societal issues which plagued Argentina between 1973 and 1980:

\begin{quote}
All narrative depends on the workings of plot expectations: the reader demands that stories 'make sense'. \ldots in terms of either a plot scheme or in terms of \ldots potential narrative structures. The writer constructs his tales with the confidence in \ldots the competence and ability of the reader to follow and impose discourse structure on his tale (\textit{LAS}, p. 99).
\end{quote}

The Argentine short story "came out of the closet" and was put to use by many bold writers fighting the silence and sacrificing their freedom to remain in their native countries and, in other cases, sacrificing their lives in order to make their statements heard. These "new" Argentine short stories, that such authors have created in the face of much sacrifice, serve an intended purpose. They all strive to open the eyes and ears of the Argentine and international society to the truths about the atrocities of the "dirty war." By sharing a unique recipe of literary codes and conventions that are worked into each Argentine social protest short story, the resulting work of literature stands apart from the "conventional" short story that does not feature more than paradox, metaphor and pun as its structural basis.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{The Short Story}, p. 13.
Aspects of subversiveness, namelessness, powerlessness, the tensions between courage and cowardice, reality and fantasy, and protest and silence as well as the appropriate "weapons" that are used to both repress and promote each of these aforementioned traits are all highlighted by the courageous Argentine authors of the 1970's and 1980's. These authors rightfully condemn the silence and the horrors of the Argentine political situation during the Proceso. With this in mind, it is fairly easy for one to understand that, unlike all other bodies of literature and their respective short fictions, the Argentine short story has shown a consistent interest in the nature of its country and the plight of its people as well as the damaging impacts upon both brought about by human rights violations that must no longer hide behind a dense wall of silence.
THE TESTIMONIAL
(INTRODUCTION)

Not even the most direct fictionalization of the calamity can achieve the immediate impact of the testimonies from victims and witnesses.¹⁸

The testimonial is a written declaration which certifies a person's character, conduct or qualifications or to the value of a thing by witness, under oath or by affirmation. In short, the written testimonial in "dirty war" literature, unlike fiction, does not concern itself with high-lighting an ominous silence and attempting to describe such trying times in Argentine history, it has a more basic function: to serve as evidence that the "dirty war" and all the events that composed it did in fact exist. Testimonials are invaluable as they serve as proof that can challenge any conflicting view which contests the question of fact that this specific phenomenon did happen. The testimonial is an assertion which is offered in order to help establish another fact, namely, the existence of the "dirty war."

The testimonial should not be viewed as some type of "red tape" or bureaucratic procedure that only serves to establish certainty in times where instances of doubt may prevail. Unlike instances of courtroom evidence or witnesses at the scene of a car accident, the testimonial itself has, over the years, evolved into an established literary format. Works such as Anne Frank's *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, which grippingly expose the realities of the Holocaust and American racism respectively, are just a few of the many internationally renowned testimonials that have a place in the world of literature. Similarly, Argentina has its share of written documents that shock, frighten, and move the reader as page after page reveals an unimaginable and untold history.

Their literature alone will not topple unjust regimes, but it does convert real concerns into effective images that clarify issues and sensitize readers. ¹⁹

¹⁸ *Argentina's Unmastered Past*, p. 10. Hereafter cited as AUP.
¹⁹ *Literary Culture and Society in the New Latin America*, p. 177. Hereafter cited in text as LCS.
The two most widely noted testimonials about the "dirty war" were written by Jacobo Timerman, a zionist Jew, newspaper publisher and owner, and prison survivor of the proceso and Andrew Graham Yooll, a newspaper reporter and self-exiled compatriot. Their two most successful testimonial works, respectively entitled: *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell without a Number* and *A Matter of Fear* are still today among the best selling, most gripping and most eye-opening publications to come out of (actually - to be smuggled into) Argentina. The theme both journalist/authors stress in their works is that of "nunca mas" (never again). Timerman contrasts the "dirty war" with the Holocaust and Yooll similarly preaches that the most important weapon against the "dirty war" is that its horrors live in the public memory so that it never happens again. Noted Latin American essayist and literary critic, Cesar Fernandez Moreno, when responding to the courage of Timerman and Yooll summed up what their contributions to Latin American literature achieved. He praised their works as serving as "an intense form of language which, in its turn, is the most direct and profound communication medium men have at their command to express the spirit of any given community." It is on these works by such a courageous handful of victims who boldly defied the strictest limitations of torture, imprisonment, exile and censorship that this study will now focus.

( JACOMBO TIMERMAN )

*The results of the six day war and the Pro-Israel and Pro-Jewish sentiment that stemmed from it in 1967 were immediately visible in the attempt to equate Israelis with the Nazis as aggressors, occupiers, racists, oppressors and murderers."* - Bernard Lewis (HRR, p. 29).

By far, the most widely renowned author and political prisoner of the "dirty war" is Jacobo Timerman. A Jewish native of the U.S.S.R., born in Bar, Ukraine in 1923, he immigrated to Argentina in 1928 and was young enough to be granted immediate citizenship. Timerman excelled academically and pursued journalism after college, landing many prestigious jobs as reporters for daily newspapers such as *La Razon* and magazines such as *Confirmado*. In 1969 Timerman started his own newspaper called *La Opinion* which quickly soared to become the most circulated daily in the nation, known for its bold writers, leftist slant and courageous denunciations and coverage of crimes committed by Peronist and military governments. Timerman describes his newspaper as "an adversary of the right for being Zionist, an adversary of the military for being
terrorist, an adversary of the mass culture for publishing sophisticated writers and an adversary of the left for publishing soviet dissidents" (PWC. p. 125).

In the early morning of April 15, 1977, Timerman was kidnapped from his Buenos Aires apartment in front of his wife and three children by twenty armed men acting on orders of high army officers. He was then held in prison, never having received an official charge against him, and was subjected to brutal torture consisting of: solitary confinement, a mock execution, electric shocks to his genitals, and regular beatings. The imprisonment of such a prominent Argentine made international headlines and caused the world to finally become aware of the human rights violations that plagued Argentina. Due to the intense pressure of the Jimmy Carter administration in association with Amnesty International, the military government finally relented after two years and freed Timerman in 1979 when he was subsequently stripped of his Argentine citizenship and exiled to Israel where, to this day, he is still pursuing journalism (President Alfonsin restored his citizenship, yet Timerman has only returned to Buenos Aires once to partake in the prosecution and conviction of 300 war criminals in 1984). It was in Israel where he wrote of his ordeal in *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. According to this work, Timerman accuses his aggressors as being extra harsh with him because he is a Jew and he further writes out his recipe for survival in such confinement (if one is fortunate enough to receive international awareness of one's unjust imprisonment-making being murdered a less likely possibility) by divesting himself of all hope and interest in the outside world, reaching a level of passivity that still allowed him to avoid a relationship of dependency with his torturers.

His best selling work which was called by Anthony Holden of the London Times, "*Timerman's testimony that should prove a lasting work of prison literature as a manual for those who may one day have to attempt to survive such an ordeal,"* is more than just a "survival guide" to torture, it is hard evidence - a readily available scream that is constantly willing to break the chilling silence and tell the world the true circumstances that composed the Junta's pledge to a program of what they termed "national reorganization and elimination of subversion." This work has been read around the world, excerpts have been published in the *New Yorker*, and it has been made into a film for television and this book by "*one of the few exemplary witnesses among the countless martyrs of our awful century"* (AUP. p. 10) has acted as the "tattle-tale" that let the world know exactly how the big bully tormented the defenseless child.

Before Timerman's testimonial is recounted and criticized here, a reproduction on his only other published work regarding his ordeal would be appropriate in that it serves to summarize Timerman's views as well as answer an integral question, namely:
What is a "disappearance?" In this short essay entitled, *A New Crime* and which was delivered personally at an Amnesty International Convention in 1983, Timerman notes:

The situation in Argentina is quite horrible: a government decided to exterminate all opposition, or what they thought was the opposition, in a way that was absolutely unusual in history. They decided to create a new category of punishment: "disappearance" - They kidnap whole families, destroy their bodies, and declare that the victim never existed - and if they never existed there is no crime. (TWH, p. 79).

Timerman's testimonial serves to prove that prisoners did exist and that there were crimes committed. His first person testimonial is directed to the only human thing he has any contact with outside of his small, wet cell. When he looks through the peep-hole in his cell down the long corridor of other cells, he occasionally spots the eye of the prisoner in the cell across from him staring at him through his or her tiny peep-hole. The two cannot speak together, do not know each other's gender, age, nor name yet they are the only ties to humanity each have. It is to this "comrade in tears" that Timerman dedicates his testimony and in doing so dedicates these truths to the thousands that perished in reality when they "never existed" on paper.

Timerman's task of relating what it is like to be a political prisoner is, surprisingly, not the main focus of his testimonial. This is so because Timerman believes that to try to impart to the reader what it is like to be tortured in prison is impossible. It is one of those things that words just can't explain: "In the long months of confinement, I often thought of how to transmit the pain that a tortured person undergoes. And always I concluded that it was impossible. . . It is a pain without reference, revelatory symbols or clues to serve as indicators" 20. Hence, Timerman does not expend too much effort on the impossible task of "telling what it's like," he does attempt this, however he puts most of his emphasis on pinpointing the political and personal circumstances that caused his imprisonment in the first place. He looks at the external factors that in Argentina and elsewhere throughout history have given rise to a systematic persecution of large bodies of individuals and he attempts to isolate these "weeds" and pull them out by their roots.

Shifting away from his cell, Timerman recounts for the reader which civilians were considered subversive by the military and why. His backgrounding, on target and informative, makes it clear that violence was sweeping the country and punishment and

20 *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, p. 10. Hereafter cited in text as *PWC*. 47
imprisonment came unjustly and randomly to civilians who may have not have had any affiliations with groups that were considered to be threats to the government:

"Between '73-'76 the violence enveloping the country erupted on all fronts. There were rural and urban Trotskyite guerillas; right-wing Peronist death squads; armed terrorist groups of the large labor unions; paramilitary army groups; terrorist groups of Catholic rightists. . . hundreds of groups that found ideological justification for armed struggle in a poem by Neruda or an essay by Marcuse. A few lines of Mao Zedong might trigger off the assassination of a businessman in a Buenos Aires suburb (PWC, p. 32).

Born from immigrant Jewish parents that had narrowly escaped the Holocaust, Timerman is a devout Jew. He is a zionist and outspoken denouncer of anti-Semitism which prevails in much of Argentina. This is evidenced by the recent 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires. The above passage typifies the pattern of events that could lead to any horrific pogrom. Similarly in Nazi Germany in the thirties and forties the formation of political parties ultimately led to the massacre of six million Jews. In Argentina, as in Germany, the military government officially imposed codes of censorship on films, theatrical and literary works. Sociology, philosophy and psychology were eliminated as aspects of school curriculum. Such limitations prevented dissen-tion from the public in response to the military's view that it was "preferable to exterminate those in Argentina who at some point might reimplant modern society and who hence constituted the enemy. The ideology of the armed forces was hate and ignorance. What you don't understand you destroy." (PWC, p. 95). Argentina was Nazi Germany all over again.

Unlike other "dirty war" literature, Timerman focuses much of his work on demon-strating how history repeats itself by drawing a long string of frightening similarities between the "dirty war" and the Holocaust. Timerman relies on mankind's obligation to never forget the horrors of the Holocaust in order to plea that mankind similarly must acknowledge the "dirty war" and never forget its horrors as they continue their cries of "nunca mas." The pain of the prisoner intertwined with images of the Holocaust is what gives Timerman's testimonial its haunting versimilitude and what makes it such a "real" cry of horror amidst a frightened, silent majority. What becomes the most disgusting aspect of the "dirty war" as seen through this testimonial is that it closely followed the pattern of the Holocaust and the alert individual should have sensed what was coming by way of example of historical patterns:
When the extreme Right combats its natural enemies, its most hated object is the Jew. This hatred inspires the extreme Right, exalts it, elevates it to romantic, metaphysical heights. Its natural enemy is the left, but its target of hatred is the Jew. When it comes to the Jew, hatred can branch off into something greater than the Marxist peril.

. . . In Nazi Germany, the Jews were guilty through birth, the liberals through weakness and corruption, the communists through ideology. The same equation of guilt proved suitable for the Argentine military.

This is the Argentine mystery: the fact that the world has been unable to avoid something seemingly destroyed in 1945, in the ashes of Berlin, in the gallows of the Nuremberg trials and in the U.N. charter. The fact that in the 1970s, a nation of no great importance, undergoing an explosion of lustful, murderous drives, has found coexistence with the world at large, without need of ideology and without need of despair. Merely as a bad hangover of that bygone period, and a forewarning that these hangovers still prevail and can recur, time and again, with barely a trace of hope" (PWC, p. 61).

Despite precautions such as the United Nations, the founding of the state of Israel, the Nuremberg trials, the formation of Amnesty International, and international peace treaties, the Argentine Jew has been forced to relive the nightmare of the third reich. The Jew was the butt of the military's gripes in Argentina and the Jew was kept out of public office and powerful organizations. The patterns that gave rise to the Nazi movement were repeating themselves and the world's "safety devices" did not respond to or even slow down this path to destruction and inhumanity. Imprisoned and tortured as a dissenter and as a Jew aroused Timerman's sense of identity with his heritage. He was unfortunate enough to receive a first hand view of how humanity has historically treated the Jews. The lethal mix of totalitarianism and anti-Semitism yields pain and silence. It is almost impossible to fathom the pain and suffering of the political prisoners as described in so many fictional works, but Timerman goes even a step beyond by writing from actual experience and imparting the conditions of being a prisoner abused even more severely than other prisoners:

But perhaps the Holocaust is in a way already occurring. . . There are no gas chambers in Argentina, and this leaves many with a clear conscience. Yet between 1974 and 1978, the violation of girls in clandestine prisons had a peculiar characteristic: Jewish girls were violated twice as often as non-Jewish girls.
No one can predict what will happen to the future of the 400,000 Argentine Jews. But everyone knows that something terrible has already happened in recent years you consider two facts: that the repression took place in the second half of the 1970s, not 1939; and that nothing equal to it had taken place in the Western world since 1945, with the end of World War II (PWC, p. 71).

The relationship between the guard and the prisoner and that between the guard and the Jewish prisoner are two different circumstances. Timerman recounts how the guards would find amusement in singling him out and beating him with a rubber hose while shouting "dirty Jew" and other such slanders. He recounts as Jews would outwardly deny their Judaism and claim that they were of Protestant descent in order to escape extra harsh torture. Since the Spanish inquisition, Jews have been scapegoats and societal ailments have routinely been blamed on such a different, defenseless and dispersed minority. They are a minority that can be hated for reasons they cannot change. Political prisoners could be brainwashed to change ideologies but how can one change a Jew?

Following this pattern, "the military government that took power in Argentina in March 1976 arrived with an all-embracing arsenal of Nazi ideology as part of its structure" (PWC, p. 69). Although some may contend that Timerman's statements such as the aforementioned are harsh overreactions, however after reading his testimonial, little doubt is left in the mind of any critic that, indeed, Jews were disproportionately discriminated upon and the episodes of torture and imprisonment of Jews are the most severe of all "dirty war" victims and exceed government claims: "Timerman is right to stress the anti-Semitic component in the fantasy world inhabited by his captors, and also, in milder forms, in the slightly more rational views of the "moderates" in the military government (AUP, p. 12).

If there is any doubt in anyones mind that the Jews were the scapegoats of societal ills, the "picked-on" populace and the feared sector of Argentina, the following excerpts from a fourteen hour "information session" between Timerman and the director of prisons in which Timerman must deny the absurd accusation by his accusers that he is aiding Menachem Begin in an international Jewish conspiracy which aims to seize world power through Israeli colonization in Patagonia achieved through the subversive aid of the

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22 Argentina has the world's fourth largest Jewish population next to The United States, The Soviet Union and Israel.

22 Menachem Begin was the Prime Minister of Israel in during the Argentine military rule.
Argentine Jewish population (this is known as the Andinia Plan), demonstrates the extent of paranoia and hatred towards the Jews by the Argentine military:

**Q:** We'd like to know some further details on the Andinia Plan. How many troops would the State of Israel be prepared to send?

**A:** Do you actually believe in this plan, that it even exists? How can you imagine 400,000 Argentine Jews being able to seize nearly 1 million square kilometers in the southern part of the country? What would they do with it? How would they populate it? How could they defeat 25 million Argentines, the armed forces?

**Q:** Come on, Timerman, you're an intelligent person. Find a better answer. Let me give an explanation so we can get to the bottom of things.

Israel has a very small territory and can't accommodate all the Jews in the world. They need as a power center Argentina, especially the south which, if it were well developed by Jewish immigrants from various Latin American countries, could become an economic emporium, a food and oil basket, the road to Antartica.

Timerman's testimonial proves that everything that has happened once, no matter how horrific, can happen again. The Argentines have been infamous as haters of Marx, Freud and Einstein - all Jews who went against Catholic church traditions. Similarly, Timerman was not seen as a subversive but rather as a Zionist, a Jew that was the incarnation of Semitic evil determined to ruin Argentina. It is through this very same lens that the Nazi vision stared down at the Jews during the Holocaust. The military tried to make an example out of Timerman in order to scare the Jewish population, which was known for its ability to group and protest injustice, into silence. Fortunately, this aim was not achieved. Due to intense pressure from the international superpowers, the military was obligated to give Timerman a judicial tribunal in September of 1977 in which he was found to have no charge against him and was declared to be released in 1979 after his citizenship was revoked and he was sentenced into exile (after being held for two years on technicalities without a charge).

Timerman survived. He struggled to live according to the doctrine of a prisoner who told him: "Keep going. That's the important thing, not to let them knock you down. If you keep going, everything will someday be resolved" (PWC, p. 92). Timerman
adhered and succeeded. He refused to shut his eyes or accept death and defeat. Timerman's struggle is indicative of the Jewish struggle as a whole. It thrives on shreds of hope, endurance and courage in the face of impossible odds and immense opposing forces. It entails the defiance of silence and a numbness necessary to endure hatred in its most vindictive expressions. Looking back on his ordeal in Tel Aviv, Israel, where the Jew is not the ridiculed and persecuted minority, Timerman notes: "if thirty five years the Holocaust the Jew can still be tortured and killed, then he has kept his place in history as does the world's inability to help him or understand him" (PWC, p. 125). One cannot relive and try to change what has been done in such an unfortunate past, but there is hope that if public knowledge of such repression and bigotry is widespread and nurtured and not forgotten or shirked off as "views from the past," that such events in history's sad spiral of persecution be forever altered. A secure future is rooted in a true understanding of the past.

**THE TESTIMONIAL**  
(CONCLUSION)

Today's writer cannot control the political process... and is not esteemed by society's power elites, in contrast to the status of writers a half century ago. But if the writer today cannot be an agent of history in the style of the old bards, at least he or she can claim a central position as the most important speaker who interprets culture and history and exercises social control over the reading public. (LCS, p. 181).

Timerman as well as many other authors of the testimonial, such as Mercedes Sosa and Corradi Guissani helped instill a new mentality in the defeated Argentine society. Sustenance stemming from ideologies of resistance and conquest in the name of human rights are slowly starting to resurface in Argentina and other such "recovering" nations as the public now has the freedom to read such testimonials and get a true, first hand understanding of a history that has evasively eluded them. Such testimonials are bound facts lying on shelves, in libraries, on supermarket counters just waiting to be utilized—more than just readings but as pieces of hard evidence that is being passed throughout a group of survivors who are now just starting to understand the magnitude of what they had survived. Granted, as stressed in the aforementioned excerpt, writers are not publicly esteemed or commonly praised in Argentina or elsewhere for that matter, but, like the journalist, the writer, especially the testimonial writer, serves an invaluable purpose which exceeds the importance of any possible doing of any influential societal elite; this
function is the telling of the truth and the exposure of a sad reality that must be faced, analyzed, understood and forever overcome.
The novel is today's most popular literary form. It is an extended work of prose fiction which possesses a magnitude that allows it to permit a greater variety of characters, plot complications, and social commentary than other literary forms such as the poem, short story, testimonial, or novella. Particularly in its role within "dirty war" Argentine literature, the novel commonly fuses illusion and reality in political life to recreate the horrors of the past and the present needed to break the silence. Despite its form, whether tragic, comic, satiric or romantic, the Argentine social protest novel invariably attempts to present the effect of "realism" by representing plots and characters which identify with a social class and position of the proceso's composition. Hence, each novel has its share of villains, heroes, masters, and victims which portray what life was like in Argentina during the military rule. This has been the case and still is the case in Argentina:

There appears to be a stance that seems to be a constant of the contemporary Argentine novel, a proclivity toward viewing man through his existential, sociopolitical, and cultural preoccupations. Politically inspired novels in Argentine society date back to the times of Escheverria and Sarmiento. It is fitting that the birth of literature in this country came about through the form of protest against heavy handed, militant regimes. Literature in Argentina unquestionably evolved as a means to pursue social and political ends. It is this type of literature that I will focus on in the late twentieth century Argentine republic. 25

It is seemingly ingrained into the Argentine novel to emphasize the influence of social conditions as applied to a historical milieu and event and to embody a thesis recommending social reform or lamenting the lack of it.

Today's Argentine social protest novelists continue the tradition and courageously write by the pulse of their blood. Of the most noted contemporary Argentine novels, the vast majority are commitments to denouncing the atrocities and silence brought about by the "dirty war." This study will now focus on the works by the two leading "dirty war," novelists: Manuel Puig and Humberto Constantini who have authored the titles to be addressed here: Kiss of The Spider Woman (Puig), I

25 The Contemporary Argentine Novel, p. 18; hereafter cited in text as CAN.
and *The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis* (Constantini). All of which have succeeded in creating a prophetic vision of the Argentine everyman as continuing in a struggle of self-liberation and self-progression while struggling to defeat repression and a societal subjugation by the military government which imposed a tight fitting and silencing muzzle on Argentine society.

*(MANUEL PUIG)*

*The films help you not to go crazy. You see another way of life. It doesn't matter that the way of life shown by Hollywood was phony. It helped you hope.*

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Born in 1932 in the Pampas, Manuel Puig lived in an isolated pueblo of less than one thousand residents. The town wasn't the most exciting place in the Southern hemisphere and consequently the town's single movie theater provided the sole entertainment and social focus for Puig and his companions. Left with little choice but to become a "film buff" Puig found himself actually taking notes during the different films played every day. Among his favorites were *Spell-bound, Wuthering Heights,* and *Rebecca.* These films served as proof that there was more to the world than Puig's dusty little pueblo and offered him the hope of possibly pursuing a more fulfilling existence. It is this "hope" that fueled Puig to leave his town in 1950 and venture to the city to enroll at the University of Buenos Aires and to subsequently win a scholarship to study filmmaking in Rome. After travelling throughout Europe and writing, he moved to New York City where he published his first novel, *La Tradicion.* in English this novel was translated to be entitled *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth.* Due to the fact that this novel received great praise and a warm welcoming in Europe and the United States as well as in Argentina, Puig's career as a "cinematic novelist" until his death in July of 1990.

Deviating from the metaphysical trends of Borges-inspired "Nuevo Cuento Hispanoamericano," Puig's novels represent his knowledge and enthusiasm of cinematography as they are invariably written in cinematic style, marked by character interaction with little authoral guidance: "Puig used the subtle tool of dialogue, making his characters do all the talking and mini-mizing narration* (CBY, p. 461). Furthermore, not only the style of his novels but their contents (characters, plots, literary techniques) revolve around the world of film as well. For example, *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* is about a group of film aficionados who meet regularly in a Buenos Aires

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26 *Current Biographical Yearbook,* p. 458; hereafter cited in text as CBY.
cafe and discuss their heroine, Rita Hayworth, and her movies, personal traits, private life, and more. Ultimately, the members of the group lose their own sense of identity and personal ambition as they devote their entire lives into fantasizing about their heroine. These "characters who suck the thumb of popular culture to avoid chewing the gristle of reality" (CBY, p. 461) are typical of characters found in Puig's works, nearly all of whom's sole inspiration in life is derived from the cinema, whose models they try hard to imitate.

After the relative success of his novels following Betrayed by Rita Hayworth: Heartbreak Tango and The Buenos Aires Affair, Puig moved to Mexico in 1976 where he published his most internationally well-known work, "a scathing expose of what he saw as the cultural and political infertility of his homeland" (CBY, p. 463) entitled Kiss of The Spider Woman. As with his other novels, this work uses the themes of love, sex, power, and the cinema in order to explore Puig's characters' lives and how they are affected at polar ends by the sobering limitations and human rights violations of the military government verses the hope that exists within their lavish, Hollywood-inspired fantasies. Fittingly, in 1985, while Puig was still publishing best selling novels from his home in Rio de Janeiro, Kiss of The Spider Woman was put on screen by Brazilian film maker Hector Babenco. The screenplay stared William Hurt and Raul Julia and received international praise and was nominated for various Academy Awards. Today Puig lives in New York and Rio de Janeiro and lectures throughout the United States when he is not writing screenplays.

The novel is set in an unnamed, clandestine political prison in Argentina. The story is embedded entirely in the dialogue between two cell mates, "the Argentine odd couple" (CBY, p. 465); Valentin, an imprisoned fierce revolutionary charged as being an "enemy of the state" who has little on his mind that takes precedence over his stubborn commitment to overthrow the miliary regime through guerilla offenses, and Molina, a very effeminate, homosexual window dresser who is charged with "corruption of minors" and whose only efforts are to get out of prison to return to his mother and his estranged lover. Their dialogue in addition to a few interspersed police reports makes for the entire narrative of the text.

Unbeknown to Valentin, Molina secretly struck a plea bargain with the prison officials and the Argentine government that would reduce his sentence. He is purposely put in Valentin's cell and is ordered to tactfully and inconspicuously befriend him in order to find out information about Valentin's subversive history, connections, and plans which he is to relay back to the authorities before a certain deadline or else the deal is off. The long hours are passed by Molina telling Valentin of his favorite films. Molina assumes the
feminine role in the relationship as he not only tells "bed-time stories" (the movies) to Valentin but also cares for the cooking, washing, and other regular domestic chores. After much time together Molina falls in love with Valentin and even wins his trust enough to persuade him to take part in a homosexual encounter.

Molina feels immense guilt for secretly betraying his "only love" by operating with the police to collect evidence that could lead to extreme prosecution of Valentin and his fellow subversives. Consequently, Molina uses his stories as ways to vent his feelings of guilt and the perceptive reader can slowly come to realize that the "movies" he talks of are not actually movies at all, but rather romantic fantasies and confessions about the relationship between the two. As Molina's love for Valentin grows, he tells less and less to the police and begins to fear being released or even moved from the cell. Ultimately, the police decide to release Molina regardless on the assumption that since the two have grown so close, while free, Molina will most probably transmit messages to other subversives for Valentin and the police can follow Molina to find out who these subversives are. The police's hunch is correct. Molina agrees to contact a group of subversives in Buenos Aires for Valentin after he is free and upon doing so the police follow him to the meeting where there is a shoot out and Molina dies in the cross fire.

The novel is a romance which intertwines hope, deceit, persecution, and fantasy in a unique blend which succeeds in touching nearly all aspects of life for a political prisoner during the "dirty war." Furthermore, Puig highlights these realms of imprisonment and Argentine life through a careful contrast of gender. Not only do Valentin and Molina assume a respective male/female identity within the novel, but in the "movies" recounted by Molina within the novel, the plots and morals of such stories invariably hinge on the gender related actions and developments within them. Puig shows how man and woman must exist on their own terms separately yet struggle together to gain any kind of advancement be it political, romantic, or career oriented. The mixed gender relationships that exist between Valentin and Molina, the characters in Molina's stories, and these relationships as described in the world outside the confines of their tiny cell all play an important role in the evaluation and action towards political repression exercised by the military junta. This can be seen quite clearly in the first story Molina imparts to Valentin as the novel opens.

Molina tells a gripping story about an architect who meets and falls in love with an artist named Irena. Irena is an exotic, timid, and beautiful woman who speaks with a heavy accent and refuses to so much as kiss the architect. After much courting, the two decide to get married. Just after he has proposed to her in a fancy restaurant, Irena is startled by a strange lady who recognizes her and comes to chat with her. This lady has the
same mysterious look and accent as does Irena and turns out to be a native of Irena's hometown, a miniscule, uncharted village in the highlands of Transylvania. The sight of this lady makes Irena tremble and she spills her secret to her fiance:

_The Devil appeared in her village in the middle ages and said a woman had to come outside if they wanted any food from him, and at his side the Devil had a ravenously hungry black panther, and the woman made a pact with the Devil and I don't remember what happened but the woman had a daughter with the face of a cat. What Irena tells that I do remember is that they were still giving birth to panther women in those mountains. And the legend is that the race of panther women never died out and they all seem like normal women, but if a man happens to kiss any of them, the woman turns into a savage beast._

This explains why the woman refuses to kiss the man she is so in love with. She does not want to harm him and is afraid. To prove to her that the legend is silly, her fiance kisses her and sure enough she metamorphosizes into a vicious panther and nearly kills him before he quickly makes the sign of a cross and wards her off. Irena goes to a psychologist who becomes attracted to her and believes not one word of her story. He kisses her at one of their sessions and she turns into the beast and kills him. Quickly, she runs to the zoo and releases the real panthers from their cages. These animals kill her just as her fiance and the police arrive on the scene.

It is more than just coincidence that this story about a jeopardized love affair follows the same pattern as does the fateful relationship between the homosexual and the subversive. The story was really never a movie as Molina claims it was, but rather his way of venting his conscience and by cleverly trying to warn Valentin of the danger he poses to him with his secret. Molina and Valentin respectively embody all the traits of the fictitious pantherwoman and architect. Molina is a rarity, a homosexual, as is the pantherwoman. He is consequently understood by few just as the pantherwoman is only understood fully by the woman at the restaurant who is of her same type. The woman in the story is an artist and Molina is a window dresser. Both are concerned with aesthetic beauty and romanticize life through their art rather than face its harsh reality. More significantly, Molina's disposition, having agreed to be an informant, is his curse which is the lethal element in a love that can never be (his relationship with Valentin). The man in the story is an architect who is dedicated to designing and rebuilding just as Valentin is

_27 Kiss of The Spiderwoman, p. 12; hereafter cited in text as KOS._
dedicated to restructuring a new government and political ideology. Valentin is a Marxist and loathes the Argentine totalitarian, fascist regime. He tells Molina, "Marxism, I can get that pleasure anywhere, right here in this cell, and even in torture" (KOS, p. 29). Also like Valentin, the architect remains unaware of the great danger his life is placed in due to his seemingly harmless relationship with Irena.

In the same vein as the character parallels, Molina's "movie" foreshadows the events which transpire in the novel. Just as the pantherwoman ultimately pays with her own life through her curse which she succeeds in controlling so that her lover is never harmed, Valentin also ends up losing his life because of his curse as his attempt to aid Valentin's cause goes sour. Also, it should be noted that both the pantherwoman and Valentin are murdered by their own. The pantherwoman is killed by a fellow panther and Valentin is shot by the police with whom he had pledged himself in alignment. Both instances display the fact that evil knows no limits and will destroy anything, including shards of itself or its allies, in order to ultimately prevail. Historically, this was the case in the "dirty war" when it was common for the military government to purposely let the word out in its own ranks of the date and location of an abduction which is to transpire and would "lie in waiting" to see which, if any, military personnel attempt to halt, thwart or complicate the fictitious abduction. Usually such persons found guilty of doing this are labeled subversives and were killed along with the other "disappeared."

The novel is filled with stories such as the above. All are told from Molina to Valentin and each is a warning/preindication of the fate that awaits them. The gender configuration within Molina's stories is indicative of the relationship between the two men. Being a romantic homosexual, Molina plays the female role in his relationship with the strong, brawny, and ambitious rebel. The characters in the "movies" mirror more than just the traits of the two prisoners as the female invariably is a representative of Molina and the male of Valentin; the characters and their actions in these stories offer commentary on the role gender has in influencing Argentine society as a whole. Puig uses not only Molina and Valentin, but these cinematic characters to protest the way the woman is commonly repressed in Latin America and to demonstrate that once the woman is in her own element and not influenced by any dominant male figure, she will overcome the societal constraints put on her: "The 'women' in Puig's novels survive best when they stop trying to win on the men's terms and result instead to their own" (CBY, p. 462).

Another of the many "movies" Molina tells in detail to an intrigued Valentin better demonstrates the relationship between the prisoners as does it the gender relationship that ties Argentina to counterproductive tradition which limits the freedoms and potentials of women. The story is about a lavish French singer, Leni, who falls in love
with a Nazi soldier while Hitler was invading Paris. Leni's cousin is a French resistance fighter of the maquis and succeeds in persuading his cousin to steal important secret documents from her boyfriend in the honor of liberating France. Leni, against her will, becomes more and more committed to the maquis and at one point is forced to go to their hideout for a meeting. The leader of the maquis is a wanted murderer and he gets her alone at this meeting and throws himself at the beautiful singer. When this happens she takes a carving fork and stabs the resistance leader to death. At this point, her Nazi boyfriend has discovered the hideout and arrives just before a fellow resistance leader of the deceased is about to avenge his com-panions death by firing a shot at the woman, the Nazi shoots this man and as he dies he manages to fire a fatal shot at the girl as she arrives in the arms of her lover:

She loses whatever strength she has left and says how much she loves him. He kisses her, and when he takes his lips away from her mouth she's already dead. And in the last scene she is shown as an enormous statue, with her face powdered white. And he goes off with his eyes full of tears and the statue of her remains there with the arms extended. And he walks all alone but the road is bathed in sunlight (KOS. p. 92).

This movie is a Nazi propaganda film which portrays the subversives as evil murderers and the Nazis as the gallant warriors. At first, the reader might be thrown off because it is very evident that the beautiful Leni symbolizes Molina and the Nazi represents Valentin. But why would Valentin, who sacrifices his freedom and life, if need be, to fight an oppressive military regime be portrayed as a Nazi? This is to show how Molina and the Argentine society in general initially reacted to the subversives. Like in this movie, the subversives in Argentina during the proceso were generally viewed as the evil murderers and the government was seen as being out to help the people. By borrowing heavily from international creditors, the military regime managed to halt skyrocketing inflation in Argentina and were deemed as heroes of the people by the populace who reaped from this benefit. It was not until after the "dirty war" did the general populace learn of the barbarism of the military and the heroism of the Montoneros and other subversive groups (just as the Nazi atrocities were not revealed to the public until after the fall of Hitler). Accordingly, Molina when confronted with the same dilemma as was the heroine of the movie, thought as she did and had little reservations of aiding the military (maquis) who were the official "good guys" to help stop the subversive (Nazi) "the bad guys" and later realized upon his death that whom he thought were the righteous (the government)
were really the corrupt and whom he considered corrupt (subversives) were in actuality the righteous.

Not only does the juxtaposition between the characters in the film and the prisoners shine much light of the circumstance of their imprisonment and relationship, but the two prisoner's conflicting opinions about the film similarly shine light on the respective disinterested and fervent political attitudes of Molina and Valentin. Valentin does not catch on to the coded plot and characters in the story which is used by Molina as an elusive warning of the danger he poses for his cellmate, however he is quick to realize that the wrong character is being championed in this twisted, Nazi propaganda film. "It's a piece of Nazi junk, it interests me as propaganda, that's all. In a certain sense it serves as a document," Valentin tells Molina regarding the film. "You know that the maquis were actually heroes don't you" *(KOS. p. 89)*? Whereas Valentin is disgusted at the political intentions of the film, Molina is blind to any such influences as he is caught up with the aesthetic beauty and level of romance that encompasses this story, Valentin encourages him that the politics is what is important and the beauty of the film was just a distraction to divert people's attention from the fact that the movie was romanticizing a murderous regime:

- I don't understand you at all.
- Well, it's just that the film was divine, and for me that's what counts, because I'm locked up in this cell and I'm better off thinking about nice things, so I don't go nuts here, see?
- What do you want me to say?
- That you'll let me escape from reality once in a while, because why should I let myself get more depressed than I am?
- It's true that you can end up going nuts in this place, but you can drive yourself crazy here in other ways, not just out of despair... but from alienating yourself the way you do. Because that business of only thinking about nice things, as you put it, well, that can be dangerous too.
- How? I don't think so.
- It can be a vice, always trying to escape from reality like that, it's like taking drugs or something. Because, listen to me, reality, I mean your reality, isn't restricted by this cell we live in. If you read something, if you study something, you transcend any cell you're inside of. That's why I read and why I study every day *(KOS. p. 78).*

Puig's characters embody the vital conflict between the silent and the active. Puig contends through the above dialogue that there is most probably a little bit of Molina and a little of Valentin in each and every one of us. It is easy to ignore the ugly and divert all cognition to the aesthetically appealing as does Molina. This is the human struggle in
times of inhumanity. Does one simply shut one's eyes or does one risk to open them to books, information, and the forbidden in an effort to understand the truth? Molina and Valentin are characters who have decided differently on this question. This is a question that Puig himself has struggled with as his characters represent the two repelling forces within him. Puig admits in an interview: "There is in me the possibility of all my main characters. If I get interested in a real-life character enough to make him the center of a novel, it is because I feel that character is a possibility I carry in myself" (CBY, p. 461). Not only does Molina's attitude demonstrate that of the silent majority but his inactions epitomize silence. He is in love with Valentin and refuses to disclose any information about him to the police yet at the same time does not dare outwardly warn Valentin of his mission as an informant against him. On both sides of the fence, so to speak, Molina is silent and, as history has shown, this silence is what ultimately kills him.

The movies, dialogue, and unfolding plot in Kiss of The Spider Woman all point to the validity of the general consensus by so many literary critics that Puig's political commentaries all rest within his characters as the author himself attests to above. His characters represent the different beliefs, ideologies and reactions that existed within the Argentine norm of accepted conduct that fueled the "dirty war." When, one day out of boredom, Molina asks Valentin about his daily studies, the reader learns how political influence can be approached in different ways and each of these approaches can carry drastically different political impacts:

- Tell me something about what you're reading.
- What can I tell you? It's philosophy, a book concerning political power.
- But it must say something, doesn't it?
- It says that honest men cannot deal with political power, because their concept of responsibility prevents them.
- And that's true, because politicians are all a bunch of crooks.
- To me it's just the opposite. Only a flawed conception of responsibility makes one stay away from political involvement. Rather, my responsibility is precisely to stop people from dying of hunger. That's why I go on with the struggle. (KOS, p. 104).

This dialogue demonstrates the individuality of the subversive. The subversive is one who follows his own belief of righteousness and will disclaim even the most liberal minded of political philosophy. Although this dialogue does make Molina look like the feeble, apathetic slouch while Valentin is the brave and dedicated martyr, the reader is
constantly reminded that "responsibility" is a word that is not only valid strictly within a political context. Molina is the provider in the cell. When Valentin is sick he prepares his meals and even forfeits his own to aid his fast recovery. He is the one who orders the groceries and cleans Valentin up when he has a terrible case of diarrhea. As he is cleaning Valentin, he is asked by the astonished rebel, "But it doesn't disgust you?" (KOS, p. 141). This shows that, in many ways, Molina is the stronger one. He can make change happen for the better from which even the dedicated and fearless Valentin would shy away. Molina serves to challenge the typical Argentine belief that women should be kept out of the realm of political responsibility. Although Molina is not politically astute, he is the one who's responsibilities are realized within the cell. Valentin is noble yet his aspirations are all talk, while within the cell, it is Molina who is the provider and the healer.

If all human linguistic expression is in the last analysis either meaningless, language is self defeating (ARB, p. 111).

Puig, is without a doubt, an entertaining novelist. His captivating stories within stories, free flowing text void of narration, and spicy characters make reading his works a thoroughly enjoyable task. However, Puig realizes that his work is a denunciation of the inhumanities committed by the military regime and this is no subject matter to have too much fun with. Hence, he inserts into his text copies of police reports which not only are unique ways to further his narrative-free story, (the entire ending of the novel when Molina is killed in a feud between the government and the rebels is told through official police documents) but is a way to lay out facts for the reader in a way to remind him or her that the terrors he or she reads about are a reality and not another Hollywood production. It is this saving grace that prevents Puig's works from "flying off the handle" and getting too descriptive and entrancing- causing the reader to lose sight of the issue at hand. Larry Rohter, a critic for Book World, summed up this precaution of Puig best when he stated: "Puig is the clown who is invited to the birthday party to make the children laugh but insists on puncturing all the balloons" (CBY, p. 459). Human rights literature surely defeats itself when its technique is so impressive that it robs the reader's attention from the issue at hand.

One sobering and shocking burst of a balloon that Puig injects into his reader is done as the reader learns of Molina's slow adaptation and liking to prison life. Molina as a homosexual is a societal outcast and he feels at home in prison away from a mocking populace that does not understand and fears him. Molina can be a "woman" in prison, this is a luxury he must struggle to attain in the outside world. Prison life allows Molina to be
a provider, care for someone, and freely reveal his wildest fantasies and desires. Furthermore, this situation allows him to have sex with Valentin which would never happen outside of prison where the heterosexual can pursue the opposite sex. Even more importantly, in prison the "macho" Valentin has nothing to lose by expressing his true values when he goes against the norms of society by telling Molina: "If you enjoy being a woman... you shouldn't feel any the less because of it" (KOS, p. 243). The fact that Molina actually enjoys his incarceration is a commentary on how imprisoned the homosexual is by society, this can be seen when Molina tells Valentin how prison liberates him:

It's as if we're on some desert island... Here no one oppresses the other. The one thing that disturbs me is that you want to be nice to me, without asking anything back for it (KOS, p. 202).

From this, Puig demonstrates how cruel humanity can be in that the minority feels more comfortable in solitude and marginalized from society than he or she does within the society. This allows one to ponder on some integral questions concerning the "dirty war." Is it the military government who is the evil force or is it societal values which allow such a regime to evolve and retain influence? Is the individual so meek as to go along with prevailing attitudes and persecution of minorities or political dissenters without even trying to understand their circumstances? Throughout Kiss of The Spider Woman, Puig inserts psychological and physiological data on the homosexual which explains this human phenomenon. He cites Freud, Reich, Altman, and other knowledgeable authorities on human sexuality in many extensive footnotes that at times are over a page in length themselves. By doing this, Puig does more than merely urge that his reader divorce himself or herself from cruel and repressive societal stereotypes and learn about homosexuality, he teaches them himself. As the reader jumps from the elaborate fiction of the text to the hard facts of the footnotes, the reader becomes like Valentin who studies and tries to understand why people around the world are commonly subjected to evil. The reader in a sense becomes the activists through the acquisition of knowledge.

The final "movie" that Molina tells Valentin in which he tries more implicitly and obviously than ever to warn Valentin about the danger that awaits him. This movie takes place in Mexico during the famous Mardi Gras of Veracruz. During the festival, a male reporter and a woman meet at a masquerade party and dance together all night. The man becomes quite attracted to the woman who ends up leaving him that night. The next day the reporter is at work at his tabloid putting together a story about a beautiful
actress-singer who got herself into a rocky relationship with a big time mafioso figure who has been enslaveing her and abusing her and who imprisons her with his wealth and power. As the reporter looks closely at the photo which accompanies the story, he realizes that the woman is the same woman he danced with the night before. He goes to the woman's home and she tells him: "how, exhausted by the terrible ordeal of the theater, where she'd managed to the very pinnacle, she let herself be taken in by a man she thought was decent" (KOS, p. 226).

The woman is in love with the reporter but cannot be with him because the mafioso is too powerful for her to break from his clench. The reporter feels defeated and turns to alcoholism and loses his job while unbeknown to him, the actress-singer leaves the underworld king and gets a job singing at a nightclub. However, her jealous ex-boyfriend buys out the nightclub and closes it down, leaving her penniless. The reporter gets very sick and is taken to a hospital where he calls out her name in his sleep. His friends look up the woman and she comes to be with him. She has no money to visit him and is forced to prostitute herself in order to be with him. They start living together. He later finds out that she has been lying to him when she claimed to have been singing in a fancy hotel to support the two, and in actuality she is prostituting herself. "He realizes what a dead weight he is on her shoulders, to the point that she needs to humiliate herself in order to save him" (KOS, p. 241) and with this realization he leaves her. The mafioso finds out what she has been doing and realizes how much she must have loved the journalist and responds to a "soft spot" within his heart by finding the starving singer and giving her a bunch of precious jewels. She searches for the reporter and finds him malnourished in a hospital and she gets to him just before he dies.

As the story ends, Molina stresses that the heroine who loses her lover is happy because she can carry his dear memory in her soul: "And suddenly you see a giant close-up of just her face, with her eyes flooded with tears, but with a smile on her lips. . . It means that even if she's left with nothing, she's content with one real relationship in her life, even if its over and done with. . . It's a question of learning to accept things as they come, and to appreciate the good that happens to you, even if it doesn't last. Because nothing is forever" (KOS, p. 259). The sense of love and betrayal that the actress feels is clearly indicative of how Molina feels in his relationship with Valentin. The woman is tied to the mafia just as Molina is tied to the police and both relationships put a strain on their respective love affairs. In this movie, the survivor is representative of Molina while he is the one who dies in the novel, this ripple in parallel structure serves to detail the extent of Molina's endless love for Valentin. Molina knows that the two will be separated as his freedom is unavoidable yet, like the lady in the movie, this does not
impede his love because he is content on just having such a love as he expresses through the preceding excerpt. Through this story, Molina pronounces his love to and for Valentin and shows that he does not lament over the forced agreement he has with the police just as the singer does not lament over her forced prostitution because in both cases such undesirable sacrifice allows the two to remain together.

This "movie" is fitting as it is the last Molina tells, because it assesses the sacrifices that both Valentin and Molina have made for each other and weighs such sacrifices against the love that they hold for each other. In the end, both Molina and Valentin as well as the movie's characters come to the conclusion that such sacrifices were worth the blossoming and sustenance of their love. In addition to being able to rid his own guilty conscience in the name of love due to the plea bargain he has made, Molina also uses this "movie" to serve as a desperate last attempt to warn Valentin that he is being investigated by the police and is in trouble. Molina makes the extra effort to try to remember the lyrics of the songs that the singer sings. These "lyrics" are really creative warnings that Molina delivers to Valentin: "If they ask you about your past, just go ahead and lie, say you come from a very strange world . . . and if they ask about my past, I'll make up another lie and say I come from a very strange world" (KOS, p. 232).

From this, Molina not only warns Valentin of the danger of disclosing anything about himself to him, obligating Molina to keep his end of the bargain and tell it to the police, but these lyrics also imply that he, the "other person" (the "I" in the song), will also lie and/or remain silent. This shows that Molina is truly on Valentin's side and will not aid the police who he now understands are on the side of evil.

On the sad day when Molina is freed and must leave Valentin, his parting words to him which intend to again profess his great love for him are: "you're the Spider Woman who traps men in her web" (KOS, p. 260). The novel then proceeds with several pages of police documentation and surveillance records documenting all of Molina's actions in public and detailing his tragic death as he is shot when he attempts to meet with the resistance to deliver Valentin's message. The story concludes with Valentin being brutally tortured and hearing of the death of Molina while trying to deliver his message to the subversives as he had been instructed. Valentin, under the excruciating pain of torture, slips into an unconscious dream state which the novel details. The concluding pages are a series of flowing thoughts which allow the reader to tap into Valentin's dreams while proving that indeed "Puig's writings are noted by the strength of his refined, excessively self-conscious sense of rhythm and style" (AUP, p. 15).

In his dream, Valentin imagines himself drowning off the coast of an Island (which is symbolic of the cell as Molina previously referred to it as a "desert island"
after trying to save an orchid that was wilting in the sea. He is saved by a native "Spider Woman":

"... My mother hears every word I'm thinking and we're talking, do you want me to tell you what she's asking? 'Yes,' well. ... she's asking me if it's true all that stuff in the papers, that my cell mate died, in a shootout, and she's asking if it's my fault, and if I'm not ashamed of having brought him such awful luck, 'What did you answer her?' that yes, it was my fault, and that yes, I am very sad, but that there's no point in being so sad because the only one who knows for sure is is him, if he was sad or happy to die that way, sacrificing himself for a just cause, because he's the only one who will ever have known. Let's hope that he may have died happily, 'For a just cause?' hmmm. ... I think he let himself be killed because that way he could die like some heroine in a movie, and none of that business about a just cause... 'That's the only thing that I don't ever want to know, the name of your comrades'... that's the only thing I couldn't tell you. I was so afraid that you were going to ask me and I was going to lose you forever, 'No, Valentin, beloved, that will never take place, because this dream is short but this dream is happy'" (KOS, p. 281).

By tapping into Valentin's unconscious, the reader learns that Valentin and Molina achieved a spiritual and meaningful comradity. Valentin, has subconsciously registered Molina's movies as indicative of his fate. He realizes that, like the heroines in his movies, he sacrificed his life for love and was content in doing so even though he didn't comprehend the nature of the sacrifice. Molina never did ask for or receive the names the government asked of him and he proved to be the strongest resistor in the novel. It is because of this that Molina has actually saved Valentin. The reader learns from this dream that Valentin makes it off of the island due to the Spider Woman that has saved him and continues to "be strong again, because my comrades are waiting for me to resume the age-old fight" (KOS, p. 281) which, as Argentine and world history has proved, succeeded in smothering repression and corruption. The island is limiting yet it is beautiful and a place where love flourishes and one can be oneself, immune from outside pressures. Molina has liberated Valentin and allowed him to pursue his desire, the end of the dictatorship, and has liberated himself to achieve his goal: finding and being accepted by a true love. Molina's intense love for Valentin has also guided himself in the right direction, caused him to protect his loved one, further the resistance, and, most importantly, to die like his fictitious characters, leaving this world content with long awaited love and understanding which he finally found in a world that has very little of this to offer, appreciating what good life has to offer and happy knowing that nothing is forever except his own image of a
provider, lover, and martyr that will burn not only in Valentin's soul but also in the heart of the fight against evil, despair and corruption.

The treatment of literary characters is paradigmatic in two ways of the innovations made by expressionistic literature as a whole. The link between the real world and the fictional world is less accessible and more demanding of the reader's attention than the direct transcription of human realities that was the goal of documentary realism. 28

Puig, using his trademark technique of presenting his characters through a locus in films and, in turn, using these characters to represent humanity, does a stunning job of intertwining fantasy with reality on many distinct planes. Within Kiss of The Spider Woman, there exists fiction within fiction, Molina's "movies" are fictitious accounts of the reality of his situation within the novel which is also fictitious since it is part of the novel itself. Consequently, the reader is concerned with distinguishing the fiction from the reality in the framework of a piece of fiction. By locating two different spheres of reality within a work of imagination, the reader learns how many different levels of understanding are necessary to grasp the true image of the political prisoner and the oppressor.

The glitter and glitz of Hollywood is not as far from human reach as most people commonly perceive. It is an attainable fantasy, a possible impossibility if one is equipped with the right frame of mind and willing to exchange bold sacrifice for the possible riches such efforts can seize. Puig's intense examination of the relationship between Molina and Valentin not only guides the story, but draws the reader into examining himself or herself and really considering what kind of role he or she plays in this confusing production known as life. The reader becomes aware that it is the individual actor on the stage of life that furthers the performance. Just as Valentin ultimately realizes through the fate of Molina, human happiness or discontent is caused by and also affects all personal relationships. Molina and the characters in his films assess the consequences of the great sacrifices they make by how such actions affect those whom they love and this in turn affects the character itself and consequently gives meaning to such sacrifices. It is this interpersonal pattern that the reader learns is the focal point of any struggle be it for a "just cause" or for simple "love and acceptance." Upon realizing this, the reader learns of a new and refreshing outlook on the grim subject of the nightmarish Argentina in the seventies: this outlook contends that, just as in Valen-tin's dream, the nightmare can

28 Literary Expressionism in Argentina, p. 72; hereafter cited in text as LEA.
change to a "dream that is happy" if the dreamer is motivated by the right forces and if his actions and intentions touch the right people in the right way.

(HUMBERTO CONSTANTINI)

The book was written at a particularly difficult time when the mere possession of a table, a chair, some light and a bit of peace were virtually impossible. - Humberto Constantini

Humberto Constantini describes in his introduction to his first internationally published novel, The Gods, The Little Guys, and The Police, what risks and sacrifices he was forced to make by writing a novel in his native Argentina that condemned the military during the proceso in 1982. Constantini, born in Buenos Aires in 1924 and now living again in Buenos Aires after many years of exile in Mexico, wrote his first novel as well as several essays, short stories, books of poetry, and plays while living in a small room shared with a young couple, their infant baby, and a dog. All of his manuscripts were hidden throughout Buenos Aires after they were completed so as to avoid ending up the hands of the military, and the threat of Haroldo Conti’s fate always loomed above an ever paranoid Constantini.

Constantini’s novels are daring, and it is not merely a coincidence that they commonly deal with the question of action verses inaction and risk verses safety, the same choices Constantini as an author must face himself before writing such powerful and "dangerous" works. Such works directly challenge the Argentine fascist regime as they are courageously written during and within the nation and time frame of such atrocities. His works are marked by their dark fantasy intertwined with scraps of humor which do not dilute the seriousness and urgency of the issues Constantini raises in his witty writings. The theme which seems to be common to all of his works is the denunciation of the irrationality of Argentine political violence which endangers and victimizes innocent, unsuspecting, common civilians and at times does this by sheer chance of randomness. For example, it was not uncommon for the military squads to abduct and kill suspected subversives as well as any eye witnesses who may be unfortunate enough to be at the wrong place in the wrong time and see such an abduction and therefore pose a threat to the military’s mischievous and illegal doings. All of Constantini’s works play an essential role in the body of Argentine social protest literature.

This study will focus on his latest and undisputed most direct and moving attack on the villainous regime, namely his powerful novel *The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis* which concentrates on condemning the silence that plagues Argentina as well as a regime that thrives on the murder of random and innocent victims.

Written in 1984, *The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis* is an odyssey which takes place during a single spring evening in Buenos Aires in 1977. Constantini's protagonist, Francisco Sanctis, represents the Argentine everyman as he is named after a real "disappeared" person in which the circumstances surrounding his abduction and murder on November 12, 1977 in Buenos Aires are still unknown, and who shares many of the same characteristics as the fictional character bearing his name. For example, the real life Sanctis was also an apolitical accountant. Similarly, the character is a humble bookkeeper who does not know much about politics and his major concerns are those of his job and providing for his wife and daughter as he is "perpetually engulfed in the problems of eking out a living" (*LNFS*, p. 22). In short, by dedicating and attributing his protagonist to an actual victim of the "dirty war," Constantini effectively demonstrates how the victims of this tragedy were in fact real people, and fictional characters cannot alone convey the impact of this reality which must not be forgotten nor taken for granted.

One day, Sanctis (the character) is suddenly approached by an old college acquaintance who asks him to help her. She claims that she knows of two men who are in danger of being abducted and killed by the military later in the evening of the very day she delivers this information to Sanctis. She asks him to send warning to these men for she is wanted by the police for previous acts of subversion and cannot risk doing this herself. She tells Sanctis that there is a possibility that the whole thing could be a trap but if it is not and he fails to warn them, they will surely be killed by the following morning. The novel follows Sanctis throughout his long night where he struggles with the decision of getting involved in dangerous politics to save the lives of fellow human beings or playing it safe and leaving the matter alone, but having to live with a bruised conscience if he finds out that the men were in fact killed due to his inaction. The reader follows Sanctis as he struggles with his dilemma as he confronts his own sense of morality, causing the reader to in turn examine his or hers, as the decision between activity or inactivity, and denunciation or silence haunts both Sanctis and the reader.

This gripping adventure fable draws the reader into the political climate of Argentina during the "dirty war" as the reader is forced to weigh the respective fears, risks, concerns, and benefits of the choices Sanctis has to decide upon. The story is narrated in removed, third person, omniscient thus giving no bias to the circumstances regarding the decision Sanctis must make and consequently effectively allowing the reader
to "climb into" this suspenseful chiller and play an active role which explores the fringes of both activity and apathy during the proceso. It is this unique ability of the novel that has allowed it to gain overwhelming critical acclaim from all corners of the world and to be praised by many literary reviews such as the Kirkus Reviews which attributes its content as: 
"Oblique political fiction, this - all the more effective for its top-layer of humor, which by contrast only increases the visceral brutality and deadliness of its underlying subject." At every intersection, The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis denounces the military in the most effective and convincing method possible, by refraining from any direct attacks upon it and through the presentation of a very real situation and an outlining of the possibilities available to rectify the situation, the reader alone comes to make this denouncement.

Sanctis gives his reader "fair warning" of the biting decisions that the reader must ponder through the actions of Francisco Sanctis before the story even gets underway:

In which, so as to keep the reader from raising his hopes too high with regard to the entertainment value of this little book, it is here stated without further ado that its subject matter is of a more or less psychological nature - or, in other words, that the prospect ahead is fairly humdrum. Thus forewarned, the reader can now be told something about a certain telephone call that came from out of the blue.  

With this, the novel wastes no time plunging straight into the "moral dilemma of Francisco Sanctis on November 11, 1977 that cost him no fewer than ten valiant hours of wrestling with himself" (LNFS, p. 1). The reader learns of the call that Sanctis receives while at work in his accountant's office with the prestigious firm of Luchini and Monsreal. Elena Vaccaro, a distant name from Sanctis's past college days who worked in a radical, left wing, political magazine with Sanctis and other students when Sanctis was following the radical left trends of his liberal arts college peers, is suddenly begging Sanctis to meet with her. Sanctis is not and never was adamantly political; he sort of went through the phases of his collegiate youth and never felt any passion for politics of any slant. As the frantic voice on the receiver begs Sanctis to meet her at a certain spot that very same day, Sanctis slowly starts to recall bits and pieces of the girl he knew seventeen years ago who was "overweight, myopic, garrulous, and on the face of it, a bit nutty as well" (LNFS, p. 2). Unsuccessful at politely trying to refuse the invitation from the "roly-poly girl" who used to have a crush on him, Sanctis finally relents and agrees to meet her.

32 The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis, p. 1; hereafter cited in text as LNFS.
As he is holding two heavy bags of canned food he had recently purchased at the grocery store on his way to the spot where he is to wait for Elena to pick him up on some dark street corner at twenty past eight in the evening, and bewildered as to what this crazy woman wants with him, Sanctis reflects on how his position with the activist magazine and how his days of pseudo-activism were long behind him and now being continued by the current generation of urban youth:

_It was the young whom were battling against unlimited might of the armed forces. He told himself that he, too, had done his bit and that it was only natural that another generation should want to keep those ideals alive now. So he had no reason to feel the slightest remorse for not participating in the present struggle_ (LNSF, p. 31).

This attitude that Sanctis initially holds, is the unfortunate general attitude of his fellow Argentines of his generation. Activism and concern for the political well being of the whole in Argentina is viewed by many as a "generational thing." It is what the young college students are involved in and those adults out in "the real world" have not the time nor effort to spare with such frivolous endeavors. This is one of the many factors that contributed to a murderous silence that continued in Argentina which was fueled by apathy and a national sense of impotency. Constantini, through Sanctis, demonstrates that silence is not a conscious choice on the part of the individual but rather it thrives on a larger scale, it is the accepted, cultural norm for repeated entire generations. Worst of all there exists the paradox in which it is the older people, the professionals, those who have the influence and ability to make a change who are the ones keeping silent while the college students who have little influence or meaningful connections to the political or economic dealings within the country are the ones who recognize and demand change for the good of the whole. Sanctis is a sole representative of a thwarted, suicidal, trendy, and powerless society.

Elena finally arrives and picks Sanctis up. She is no longer fat but incredibly attractive and Sanctis is stunned with the change. Sanctis climbs in Elena's Renault which quickly begins circling the neighborhood, then Elena demands Sanctis to "Take down what I'm going to dictate. Two names and two addresses... on any scrap of paper. Then learn it by heart and we'll get rid of the little piece of paper" (LNFS, p. 38). Sanctis complies and memorizes the names of Julio Cardini and his address on Alvarez Thomas street as well as that of Bernardo Lipstein and his address on Lacarra street. After he repeats the names and addresses back to Elena, she quickly burns the piece of paper and tells Sanctis that the Air Force intelligence is coming to abduct and kill these men that
very night and she is sure of this because her husband, who works for the air force, got
wind of this project. Elena informs Sanctis that the two soon to be victims must be
contacted in person because their usually is heavy surveillance on destined victims by the
police as their phones and mail are no doubt being monitored. She further warns Sanctis
that the whole thing might be a trap so the air force can see which "subversives" come to
warn their decoys. Elena recites Sanctis's choices to him in a cut and dried manner, "I
gave you a piece of information, nothing else. You know what you can or can't do" (LNFS,
p. 46).

Initially, Sanctis believes the whole thing is some strange joke propagated by his
old-time and slightly unusual classmate. Sanctis's first reaction is to discount this whole
incredible story:

Sanctis begins to smell a rat... is there any way Elenita's
going to miss an opportunity to construct her own little
horror film? Not on your life... Shit no, this nut can't be
allowed just to come and take advantage of a situation that's
deplorable, and of massacred thousands of sorry bastards in
order to play at moviemaking (LNFS, p. 42).

Again, Constantini highlights for his reader some of the main attitudes that kept the silence
in Argentina alive. Not only did the populace discount the struggle between the military
and its dissenters as a generational trend, but the horrors associated with the "dirty war"
were not really believed. After all, the abductions were usually carried out during dawn's
smallest hours, rarely were there eye witnesses and the streets were always abandoned
because of the curfew imposed by the government. Governmental threats and control of the
newspapers, radio, and television media prevented these abductions from being exposed to
the public. Consequently, no one really ever "saw" the "disappearances" happening. Word
of these events was whispered in small circles but there was never any hard evidence or
public recognition which could verify the rumors. Not fully convinced of the reality of
these crimes, the general public perceived any efforts denouncing the military as a
potentially wasteful task of chasing ghosts. People generally are unwilling to combat an
invisible enemy. The military knew this and in order to fuel the silence, they made sure
that the enemy as well as the victim remained invisible to the public eye and ear.

Weighing the possibilities of the truth of the story and, if true, whether or not it
is a trap, Sanctis finds himself caught in a huge moral dilemma of whether or not to
become involved. Elena admits to Sanctis that she had come to him because in his youth he
was so rebellious and closely affiliated with the members of the liberal magazine, Elénta
thought that he would have some connections to a leftist, political group which would know what to do in a situation like this one. However, the fact is Sanctis is "completely out of touch with people of that kind" (LNFS, p. 46). Unable to make up a definite decision, Sanctis promises Elena that he will think it over and not tell a soul about the information he has for it may endanger Elena and the two strangers in jeopardy even further. Just before Sanctis can "blow-up" and express his anger and feelings of injustice at the situation when a stranger from the past appears in his life and puts a heavy weight on his shoulders, Sanctis is interrupted by Elena who snaps "And now, I've got to go. I'm sorry but it's better if you get off here" (LNFS, p. 53). With that, Sanctis is left alone on a dark Buenos Aires street corner with his dilemma and only a handful of hours to act - if he decides to act:

This, in fact, is where the real story of Francisco Sanctis begins. . . Because it just happens that it's right here in this short, unusually dark stretch of Olleros street following the muddled meeting we know about, that we find Sanctis alone. For the first time. That is, alone with his own muddle (LNFS, p. 55).

Sanctis is left with his dilemma. He is responsible for two human lives if Elena's story is valid. Sanctis represents the choices the Argentine as well as the citizen of the world must at one point in their lives be forced to make. Does one risk his or her domestic security and even his or her life to aid fellow human beings in distress, or does one simply shut one's eyes and ears to troubled ones elsewhere and retreat, free of risk, into life's little securities? This is a question that has nagged the western world since the discoveries of the horrors of the Holocaust. Is silence consent? Is inaction murder? Where is the line to be drawn and who is to draw it? Is the "easy way out" the best way? Constantini uses Sanctis's decision as a microcosm of an issue that faces society in large, an issue that is too easily avoided and that decides the fate of innocent human beings. As Sanctis stands alone with his groceries on the dark street corner, he weighs his choices of going home to his wife and forgetting about what he knows and forever living with the possibility that he let two men be murdered or trying to warn these men and saving two human lives:

These names and addresses imprinted on his memory are an obligation of sorts, a nagging presence that he doesn't know what to do with and of which, in his heart of hearts, he'd like to be rid of as soon as possible. A nuisance much like the package of canned goods whose course twine . . . keeps cutting into his flesh, son of a bitch, and of which it's also becoming
urgently necessary to rid. With the slight difference that the moment he arrives at home he'll fling the package aside, but these names and addresses, what's he to do with them? Where in Christ's name is he going to fling them? (LNFS, p. 59).

Sanctis, and the reader is reminded that the dilemma will determine the fate of human lives which must be cared for and cannot be flung about like so many groceries. This nagging question is a question of humanity, not only of the humanity of others whose fate relies on Sanctis but on Sanctis himself and how he, through his dilemma, is forced to confront his own sense of humanity.

Still undecided, Sanctis returns home to his wife, Maria Angelica. He is unable to relax as the decision haunts every corner of his mind and engulfs his attention, Sanctis repeatedly asks him-self, "Does one ignore the danger lurking in the shadows, gratefully accepting the invitation as if it were no more than an invitation to a picnic or a hand of canasta? [or should one flee from danger and allow] two guys to be beaten to a pulp" (LNFS, p. 64)? To help resolve his inner conflict, Sanctis tactfully asks Maria Angelica what she would do by posing the situation hypothetically so as not to reveal the information and danger he holds within him:

"Tell me, Maria Angelica. Supposing that you're given the chance to save some guy's life who's going to be knocked off. What would you do?"

Maria Angelica thinks it over, trying to understand the meaning of this rather pointless rhetorical question and says in a perfectly natural way, "I'd save him... you know I don't go along with crime, I don't care what quarter it comes from."

"All right. Just suppose that by doing it - saving the guy's life, I mean - you're taking a risk... it could be a trap or something."

What she had in mind was a much more exciting program than this dull talk about traps, lives to be saved, and murders... To hurry things (and shorten the way to bed) she forces herself to answer candidly.

"I wouldn't get involved... It's not just the life of one person that's at stake" (LNFS, p. 70).

Maria Angelica reduced the matter to its essence showing how simple Sanctis's choice is. It is a choice between yes or no, nothing more. Maria Angelica represents the silent majority in Argentina who are ideologically committed to the perseverance of human rights until such a commitment can jeopardize their own interests. Hence, the rift between ideology and reality becomes apparent. Argentines, by being silent, have justified their silence by a code of accepted ethics which stems from the "me first" attitude which
contends that it is noble to help others but if helping others puts one at risk of hurting oneself, than such a deed is sheer foolishness. Of course, any friction caused by the individual in Argentina against the armed forces brings about a wide spectrum of dangers. Hence, silence is accepted and considered the wise choice, it transforms from an immoral and cowardly choice to a guiltless choice of safety and self preservation.

Even further confused and agitated by his wife's inability to "provide the magic solution that with almost religious faith he'd been expecting from her" (LNFS, p. 70) Sanctis is forced to realize that the decision must be settled by himself. This prompts him to leave for a walk in the night to continue his ethical struggle. As Sanctis walks the streets, he begins to go through phases of denial and doubt. He tells himself that the two men are probably already aware of their danger and Elena was just inflating their story from her feverish imagination. Sanctis counters his denials by struggling with his ego and reassuring himself that he is not a coward for fumbling with this decision for so long: "can it be said that Francisco Sanctis is a coward? No sir, it cannot" (LNFS, p.85)? However, this struggle with himself is a true battle since Sanctis's sense of humanity is fighting against a strong opponent: "he stands there thinking about Maria Angelica's warm skin, her smile. . . " (LNFS, p. 87). Clearly, the reward for retiring for the night to the comfort and security of his wife and home is tempting, however Sanctis's sense of responsibility still cannot fully give into these luxuries. Sanctis continues on, growing wearily determined to get the whole thing over with and free his conscience by making one quick attempt at a warning to the two men.

As Sanctis's courage and ego grow, he becomes more upset with Elena whom he starts to view as somewhat of a coward: "The only thing she did, when you come right down to it, was rid herself with relative elegance of a small problem and palm it off on him. . . the way one drops a handle that is burning in one's fingers" (LNFS, p. 90). As Sanctis goes through this sobering state of mind, he begins to be able to link through human spirituality his connection with the two men he must save. Sanctis understands that saving two human lives takes precedents over any political threats that may cause him to shy from this act of humanity:

But suddenly and by an absurd somersault of his imagination, Julio Cardini and Bernardo Lipstein have stopped being two names scribbled on the back of an optician's receipt and then learned by heart. They are real people - men, unknown men, sure, but alive and with a body like his and with inconsistent; restless minds like his. And maybe with the same fear he's feeling at this moment, a fear that little by little is oppressing him, paralyzing him (LNSF, p.100).
Sanctis stumbles into a good friend, Perugia, as he passes by a bar who urges him to join him for a drink. Sanctis is relieved to have somebody he can talk to and readily accepts the invitation yet is still conscious of the vital time constraints on his mission. Sanctis has great respect for his friend who is a widely respected, affluent, self-made man. As they speak, Sanctis slowly but surely introduces the topic of the disappearances as to pave the way for his asking Perugia for connections to subversive organizations that could aid him. However as they discuss this issue, Sanctis learns that his initial belief that "Perugia doesn't really side with these military shits... [and] will react like the descent guy he really is" (LNFS, p. 122) was quite off mark. When Sanctis spits out the figure of twenty thousand "disappeared," Perugia responds that he thinks that is just a drop in the bucket: "Get rid of two hundred thousand and the country'll run like clockwork" (LNFS, p. 122). Perugia is the smug representative to both Sanctis and the reader of the large sector of the public that supported the military. It is a fallacy to claim that the military was the sole sector that promoted human rights abuses. In fact, much of the public who benefitted greatly from the military's "quick fixes" to rising inflation and ability to increase employment levels and standards of living believed that these benefits were realized through the elimination of "subver-sive" forces and actively supported the military's deed, placing all their faith blindly in the state. Usually, it was the very right wing and affluent sectors that supported the military. The nightmare of the "dirty war" is all the more horrifying when it is recognized that the military were not the only tyrants in their quest for blood, the neighbor next door might be supporting this as well. There is no "us and them" in Argentina and the evil is invisible and lurks in all corners.

In a state of disbelief, Sanctis excuses himself from the sudden "murderer" sitting across the table from him, and deliriously wanders onto an empty, midnight bus which takes him to the end of the line. Too committed to his efforts now, he decides he is beyond the point of no return and eliminates from his mind going back home as an option. As he takes a series of buses and cabs to Lacarra street Sanctis struggles with trying to define what he is dong. Is he just trying to be a hero? Is he really siding with his sense of humanity? Is he doing the right thing or is he "quite possibly embarking on the greatest blunder of his life" (LNFS, p. 157)? Finally, in a cold sweat, Sanctis gets off of the bus and is left all alone in the middle of the dark and ominous Lacarra Street. Sanctis discovers that the address he is seeking, 4225 Lacarra does not exist as the street ends at 4000. Sanctis assumes that Bernardo Lipstein purposely passed on his address as false as a precau-tion by "foreseeing just such an eventuality as this one tonight" (LNFS, p. 172). Convinced that Lipstein is safe, Sanctis walks away from Lacarra street swelled
with joy and relief. He is further optimistic as he assumes that Cardini's address will likewise be false in order to baffle the police, or in this case, the Air Force.

By a sheer stroke of luck, Sanctis finds a cab and hails it to a few blocks away from Cardini's address, using precaution not to be let off directly in front just in case danger is still a viable threat to him. Now Sanctis's confidence and ego are boosted and he sees himself as a person divided in two in which the side of humanity and courage is overcoming his cowardly and defensive side:

There is a Francisco Sanctis - no one denies this - pitifully gnawed by doubts and fears; but at the same time there is another Francisco Sanctis, dedicated and courageous, who knows what he's doing, who on certain occasions lends support to his other, indecisive, tired, and scared self (LNFS, p. 177).

This division in Sanctis is the realization of the division that exists within every human being. It is the classic inner conflict of good verses evil, or more specifically, consideration for others versus consideration for oneself. Everyone has idealized images of themselves. It is not uncommon for one to envision oneself as the courageous and fearless protector of the oppressed - the hero who never hesitates to do the right thing. However, is this image really accurate? How often is it that the one who claims that he would fight for the homeless or defend a persecuted minority, end up turning his or her head to the unpleasant sight of "street people" or remaining silent at the mention of some racial slur by a stranger? Verbal commitment and real action are two different things. It is this division that exists in all and that must be confronted.

As he makes his way to the apartment on the 2800 block of Alvarez Thomas Street, Sanctis thinks about his wife, his job, the funny fact that his mud-caked shoes are the saviour of Julio Cardini's life, and the shower that he will take when he gets home. His fear conquered, Sanctis approaches the apartment and Constantini switches out of the omniscient narrative and gives the reader a distant view of Sanctis instead of tapping into his thoughts: "For once, let us not meddle in Sanctis's privacy. Instead, let us watch Sanctis walking alone down the broad sidewalk of Alvarez Thomas Avenue" (LNFS, p. 181). This authoral technique distances the reader from Sanctis allowing him or her to, in turn, view his or her respective roles and duty as a reader. The reader takes on an equally risky role as does Sanctis in that the reader is confronted with confronting his or her own humanity as the reader must follow Sanctis through his moral dilemma and direct the issues found therein to his or her own world. Would the reader, if in Sanctis's shoes really make the same choices he does? Would the reader go through the same emotional
and ethical conflicts as did Sanctis? If so, why? If not, how would such conflicts differ? To understand Sanctis's conflict and long and confused night, the reader must first understand his or her own sense of values and priorities.

Sanctis approaches the apartment building and enters its lobby, pushing the apartment number on the intercom. As he does this he does not see:

*the two shadows emerging from behind the elevator nor the car slowly drawing up from Olazabal Street, nor the glint of the gun barrel pointing at him from the darkness of the building site next door* (LNFS, p. 183).

With this concluding sentence, the novel realizes its worst fear. Indeed, the lead was a trap set up to ensnare anyone devoted enough to "subversive" tactics to interfere in military plans to save another "subversive." It can be concluded that the false address was fictitious so that the police could stake this site out and see if any one person attempted to find this location and then proceeded to Alvarez Thomas Avenue. Surely, such a person was acting on the false lead the military purposely leaked in order to catch those who are willing to combat this institution. It can further be concluded that Sanctis is abducted and killed due to his efforts. Thus making him a martyr or a fool, depending on the opinion of the reader of the novel. Regardless of what the reader may label him, one fact remains intact; Sanctis was an innocent, harmless, and honest human being who, by a bizarre series of events, was killed as a "subversive." This shows that those who were persecuted in Argentina were not necessarily "subversives" who posed real threats to the government and endangered lives. In fact, the typical "disappeared" person was not unlike Sanctis, an everyday, common, Argentine who has enough courage to stand up for his or her sense of humanity but at the same time has no intentions of inflicting violence, disruption, or destruction to no person or governing body. Sanctis represents the majority of the "disappeared" who were killed because their true innocence was not recognized or fervently denied by others. It was not the irate activist who was hunted down in Argentina, it was anyone with ethical standards noble enough to refuse to let the silence grow at the expense of mass apathy and blindness.

*The Long Night of Francisco Sanctis* does more than merely outline the horrors of the "dirty war" to make way for a thrilling odyssey, Constantini's novel is audience participatory. Constantini does not only address the issue of silence and the individual's role in regards to pro-moting or combatting it, he succeeds in drawing in his reader to actively examine his or her own personal position regarding this ethical question. It is in this sense that Constantini is a very im-portant writer of Latin American fiction. In the
true sense of expressionistic literature, this text is triumphant in its ability to actively question how applicable man's reasoning and moral capacities are to the living of his life. Constantini's writings reflect the ideals of expressionism as outlined by Wolfgang Kayser, "even the most bizarre features of expressionism must be discussed not as mere curiosities or defects, but as part of the expressionist's attempt to convey a certain view of existence, literature, and language" (LEA, p. 41). The reader is forced to hypothetically place his being into the existence of another environment, in this case that of Sanctis's and his dilemma, in order to attain a full perspective of humanity and its inherent fruits and challenges. The reader is forced to wear many hats which allow one to gain a true perspective of human morality and persecution. There are bits and pieces of Francisco Sanctis in all of us. Everyone struggles with right and wrong, risk and safety, and action and inaction. Through his character of Francisco Sanctis, Constantini allows his reader the freedom to momentarily distance him or her from these mortal dilemmas and look at them in a fresh perspective on the outside as the reader follows Sanctis through his long night. A night that not only decides the fate and resolves the moral struggles of humanity verses self preservation and security for Sanctis, but a night which allows the reader to gain a unique and revealing insight of him or her self as well.

THE NOVEL

( CONCLUSION )

There appears to be a stance, that seems to be a constant of the contemporary Argentine novelist, a proclivity toward viewing man and his existential, sociopolitical, and cultural preoccupations in ironic terms. . . from the commonalities in such views, it can easily be seen which matters are the preoccupations of Argentine society (CAN, p. 10).

Undoubtedly, the silence that plagued Argentina during and after the "dirty war" is one such preoccupation addressed by Argentine authors who attempt to through their works, reflect upon and question society and humanity at large. Despite their contrasting literary techniques, styles, and presentations, it is evident that social protest Argentine authors all share a simple, critical socio-political attitude which they advocate and even impose through their respective texts. Because the novel can house a variety of characters, elaborate plot structure, and limitless contrasts between illusion and reality, unlike the
limited formats of the short story, testimonial, and even poetry, the novel can approach the subject of the "dirty war" with great agility, ease, and meaningful accomplishment.

In order to create an elaborate and representative portrait of the "dirty war" and its inherent causes and consequences, the Argentine novelist can utilize the freedoms of the format of the novel to address these concerns unlike other social-protest authors. In the Argentine novel, the reader is introduced to characters who become martyrs and the reader gets a horrifying taste of what the victims of such abuses underwent. Unlike the testimonial, short story, and other formats, the reader is likely to identify with a victim who is tortured and even killed. Furthermore, the reader can, at the whim of the author, be projected from the realm of reality to illusion and back again. These transitions epitomize the freedoms of the novel, as the reader can place him or herself in the same cell with Molina and Valentin, the meetings in Carlos's backyard, or in the dilemma of Francisco Sanctis. It is this "connection to cultural values and human emotions and social life and the sense of history" (BHF, p. 45) that the Argentine social-protest novelist can provide to his readers which truly allows the reader to gain a true understanding of this chapter of Argentine history and the sacrifice, silence, and horror that composed it.

The Argentine novelists have done their part. Taking great risks, they have captured the "dirty war" and presented it to an international reading public. They have left the public with the freedom to project themselves into the tragedy, to understand it, to sympathize with it, and to take action against the possibilities of such terror ever repeating itself. The authors have fulfilled their role in their campaign against the silence and terror. It is now up to the public to realize its role. Does the reader dismiss what he or she has absorbed through such novels, or does the reader take heed of the warnings and advocations such works contain? Does the reader join the silent majority? Does the reader commit to the task of promoting prevention of the repetition of this tragedy? These are the fundamental questions which only time can answer:

It is not for scholars to say whether the literature of Argentina has functioned as a cause or derivative result or simply as a barometer for measuring ideological change and perhaps social practise... The triumph of Latin American literature might yet announce... the triumph of a culture and a people (LCS, p. 185).

Let us hope that the courageous novelists of Argentine social-protest literature have succeeded to pave the way for such a triumph. Let us hope that the view of existence, literature, language, and humanity presented by the many bold and expressionistic novels which condemn the silence and the tragedy that such silence and apathy gives birth to, will
give rise to a blossoming of a truly humani-tarian movement that will break with all passivity to defend the liberty and dignity of the persecuted individual. Let us hope that the novel succeeds in pulling silence up from its roots and implanting justice in its place.
CONCLUSION

The role of the writer in the twentieth century is to speak insofar as he or she can on behalf of those who cannot (TWHR, p. 3).

Argentine social protest law and literature serves to speak for the victims of human rights abuses to another sector who can but refuse to speak out—the silent majority. Such efforts strive to mirror the hidden truths of the tragedy of the "dirty war" into the eyes of an apathetic and fearful populace. Oppressive forces rely on an ignorant, timid, and indifferent public in order to carry out their "dirty deeds" without obstructions. Literature and Argentine domestic laws and legislation and International community laws and legislation are powers that can deplete the circumstances which such regimes rely on and consequently help to undermine many a reign of terror and abuse inflicted by empowered authorities upon defenseless individuals. George Santayana said in 1905, "Those who cannot re-member the past are condemned to repeat it." His words ring true today as the "dirty war" serves as proof that too many were silent in a contemporary post-Holocaust international society and such a deadly silence gave way to the repetition of yet another gross chapter of institutionalized repression, torture, and murder.

In conclusion, it should be again stressed that the legal and literary commitment to human rights is a just cause and they have come a long way in their battle against the silence. However, the struggle is far from completion. Of course, people living under despotism in all parts of the world today are still subjected to political killings, incarceration, torture, discrimination, repression of thought, religion and opinion, and other similar deprivations and inflictions. However, this is not to say that law and literature have been ineffective in promoting human rights. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter acknowledges the power of literature in combatting human rights abuse:

In the life of the human spirit, words are action. The proof is that words are precisely the action for which dissidents in totalitarian nations are being prosecuted (THR, p. 308).

The recognition of silence by the legal and literary world communities is the first step in eliminating it. Furthermore, it is even more important for one to always keep in mind the fact that this plague can be avoided as long as a reciprocal relationship of commitment, activism, and understanding between the law maker, writer and civilian can
be maintained and nurtured. Hopefully, and only time will tell, such a bonding will cause a murderous silence to slowly but surely become an endangered entity everywhere.


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