Cinemalore: *State of Siege* as a Case Study

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Introduction

This paper examines the configurations of "cinemalore" and applies the cinemalore approach in a case study. For cinemalore the film is a document not unlike other historical materials. Just as the historian interprets data and written documents for complexity, so, too, film analysts must interpret the film image in its multiple aspects. Within the realm of cinemalore, film can be interpreted both as an image of reality and an element of lore. By focusing upon the latter, we aspire to de-emphasize the analysis of film as an aesthetic medium and to stimulate scholarly interest in cinema as a component of social myth.

Cinemalore is conceived as part of the lore of and about elites in contrast to the masses or folk. Thus lore is defined as noninstitutionalized knowledge in both folklore (its traditional or popular sense) and in elitelore (as seen in conceptual and perceptual information and views manipulated by unique individuals to justify their leadership).[1] Whereas the study of folklore is seen also to focus on such derivative fields as Indianlore and popularlore, the

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[1] For discussion of the distinction between folklore and elitelore (folklore is found in the lives of both followers and leaden but elitelore is found only among leaders, if at varying degrees according to level of leadership), see James W. Wilkie, *Elitelore* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1973) and James W. Wilkie and Edna Monzón de Wilkie, "Dimensions of Elitelore: An Oral History Questionnarie," *Journal of Latin American Lore*, 1: 1 (1975).

examination of elitelore deals with its derivative genres, cinemalore and literaturelore. While distinction is made between the lore of those who lead and those who follow, we must recognize the interrelationship that exists between the two.. The lore of the elite, for example, is selectively influenced by popular belief, thereby creating an intellectual view of what the... folk" are all about. [2] Conversely, elite conceptions of the folk may be so persuasively presented in great literature that they come to be accepted as expressing the unarticulated folkways of the masses. This processual interrelationship of folklore and elitelore can be called "lore in the making," and it is what this paper is about. When film is examined in this light rather than through traditional film criticism, we can begin to see the cinema not as simply involving "truth" or "justice" but also as revealing important aspects of the lore of the time. In short, we suggest that the term cinemalore gives conscious form to analysis of the film as part of the customs, beliefs, ritual, and social myth that must be examined if we are to begin to understand our own time as well as times gone by.

The film *State of Siege* was chosen for our case study because, of its impact upon the public and upon academia since its release in 1973, public reference and debate having examined its implications as a valid historical record of events in the Tupamaro urban guerrilla rebellion from 1963 to 1972 against the Uruguayan government. This work by the Greek filmmaker Constantin Costa-Gavras is important because it utilizes fine cinema technique and powerful acting to transform political issues into a popular emotional experience. *State of Siege* purportedly "documents" the view that oven U.S. aid to Latin America really involves covert U.S. counter-insurgency that terrorizes and tortures whole societies. The sustained success of *State of Siege* in arousing audience indictment of U.S. involvement in Latin America is due largely to its simple message: the United States is the villain responsible for the underdevelopment of Uruguay, and hence Latin America. Implying that Uruguay is dependent upon U.S. trade and investment, the film urges that the U.S. yoke be broken.

While U.S. intervention in some Latin American countries might be attributed to the maintenance of local markets and local investments, recent statistics on trade between the United States and Uruguay suggest that this factor is not fully applicable in the case of Uruguay. [3] The value of the film as an historical document. Therefore, is compromised, as is the generalization upon which it is based. More significant are issues which Costa-Gavras has

[2] For an analysis of such literature, see Maria Herrera Sobeck, "The Function of Folklore in Gabriel Garcia Marquez," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1975.

[3] In 1972 the United States accounted for only 3.5 percent of Uruguay´s exports (down from but 15 percent in 1960) and 12.9 percent of its imports. At the same time, 39.8 percent of Uruguay´s imports came from the Latin American Free Trade Area. See *Statistical Abstracts of Latin America*, vol. 16 (1972), 502; and James W. Wilkie, *Statistical and National Policy* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1974), p. 290.

only marginally examined, such as Uruguay's imbalanced economic structure and the righteous moralism that characterizes U.S. foreign relations with small countries.

Through documentation of a single case *State of Siege* tries to slice through the complexities and ambiguities of twentieth-century affairs to offer the essence of truth in which the masses like to believe and for which intellectuals try to search. By documenting a case with which neither audience nor film critics have been sufficiently aware, the filmmaker is able to at once expose evil and at the same time be relatively free of scholarly criticism. Moreover, film criticism generally has been known for analysis of form and style rather than for historical message, the filmmaker's art (or at least the film critic's expertise) being considered too fragile (or too limited) to delve into the facts of the case. Through this allowance of artistic license, we presumably encourage and gain access to universal truth that overrides the detail of unique cases.

Given this tradition of film criticism and viewer lack of familiarity with the Uruguayan case of Tupamaro urban guerrilla action,[4] most viewers have had to sort out for themselves the historical meaning of the film. And given the general lack of mass and intellectual sophistication concerning the film's subject matter, its structure, and its documentary status, there is little wonder that the subthemes of the film (including the role of political kidnapping and the goals of urban guerrillas) remain clouded in the public eye. Briefty stated, if we are to develop a new role for the historical documentary, must not we have a new type of film analysis critically sensitive to politicohistorical issues? Should not the events and issues posed by the sophisticated filmmaker be criticized on historical grounds in order to help unsophisticated audiences understand what they see?

With the filmic approach to history and contemporary life being increasingly used by academicians, debate about the historical documentary has involved a specific issue: Should a film be "true historically" or can film fiction better present the "inner truth" of the photographed themes? Writing about *State of Siege*, Mark Falcoff and E. Bradford Bums take opposing views of this question (see pp. 239-256 and pp. 257-263. below). And while it would appear from reading their arguments that film criticism has reached an impasse with regard to such films as *State of Siege*, we argue that the concept of cinemalore provides an analytic umbrella under which film as fiction and film as history can be examined to further scholarship.

In our view, then, development of theory and methodology for under-

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[4] The few journalistic works available (see, for example, Maria Esther Gilio. *The Tupamaro Guerrillas* [New York: Saturday Review Press. 1972) and *Generals and Tupamaro; The Struggle for Power in Uruguay, 1969-1973* [London: Latin American Review of Books, 1974]) only recently have been supplanted by scholarly analysis (see James Kohl and John Litt, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Latin American* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974]; and Donald C. Hodges, *The Latin American Revolution: Politics and Strategy* (New York: Morrow. 1974).

standing the film is crucial to understanding the role of film, especially when it plays a role documenting historical processes. Difficulty in analyzing the film to date stems more from an absence of critical theory and methodology than from the filmmaker's lack of clarity. It is the concept of cinemalore that provides a viable alternative to this vacuum. By refocusing traditional methods of film criticism to place filmmaking into a context of mythmaking, we seek to overcome the argument that because of the film's "art form," its message should not be subjected to the same canons of scholarly analysis as other forms of mythmaking.

Theory and Methodology of Cinemalore

Lore in the case of cinema refers to the folklore created intellectually through the medium of the film as well as to the lore of the filmmaker about how and why films are to be made. Another way of looking at cinemalore is to see it as involving two main bodies of information, one human and one technical, both being integrated into the filmmaker's lore and both involving manipulation of the filmic process. [5] Questions such as the following indicate the spheres wherein revolve the filmmaker's lore: What were the intentions of the cineast? What themes and stylistics did he employ in previous productions? What might one deduce about his film based upon his training as a filmmaker?

As a means of evaluating this human input, the film analyst has access to several types of resource material, each traditionally used in isolation from or in weak, combination with the others: First, he can review, for example, the published material written about or by the cineast (filmmaker), Here, owing to several factors, the interview is of particular importance. Not only do oral interviews appear in film journals with relative frequency, [6] but in most interviews, filmmakers are inclined both to discuss their films and to provide

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[5] A major difficulty in evaluating the filmmaker's technical input is that several aesthetic devices such as the close-up shot tend to elicit a particular response from the viewer. Thus, even if the cineast consciously used such a device to elicit that response, there would be no concrete means of determining to what extent the use of that device constitutes the lore of the cineast and to what degree it represents the qualitative structure of the medium.

[6] In the case of Costa-Gavras, we have used no less than seven published interviews: (i) Dan Georgakas and Gary Crowdus, "Costa-Gravas Talks about Z," *Cineaste*, 3:3 (Winter 1969-1970), 12-16; (ii) David Austen, "Pointing Out the Problems: An Interview with Costa Gavras," *Film and Filming*, 16:9 (June 1970); (iii) Guy Braucourt, "An Interview with Costa Gavras and Jorge Semprun," *Film Society Reviews*, 6:5 (January 1971), 43-47; (iv) Harold Kalishman and Gary Crowdus, "A Films Is Like a Match: You can Make a Big Fire or Nothing at All," *Cineaste*, 6:1 (Winter 1972-1973), 2-7; (v) Michele Ray, "Interview with Franco Solinas and Costa-Gavras," *State of Siege* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), pp 141-158; (vi) Gary Gilson, "Interview with Costa Gavras," *Film and History*, 3:2 (May 1973), 11-20; (vii) Bruce Berman, "A Conversation with Costa-Gavras," *Take One*, 3:12 (November 1973), 23-26.,

the d´etre for their work. This, in effect, provides access to their "(a) self-perception, (b) self-organization of ideas ... and (c) self-justification for actions . . . ," factors delineated as the basic elements in the concept of elitelore.[7] And, a knowledgeable interviewer can often elicit candid responses from his subject.[8] In the case of cinemalore, this candor is generated when the interviewer enters into a relationship of empathy with the filmmaker in order to transmit the cineast's ideas to "the public." Film elite may be encouraged to speak frankly also because, in contrast to self-explanation, the interview situation does not give the appearance of arrogance in discussing personal achievements; most elites desire to act humbly even as they take credit for decisions or roles.[9]

Second, the analyst can examine biographical material, hopefully testing out his inferences in oral history interviews. While full biographies on most filmmakers are not available, skeletal biographies can be used to provide invaluable insight into the filmmaker's lore. For example, where did the cineast spend his childhood and adolescence? (This factor helps us to understand cultural intents.) At what university or film institute did the filmmaker study? (From this information we can draw inferences about the filmmaker's theoretical orientation.[10]) Under which producer-directors did the subject work? (This information is useful in suggesting the filmmaker's employment of particular film language elements or a particular film genre.)

Third, the analyst can study the cineast's other productions to develop a multiprong approach to the lore of and about cinema. Proponents of the "auteur theory" have used this approach in attempting to define cinema trends, and, in particular, to identify the stylistics of the "great" filmmakers. The basis of logic for auteurism is that a filmmaker develops a unique cadre of stylistics and film structure from which he does not deviate. Thus, characteristics which are identifiable in one film can generally be expected to appear in the cineast's other works.

Study of cinemalore, then, provides a systematic means of analyzing the filmmaker's input. The film analyst's ability to strip away from principal

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[7] Wilkie. *Elitelore*, p. 9.

[8] Among many film scholars, however, it is believed that oral interviews do not represent the cineast´s actual beliefs. The reasoning is that most filmmakers look upon their 'films as selfcontained entities and they would not have spent two years making a film if they could have expressed the same ideas in the context of words.

[9] As noted in Wilkie, *Elitelore*, pp. 9 and 55, since the interview is not initiated by the leader, he does not lose dignity by talking "the initiative in telling his own story".

[10] Because most film schools are inclined towards one particular mode or type of productions, we can conjecture that the filmakers´s own style was influenced, at least in part, by his academic training. On the one hand, a good example of film school inclinations is seen at the University of California, Los Angeles, where the focus is upon experimental production. On the other hand, at the University of Southern California, located but a few miles away, concern is with commercial cinema.

themes such "extraneous" material as technical "devices" or misleading film language is of particular importance in evaluating the increasingly popular "fictional documentary, ., of which *State of Siege* is an outstanding example. The term "fictional documentary" was coined by Joan Mellen,[11] and it has been used insightfully with regard to Latin American cinema by E. Brad- ford Bums.

For Bums, the fictional documentary film shares much in common with the documentary film because both are concerned with and interpret reality creatively and imaginatively: "In the nonfictional documentary, imagination is used in the technique of presentation, whereas the fictional [documentary) relates something imaginary or semi-imaginary. It takes some license with reality. Imagination is used to reconstruct situations that reflect and symbolize reality."[12]

The potential problems of the fictional documentary can be seen in Mellen's *Filmguide to the Battle of Algiers*[13] wherein she writes (p, 57): "Although it cannot claim to express the actual facts, *The Battle of Algiers* saturates us with the atmosphere of truth. For the duration of the film its images substitute for real events and immerse us into one man's view of the troth." It would seem from these scholarly observations that the fictional documentary filmmaker strives to capture this "inner truth.. by simplifying the complex process of historical causation. It should be noted, too, that in using substitute events to move beyond a superficial reality, the fictional documentary cineast may create as many myths as he destroys. And since no one man is ever apt to find complete truth, arguments that it has been found should, perhaps, be taken with great suspicion.

Yet, it could be argued that this" atmosphere of truth" reality provides the best kind of history, because it goes beyond the historical documents to re-create the emotion of the issues so often left out of traditional histories. John Womack, Jr. has indicated the importance of this historical approach in commenting upon another fictional documentary about Latin America, John Steinbeck's *Viva Zapata!:*

[11] See Joan Mellen, "Film and Style: The Fictional Documentary" (1973), reprinted in E. Bradford Bums, *Latin American Cinema: Film and History* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications. 1975). pp. 67·92. According to Mellen (pp. 67-68), "the mid-nineteen sixties saw in world cinema a renaissance of the fictional rooted in concrete historical contexts whose action expressed the social conflicts of the decade and in some cases the century. In literature this form was developed during the same period by the "nonfictional novel," exemplified in Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*. Both nonfiction novel and fictional documentary aspire to revitalize their art in implicit protest against the retreat from commitment" and to explore the recent by giving "meaning" to history. "meaning," which destroys the "mystification of the political."

[12] Burns, *Latin American Cinema*, p. 15

[13] Joan Meller, *Filmguide to the Battle of Algiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

In telescoping the whole revolution into one dramatic episode, the movie distorts certain events and characters, some grossly; but it quickly and vividly develops a portrayal of Zapata, the villages, and the nature of their relations and movement that I find still subtle, powerful, and true ... (the screenplay including in its) simplification some factual details that complicated the superhumanly heroic image of Zapata that then prevailed -like his marriage to the daughter of a hostile local rancher, his difficulties with her, etc.-details which were then practically unknown…

and which made the character more true to life and interesting.[14] A question which arises in light of Womack's commentary is whether the fictional documentary should be judged as factual history (i.e., "fact" versus "fiction") or moral history (i,e ., "right" versus "wrong"). Bearing this question in mind, let us examine the essence of *State of Siege.*

Cinemalore Applied: The Essence of *State of Siege*

In a fictional documentary like *State of Siege*, where the viewer is beset by a complex network of themes, a methodological framework is needed to "deconstruct" the film and to identify its core, its substructural development. Here, the methodological framework is cinemalore, and the film's substructure hinges upon the function of the individual. The key in identifying this substructural element is to locate patterns in Costa-Gavras's thematic development, his film language, and his expressed and unexpressed intentions-in short, his lore.

The core element in Costa-Gavras's lore is the apparent contradiction between content and form that characterizes his films. He presents his material as factually based: yet the film itself is developed in fictional formal. To analyze this lore is to identify the filmmaker's use of technical devices, genre, and expressed intentions.

That *State of Siege* develops the roles of several characters is misleading. The individuals with whom we identify-Philip Michael Santore (in real life Dan A. Mitrione), a "communications technician" for the Agency for International Development (AID): Hugo, the Tupamaro leader, and Carlos Ducas, the veteran journalist-are merely extensions of their respective groups. They function as auxiliaries to much larger systems. And, as the film reveals, individuals are expendable; the system is not. Even the leaders-Hugo (the Tupamaros) and Santore (AID)-are quickly replaced.

We should be careful, however, not to equate "individual" with person and "system" with non-person. Indeed. Costa-Gavras has identified this same structural relationship between individual and system among non-person

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[14] Quoted in Robert E. Morsberger, *Viva Zapata! The Original Screenplay by John Steinbeck* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), pp. 137 and 139. The Screenplay was based upon Steinbeck´s own innovative research.

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entities. In *State of Siege*, for example, the Pacheco government (individual) is almost toppled because of its inability to subvert the activities of the Tupamaros. Accordingly, it is the oligarchy (system) which is called "into session" in order to remedy the situation. This same structure is identified by Santore, who, at the International Policy Academy, to his "students" forthrightly proclaims: "Governments [individual] come and go. The police [system] remain." [15]

The film's depiction of the two competing entities-the government and the Tupamaros-does not reflect the reality of their respective comparative powers. The Tupamaros, though defeated by 1972, [16] are portrayed in 1973 as being the stronger of the two. The government seems to be a second-rate power, a lackey of the military. This, in fact, is exactly how Costa-Gavras intended these groups to be interpreted. In terms of his structural relationship, the Tuparnaros constitute a system, the government-an individual.

To carry out this analogy in accordance with the auteur theory, let us examine two other films by Costa-Gavras, Z and *The Confession*. In Z the military again represents a "systemized" entity. We are initially appalled that a constitutional figure (Lambrakis) can be eliminated by a governmental auxiliary. the army. We are left dumbfounded at the film's end when this "auxiliary" usurps the nation's constitutional powers. For Costa-Gavras all political conflicts can ultimately be analyzed as uncompromised struggles between two competing systems. The colonel in Z. for example, metaphorically characterized the struggle in which he was involved as a revolutionary "disease" being fought by: counter-insurgent "anti-bodies." In *State of Siege*, the U.S. agent Philip Santore (Mitrione) conveys the same idea in more precise terms: "You are subversives, Communists. You want to destroy the foundations of society, the fundamental values of our Christian civilization.... You are an enemy who must be fought in every possible way. [17] "When Hugo responds to this polemic with "I don't think we have anything more to say to each other." Costa-Gavras is indicating that there is no room

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[15] Franco Solinas and Constantin Costa-Gavras, *State of Siege* (New York: Ballantine. 1973), p.73.

[16] In the November 1971 presidential election more than 80 percent of the voters cast their ballots for the traditional *colorado* and *blanco* parties against the Tupamaro-oriented Broad Leftist Front, which won only 18.4 percent of the votes; see Kenneth Ruddle and Philip D. S. Gillette. eds., *Latin American Political Statistics* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications. 1972), pp. 98 and 114. This electoral defeat, to which the Tupamaros reacted with a campaign of terror, was followed by crushing losses to the Uruguayan security forces, several thousand Tupamaro suspects being jailed and several hundred hideouts being discovered. Thus in mid-1973 even the Tupamaros admitted that they had been completely defeated by the crackdown that began in April 1972-see the *Miami Herald*. August 4. 1973, for discussion of this Tupamaro communique which blames defeat on "our deficiencies and our treasons" and "millionaire assistance given by North Americans."

[17] Solinas and Costa-Gavras, *State of Siege*, p. 100.

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for communication between competing systems. The implication is that, ultimately, the struggle can only be resolved through use of force.

Costa-Gavras's film entitled *The Confession* adds a paradoxical element to the structural struggle of individual versus system. While there exists the standard conflict between the individual (the central character, Arthur London) and the system (court, police. and government), the film also presents a person who has been transformed into a system-Stalin.

Thus, in analyzing *State of Siege* we should not misconstrue the significance of the central character portrayed by Yves Montand. For Costa-Gavras, individuals are transient or symbolic figures: "Today there is another Mitrione who is there and after him there will be another."[18] They are developed principally as a means of personifying or highlighting the internal structure of a system. The film authors' treatment of Mitrione, therefore, was not moralistic. Rather, their interest in him arose "because he represents a system that is bad for the majority of people." But, even more significant was that Mitrione "had begun to constitute a symbol ... [and] he permitted us to dismantle ... the mechanism of imperialism."[19]

Another element of Costa-Gavras's lore that contributes to the viewer's misinterpretation of *State of Siege* is embodied within the film's contrast between content and form. Because the film's content is immersed in factuality, the filmmaker's utilization of technical devices and fictional format is either seen as contradictory[20] or is bypassed by the viewer altogether. Because unsophisticated viewers do not understand this new fictional documentary film genre, the integration of "factual" content and fictional format tends to uproot the audience from its perceptual base.

Although Costa-Gavras never identified his film as a documentary, *State of Siege* has been accepted by audience and critics as "literal truth" because it does incorporate several aspects characteristic of the documentary genre.

First, the film employs numerous scenes in which news-reporting techniques are duplicated. At the Presidential palace, for example, Carlos Ducas "reports" to the audience with low-key gravity as he identifies the cabinet ministers and their respective financial affiliations. Later, in an interview with the university president, Ducas uncovers the "inside line" on the governmental crisis. In both instances, there is an air of detachment and objectivity that television audiences have come to associate with the "unbiased" visual news format.

Second, the film presents a subject to which most viewers have been little exposed and only then in the "you are there" manner. As a topic of recent

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[18] Kalishman and Crowdus, "A Film Is Like a Match: You Can Make a Big Fire or Nothing at All." p. 4.

[19] Ray, "Interview with Franco Salinas and Costa Gavras." pp. 148 and 154.

[20] This "contradiction" seems to be the basic argument in Mark Falcoff, "The Uruguay That Never Was: A Historian Looks at Costa - Gavras's 'State of Siege.', pp. 239-256. below.

history State of Siege apparently affords the viewer insight into the history making process, helping him, in an identification phenomenon, to be swayed by the "objective" news medium.

Third, *State of Siege* is comprised of an endless stream of "facts" and "evidence." The filmmaker, infact, has gone so far as to have Hugo rebut one of the U.S. agent's denials by quoting an article in the *New York Times*. Costa-Gavras does not allow the Tupamaros to direct unsubstantiated accusations toward their prisoner. This is because he is vitally concerned with the legitimacy and provability of his films' subject matter. (Talking about Z. Costa-Gavras has attested: "Most important for me was that the Lambrakis affair had a conclusion. There was a trial which produced concrete testimony and evidence," And why this provability? "It's important for reference purposes. Someone speaking about Greece can be challenged on specific grounds." [21]

In *State of Siege* this dossier approach has been placed within a fictional framework. Costa-Gavras attempts to direct the audience's response to his "evidence" via the employment of technical devices, exaggeration, and identification, i.e.. the process by which the audience "identifies" with the film's heroes. Yet his utilization of these elements does not justify our depreciation of the film--or of Costa-Gavras. These elements are the filmmaker's tools. They are an integral pan of his total strategy in developing a theme. It is the responsibility of the film analyst to familiarize himself with these devices so that he can proficiently separate "fact from fiction."

In Costa-Gavras's "fact," the Tupamaros are identified as young, intelligent, and sensitive, reluctant to use violence. Youth is the most noticeable of these identification factors; viewers are exposed to an active core of Tupamaros which consists almost exclusively of young men and women. In contrast the antagonistic characters-the U.S. agent, the police, and the Death Squad-are shown to include no young participants. Further, these young Tupamaros display sensitivity and human emotion. When they remove their hooded masks, their faces reveal concern, fright, and fatigue: the antagonists never remove their "masks." In a society where youth is synonymous with beauty and vivacity, we can reasonably speculate that Costa-Gavras has made this clear distinction between the Tupamaros and the "antiheroes" in order to elicit an identification response from his audience. The following exchange between Bruce Berman and Costa Gavras characterizes how a filmmaker's lore is placed on celluloid:

BERMAN. The Tupamaros ... they're all so young and good looking and
   sensitive....
COSTA-GAVRAS. Because they are.

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[21] Georgakas and Crowdus, "Costa-Gavras Talks About "Z," pp. 12 and 15.

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BERMAN. You mean ... that all of the Tupamaros are young and good looking and" compassionate like the actors in your movie?

COSTA-GAVRAS. I think all young people are good looking; even if they are ugly they are good looking…   I met something like twenty or thirty Tupamaros and they were all very good looking. . . .

BERMAN. But is it not possible for . . . a reactionary in established government to be good looking?...

COSTA-GAVRAS. When I was in New York… they gave me a dossier of all the photographs of all of the people involved in the Watergate Affair… They are all so ugly, all of them…[22]

Group composition is another means used to elicit an identification response from the audience. The young Tupamaros have a well-rounded contingency-men and women, students and workers-while the antagonist· groups are comprised almost exclusively of middle-aged and older men working in an official or semiofficial (Death Squad) capacity. Among those in Uruguay's Parliament who align themselves with the Tupamaros are a woman and a younger man, who speak informatively and with great determination. In contrast, their opponents in Parliament are uninformed, older, obese men, several of whom wear dark glasses. While all four of these factors would seem to be less attractive to the audience, the wearing of dark glasses in particular connotes a hidden-and thus despicable-quality.

Intelligence and nonviolence are two additional factors influencing the viewers' identification with the Tupamaros. In both cases Costa-Gavras 'enhances his favorable portrayal of the Tuparnaros and their affiliates by contrasting their behavior with the ignorance and brutality of the antiheroes. Although the "war of wit" between Hugo on the Left and their captured U.S. agent on the Right is an apparent standoff, in other encounters, between Ducas and the President, and between members in Parliament, the Left is seen to be intelligent; the Right is not. The reactionaries are only able to overcome this deficiency by exercising violence with impunity. They bomb the houses of the Tuparnaro sympathizers, shoot Communist Party workers in cold blood, and torture Tuparnaro prisoners. The scene which most effectively typifies the difference between those who fight with ideas and those who fight with guns takes place when the President, in an effort to squelch anti-Govemment sentiment, sends the army into the university. After the students have been dispersed, a loudspeaker continues to broadcast a revolutionary protest song; the soldiers frantically run from one loudspeaker to the next, stomping and smashing on them with their gun butts, in an attempt to terminate all opposition activity. The soldiers win the battle but it is the students who win the viewers' support.

[22] Berman, "A Conversation with Costa-Gavras," p. 24.

produce a response of association between the Tupamaros and the "good guys." One example of the montage device occurs early in the film. A well-off woman is abducted along with her car for the Santore kidnapping. They stop near a mountain of trash where young, impoverished children frantically search for useable materials. The association factor in this sequence aligns the Tupamaros with the impoverished children. And certainly culpability for the poverty is also inferred by this montage sequence-in the person of the fur-attired woman.

Sound track has also been used to produce an associative effect. Several times Tupamaro activities (e.g. the kidnapping scene) are supported by background folk music. The audience almost unknowingly comes to associate the Tupamaros with the "folk." the people.

Exaggeration has been utilized also as an element in Costa-Gavrcls's film. During the Uruguayan congressional vote to proclaim a national day of mourning, for example, the Assembly reporter announces that thirty-two deputies are unexcused absences. This verbal recognition is underscored visually as the camera scans the Assembly; both overview and frontal view indicate the substantial threat posed by Leftist opposition. In reality, however, both houses of congress voted unanimously, except for the six Communist deputies who absented themselves from the vote, to declare a national day of mourning for Mitrione. [23]

Too, Costa-Gavras has purposely changed the conversations between Mitrione and the Tupamaros to the point where they no longer represent the true significance of the dialogues. [24] How does a filmmaker justify this blatant misrepresentation'! In the case of Costa-Gavras we can connect this inaccurate re-creation to his substructural development of the screenplay. In *State of Siege* Santore does not represent Mitrione so much as he characterizes the "cold-war" ideology embodied in American foreign policy: "The reason for the film's existence is imperialism, with its mechanism of repression, its murders, its tortures. The occasion for the film was the capture and death of a person who symbolized this mechanism." [25]

In presenting a critical comment through *State of Siege* on the nature of American foreign aid, Costa-Gavras has examined with high drama a lesser-known facet of the United States' "advisorial" role in Latin America-that of eliminating Marxist guerrilla forces by "whatever means possible." While the film does not explicitly suggest that the American interest in maintaining Uruguay's government is lucrative, the nonspecialized viewer can only deduce from the complex, clandestine U.S. AID network shown that some powerful entity in the United States does have a vested interest in Costa-Gavras's "South American country."

[23] *Washington Post*, August 11. 1970. Only six of the 130 legislators, then, were absent.
[24] See Falcoff, pp. 239-256, below.
[25] Ray. "Interview wich Franco Solinas and Cosca-Gavns." p. 156.

Unfonunately, the implicit "truth of *State of Siege* is that somehow the United States has dominated totally Uruguay's economic affairs for purposes of economic imperialism-this in spite of the fact, for example, that U.S. investment in Uruguay has been next to nil.[26] Actually, *State of Siege* would have been more successful if it could have emphasized, in this case, the "truth" of the obsessive compulsive U.S. *moral commitment* to anti-Communism. Too, the film might better have shown the ironic complexities of U.S. support for Uruguay's "capitalistic" traditions in the face of guerrilla attack. As Arthur Peterson has asked in his evaluation of the use of *State of Siege* in the classroom situation: Would students have found it useful to know, for example, that 38 percent of Uruguay's foreign trade was with Communist nations? Or that Uruguay is often described as a socialist welfare state in which an important share of the work force is employed directly or indirectly by the government?[27]

   In light of what *State of Siege* leaves out (i.e., what it says implicitly), a number of questions are raised: If the fictional documentary strays too far from reality in the microcosm does it not damage its own generalization about the macrocosm, in this case the role of u.s. aid? Would not it have been more effective to work with l' fictional U.S. operative in a country with strong U.S. ties such as Brazil? If both film critics and audience seem ready to embrace the much-desired simple solution to apparently overwhelming issues and problems, as presented in *State of Siege*, does the film not befuddle politically unsophisticated audiences to greater lengths than it educates?

Conclusion: The Implications or Cinemalore

> Either Costa-Gavra is a conscienceless opportunist, or the United States has sinned and should repent.
>
> Robert Hatch
> *Nation* (1973)

   This conclusion to a review by film critic Robert Hatch sums up quite accurately the huge majority of audience reaction to *State of Siege*. And because it answers our questions posed directly above, it suggests that Costa-Gavras is, indeed, more concerned with moral history ("right" versus "wrong") than he is with factual history ("fact" versus "fiction").

   The "inner truth·· of *State of Siege* has as much to do with the lore of an

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[26] Wilkie, *Statistics and National Policy*, pp. 252, 254, and 394.

[27] See Arthur Peterson, "History at the Cinema: A Guide for the Movie-Going History Student," *History Teacher* 7:1 (1973), pp. 79-88, especially p. 88.

elite group of filmmakers as it does with the essence of reality. If the film has generated a great deal of healthy hostility to mindless U.S. intervention everywhere,[28] it is unfortunate that it did so for the wrong reasons. That U.S. aid should be examined and criticized is obvious; that the mass audience and even the intellectual film critic is not ready to see subtlety of real issues also is clear, as the film itself testifies. Uses and misuses of U.S. expenditures in Uruguay need to be studied in all of their complexity: of the I J J-million dollar actual U.S. expenditure for assistance to Uruguay during the period from 1963 to 1970, only 20 percent overtly went for military purposes, a declining proportion from the nearly 100 percent levels of the period from 1954 to 1958.[29]

Just as the "inner truth" of U.S. aid is not represented by real or symbolic torture, neither can the "inner truth" of Uruguayan problems be placed at the door of the United States. Rather. the Uruguayan social and economic crisis should be attributed to such factors as decreasing export markets and declining cattle herds-in the face of an increasing population where one-fourth of those working are employed by the government and where for every two people working, one draws benefits from the country's vast welfare system.[30] With so many persons and their families committed to the system, we can presume that a large majority of the country's population has a stake in maintaining the society in its bankrupt state-in spite of its inequities and imbalances. While revolution might eliminate the economic stagnation brought about, in part, by the oligarchy, it would also result in the trimming of thousands of unproductive government "workers" from public payrolls, thereby threatening to end this peculiar socialist system in which corruption and inefficiency have been legalized through massive access to the public treasury.

Put succinctly, in *State of Siege* the complicated and often confused roles of

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[28] Mindless intervention comes in many varieties, as in Chile against one side or in Angola against many sides in a civil war. In the latter case, the U.S. Senate was shocked to learn (*Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 1975) about secrets 100-million-dolar CIA funding for diverse political groups in Angola over a period of twelve yean (including the financing of one group that also received funds from the mainland Chinese), Senator Birch Bayh noting that all groups involved in Angola's civil war were basically socialist and nationalistically against control by either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. Apparently the CIA felt that since it could not win it would not allow anyone else to win either, thus using funds to create the chaos upon which it seems to thrive.

[29] This overt percentage probably is a fair estimate for total counter-insurgency funding because, although covert amounts for AID's "Public Safety Program" came to at least 5 percent of the total between 1963 and 1972, all military funding did not go for internal security. (Also. it should be noted that the U.S. Agency for International Development does not administer military assistance, these funds being handled directly by the Pentagon.) For data on U.S. funding, see Wilkie. *Statistics and National Policy*, p. 371: and U.S. AID, Statistics and Reports Division, *Operations Reports*, Fiscal Years 1963-1972.

[30] Kohl and Litt, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America*, p.176.

U.S. aid are reduced to the same kind of generalized simplicity as are the, causes of the Uruguayan crisis.[31] Instead of focusing upon the particular set of dilemmas that surrounded the Mitrione incident, Costa-Gavras attempted to broaden the film's perspective by applying to the Uruguayan case some U.S. patterns of economic investment in other Latin American nations. Consequently *State of Siege* more accurately reflects Costa-Gavras's own political lore than it does the interrelationship between Uruguay and the United States.

Costa-Gavras and Solinas focus upon Uruguay's internal power struggle in order to explore the macrocosm of neocolonial intervention. They have no interest in Mitrione as an individual. But, because he did embody what the filmmakers considered to be the arrogant, righteous ideology that characterizes American foreign policy, Mitrione provided the filmmakers with an opportunity to try "to dismantle one aspect of the mechanism of imperialism." Audience difficulty in identifying this issue and other principal themes in *State of Siege* arises because of a lack of familiarity with the film's subject (content), its documentary status (genre), and the implications of aesthetic development (form). Analysis of cinemalore provides a systematic means of elucidating these factors to enhance comprehension.

When *State of Siege* is examined as an historical document, it reveals serious inaccuracies. But even as a flawed historical account, the film should be acclaimed for brin2ing to the forefront issues which had previously languished in anonymity. It must be recognized, too, that *State of Siege* is a document of great political complexity with diversified political inclinations. For example, while the film attempts to exhibit an Uruguayan oligarchy supported by the United States, the opponents of this antidemocratic "conspiracy," the Tupamaros, are not depicted as absolute heroes. They fail to achieve either their immediate goal to release political prisoners from Uruguayan jails or to gain their long-term objective of expanded popular support. At best, the Tupamaros fulfill the role of the tragic hero.

Nor do we need to accept Hatch's false choice between Costa-Gavras's "conscienceless opportunism" versus U.S. "sin." Even Hatch recognized that Costa-Gavras was compelled to make a difficult choice in his portrayal of the Tupamaros. He wrote very perceptively about this dilemma for CostaGavras:

What he finds intolerable includes political assassination which, as he shows most poignantly, is the climax of an inevitable dilemma. Having snatched [the U.S. Agent] and broadcast conditions for his safe release which the authorities are almost certain to reject, the insurgents are caught in their own trap: either they let him go anyway, thus

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[31] For examples of the more subtle issues involved in the relationship of Latin America's national development and U.S. assistance, see James W. Wilkie: *The Bolivian Revolution and U.S. Aid since 1952* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1969).

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showing showing themselves feckless; or they kill him, thus allowing the state to make him a martyred hero and themselves losing the sympathy of their natural supporters. [32]

Indeed it is this loss of sympathy that contributed much to the final end of the Tupamaros. One can only marvel at the undemocratic way in which the filmmakers portray the guerrilla rank and file' vote" to execute Mitrione, the vote appearing to involve uninformed assent. And it is the suave, urbane, Mitrione who in the filmmaker's portrayal is permitted to foresee how the drama must ultimately be played out-ending with his own death. A real life expose of the CIA has yet to uncover such a sophisticated agent as exists in the lore created by *State of Siege*; literary exposes portray most of them as "cowboys" or incompetent fools. [33]

In the end, the irony of *State of Siege* of focuses on the number of oral interviews granted by its makers. Their interviews compromise the film by suggesting the lengths to which they are willing to go in order to work out their own lore in the celluloid experience. If we were to ignore these oral interviews in criticizing the film, we would miss the essential context of the cinemalore in *State of Siege.*

As a document, film is not unlike other historical materials subject to contextual interpretation. It is best understood and explained by a scholar who is equipped with the appropriate tools, that is, a workable analytic framework and a familiarity with the "language" used. In the same vein, film critics and historians should analyze film to help the viewing public make sense of it, especially in the case of the fictional documentary. The province of cinemalore is to test the meaning and concepts involved in order to see the process of how and why films can have the impact they do: how and why their message interacts with the larger issues of politicosocial economy to shape history in new ways. In this respect we can see in specific cases that "what people think happened in history" is quite as important as "what happens in history."[34]

Power of films to mobilize opinion, then, must be studied as lore in the making, lore that will live on independently of the "truth" or "justice"- they

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[32] *Nation*, April 30. 1973. p. 573.

[33] Consult Philip Agee, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* (New York: Bantam. 1976); and Victor Marchetti and J. D. Marks. *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Dell. 1974), Mitrione's own oral portrayal of himself noted that he was an Indiana policeman trained by the FBI – see *Dialogue before Death… Transcripts from a Tape Recording of an English-Language Conversations between Dan Mitrione and an Unidentified Tupamaro, August 1970* (Washington: Squirrel Publications. 1971).

[34] For discussion of how conceptions of reality interact with reality to influence the course of history (especially with regard to *State of Siege* and the Alliance for Progress), see Wilkie. Statistical and National Policy, pp. 415-426. With regard to reality, see James W. Wilkie, "Alternative Views in History: Historical Statistics and Oral History." in Richard E. Greenleaf and Michael C. Meyer. eds., *Research in Mexican History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973). pp. 49-62.

claim to represent. As an expose, *State of Siege* is most valuable to the sophisticated audiences who understand it as a symbol and not as reality. But if political films with a simple message do help to mobilize the masses to fight for the "right" and the "good;' they do so, perhaps, at a high cost.

What political films might better teach is that life is complex; otherwise the masses are subjected to false hopes. Perhaps the ultimate degradation of the masses is to leave them, in the name of momentary mobilization, with the unsophisticated outlook that has permitted them to be manipulated throughout time immemorial. Only when "the people" begin to see how lore is used will they begin to gain control of their own political destiny.

In removing the debate about films from the sole arena of traditional film criticism of plot, direction, and technique, we argue that the cinema can be analyzed as *history* just as it can be analyzed as fiction. By blending the two approaches and focusing on cinemalore, we not only move beyond film for film's sake or film as image of reality but seek to add the dimension of analyzing *social myth*. In this manner we can begin to see conceptions of the world created by the film as well as the perceptions of the film as seen by its makers. It is the "human/technical" dimension, for example, that needs further study and it is with such analysis that the greater meaning of individual films can be understood, regardless of momentary polemics.

Clearly the field of cinemalore is a complex one, one that we have only begun to study. It involves a systematic approach for evaluating film structure and film-author intent, the implications being several.

First, lore of and about cinema provides the analyst with an empirical means of analyzing the filmmaker's work as the filmmaker would interpret it. This, in turn, provides the motivational evidence which can be tested against the cineast's visual imagery.

Second, the stylistics and thematic focuses of individual filmmakers can be categorized for qualitative and quantitative analysis and the data can be used by students of national and international trends in cinematic production. For example, investigation may concern the national sociopsychological relationship between producer and consumer, that is, the needs of the national audience that are either filled or created by the nation's cinema industry.[35] With assessment of those needs, insight is gained into a nation's culture and perhaps its history.

The present analysis has dealt with international aspects of film lore, foreigners being the ones to carry the Tupamaro message to the world where the Tupamaros themselves could not. In fact, with *State of Siege* we witness

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[35] This idea is exemplified by Siegried Kracauer who links Hitler's rise to power to the trends in German cinema between 1920 and 1934. Kracauer contends that the films produced during that period accentuated the German people's need to submit to a totalitarian figure. See his *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1966).

the making of Tupamaro lore from the outside, a lore integrated and adapted into Uruguayan legend. Ironically, this lore phenomenon could be brought to cyclical conclusion should the Tupamaros themselves come to accept this legend as fact.

In sum, once we begin to examine the realms of cinemalore, we can see that such films as *State of Siege* have value mainly in relation to their capacity for formulating and transmitting lore, a value not to be denied but to be studied.