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ARGENTINA'S DIRTY WAR AND HUMAN RIGHTS LITERATURE

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## **ABSTRACT**

Following a period of extreme oppression, violence, and torture in Argentina in the 1970s, came a wide variety of literature about the topic. This literature includes: novels, fiction films, non-fiction biographies, songs, court documents, and newspaper articles. These various accounts all serve as a means of piecing together a complex history. They vary greatly in terms of style, form, and even content. In order to paint an accurate picture of the events that occurred, it is important to compare the different accounts and analyze how and why they are different, the purposes they serve, and the perceived value of each. Lastly, it is important to appreciate the impact that human rights literature has had on society and the ways in which these works illuminated an otherwise opaque period of time.

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## Chapter 1 Historical Background and Context

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the Argentine government carried out a series of human rights violations, including, but not limited to: kidnapping, rape, torture, murder, electrocution, and other horrendous offenses. These government sanctioned kidnappings and murders are also known as “forced disappearances,” which is where the well-known phrase *Los desaparecidos* (The Disappeared) originates. These “disappeared” people were typically members of the political party in opposition to the dominant one, or people otherwise suspected of being associated with leftist movements.

While this regime remained in power, little about their violence was public knowledge. However, in the years after they lost absolute political power, there was an outpouring of literature about the subject and a surge of international interest about this dark period.

These accounts varied greatly in a number of ways. First, there is a wide range of form, medium, genre, tone, and foci. There is also a large variation in the types of witnesses and the voices telling these stories. Additionally, there are large discrepancies between the versions of “truth” told by civilians, government agents, and historians.

## Chapter 2 Human Rights Literature: Purpose, Limitations, and Impact

“Literature is not at the service of the government; on the contrary, governments should do everything in their power to create a favourable climate for literature” –Murong Xuecun

In the introduction to *Theoretical Perspectives on Human Rights and Literature* by Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Alexandra Schultheis Moore, the editors encourage readers to consider: “why literary scholars should embrace human rights as an analytical lens, and what literary reading and critique can add to the aspirational field of human rights,” (1). They further expand on this topic, suggesting that, “Our questions about the theoretical implications of interdisciplinary work in human rights and literature are posed within this aura of contestation, critique, and deep desire for social justice,” (1).

The editors also note that their work is, “Dedicated to those on whose behalf human rights desire to speak, and to those whose utterances inspire deeper understanding of human vulnerability, connection, and possibility,” (Goldberg, Moore). This serves as a reminder as to why so many artists, authors, playwrights, museum curators, and poets put their time and energy into portraying these themes of justice and telling valuable stories that, without being told, would leave to a gaping hole in World History and a great lack of understanding of the human experience.

In Part III of this collection, titled “Rethinking the ‘subject’ of Human Rights” the editors include Nick Mansfield’s article “Human Rights as Violence and Enigma: Can Literature Really Be of Any Help with the Politics of Human Rights?” In this work, he claims that “four main impulses motivate creative works that deal with human rights issues: they are the impulses to

*remember*, to *reveal* to *remind*, and to *resolve*,” (203). To him, the impulse to remember strives to: “avert a forgetfulness that might make such appalling events disappear seamlessly into an unstudied history, or to commemorate things which, if not strongly remembered, might become prey to usually racially motivated revisionism,” (203), while *reveal* is based on spreading the truth about formerly covered up or underpublicized histories in an attempt to ignite a response from regular civilians and governmental officials alike (203). He views *remind* and *resolve* as closely intertwined, remind serving as a means to “shock us out of the complacencies in which we have been plunged,” and override the system by which people “become impervious to the suffering of other people,” (204). Lastly, *resolve* functions as the overarching goal of human rights literature, to instill a moral obligation to keep these stories from being repeated (204). These impulses he describes can be found as underlying motivations behind the production of literature from and about the “Dirty War” in Argentina.

In Allison Brysk’s article “The Politics of Measurement: The Contested Count of the Disappeared in Argentina,” she discusses the “inherent difficulties in measuring repression,” (678) and the way accounts of the atrocities varied widely. She specifically focuses on the aftermath of the Dirty War and the largely unsuccessful attempt to understand the full extent of the violence. While most literature, especially fiction, is composed of qualitative data instead of quantitative, it is still important to note when reading non-fiction books, court documents, and even statistics, that the basic “facts” are still very much uncertain. A major motivation behind creating human rights literature is to satisfy a need to piece together history. Given this, it is necessary to realize and understand a major obstacle standing in the way of doing exactly this.

The acknowledgement of these inevitable shortcomings begs the question: what is the point? If we will never know what exactly happened or how many people it happened to, why do

so many people invest so much time into the fruitless search? Are authors able to fulfill their mission of “revealing” if they can only do so partially?



### Chapter 3 Non Fiction Texts

“It is the mark of a truly intelligent person to be moved by statistics,” –George Bernard Shaw

The first non-fiction book to investigate is *Argentina’s “Dirty War”: An Intellectual Biography* by Donald C. Hodges. This work of approximately 400 pages tells the story of the Argentine Dirty War while providing a significant amount of background information on the social, political, and economic environment in Argentina, in South America, and in the world at large.

In the preface of the book, Hodges clearly states the manner in which he will carry out the biography and what he hopes to provide the audience with. He starts by acknowledging that he is not exclusively writing about the Dirty War and related violence, but instead is “Taking contemporary Argentine political history as its field of study,” (xii). The following paragraph clearly lays out what he hopes to do with this piece of human rights literature and how he plans to accomplish it:

*This work claims to be philosophical in three fundamental senses: as an in-depth investigation of the reality behind the appearance of events; as an attempt to understand the complex web of economic, political, and social happenings as a whole; and as the expression of an ultimate concern for the life-and-death issues that matter most in this world. Its examination of the mind-sets and intellectual shaping of the main protagonists satisfies the first condition. Its investigation of the causal relations between the Peronist phenomenon, revolutionary war, dirty war, and related Military Process and resistance satisfies the second condition. Its focus on the “final solution” to the Argentine question satisfies the third condition (xii).*

The rhetorical style is very academic and matter-of-fact. Hodges does not attempt to “sensationalize” this event. He is not striving to produce a best-seller, but instead to create a

terrifically accurate account of a series of events often misunderstood or misrepresented. His tone is formal, lecturing, and informative. Hodges' book has a logical progression of themes, events, movements, and socio-political shifts. Unlike other works that switch back and forth between time periods and events for dramatic effect, his account is primarily told chronologically.

The rhetoric of his title is also interesting. He intentionally uses "Intellectual" to present it as a reliable source, or perhaps as a *more* reliable source than the works created by other historians, filmmakers, and novelists who diminish the scholarly nature of the history. "Intellectual" suggests that it is going to be focused on truth and academia instead of drama and emotion. Additionally, it means that it will have an emphasis on critical thought and the presentation of ideas, not just a recitation of facts. The dedication page is equally insightful. It reads: "To Abraham Guillén anarchist, communist, teacher, friend" which suggests before the biography begins that he has at least partial admiration for someone associated with the leftist parties. Hodges begins with a preface detailing the socio-political atmosphere that led to the human rights violations and a brief overview of the violence and corruption itself.

Hodges asserts that: "the generals' dirty war cannot be understood apart from military repression in Argentina [...]" (20). This explains the painstaking manner in which this self-declared "intellectual biography" details the social-political and economic climate leading up to this widespread, warrantless violence.

As mentioned previously, Hodges looked at the Dirty War in a global context and with deep consideration for the historical background in both Latin America and the world at large. He ties the "Dirty War" into the aftermath of World War II.

As stated in its own conclusion, “This book has investigated the origins and outcomes of Argentina’s dirty war, the intellectual foundations of that war and their impact on the ensuing opening of and return to democracy,” (282). Because of this, Hodges’ account serves as a reminder that no human rights violation is isolated and that each “war” or other form of widespread criminal and/or violent activity is bred from conditions and incidents of the past and will serve an important role in the future of global society. This emphasis on the interconnected nature of all local, national, and global issues is lacking in many of the fictional movies and novels.

Hodges devotes a chapter to describing the manners in which Argentina during this time was similar to the Nazi Germany (187). These frightening similarities raise the question: Didn’t we learn our lesson? Which can be closely followed by an inquiry about the literature—or lack thereof—available in the years between the end of the Holocaust and the start of the “dirty war” that may have warned against this. If they were missing, we must ask why? And if they were widely available and read, does that prove that the preventative intention of human rights literature fails to yield results?

In the Appendix, Hodges adds a 1985 interview from prison with Mario Firmenich, a leftist activist. While not integrated into the book, this interview gives readers direct insight into the opinions and experiences of a major player on the left. While Hodges’ entire book is focused on explaining how the various parties and sub-sections of political parties came into existence, the tactics they used, how they gained or lost power, etc., he also gives Firmenich the opportunity to share how he feels about this same history. The interview serves as a (partially) first person account of the events. Often, political activists in prison are unable to share their

stories, but Hodges gave Firmenich this opportunity, and gave his audience a “firsthand” account of what happened.

The possibility of accuracy and credibility is a major problem in creating human rights literature. This is an attempt to piece together a formerly misunderstood historical event. Hodges takes a lot of pride in his self-declared “Intellectual” work, and takes several measures to assure the audience of his credibility, or at least of his immense efforts to be credible. For example, he discloses that no paper or pens were allowed in for his interview in prison, but that he has fact checked with three other people present to ensure he was not misrepresenting what was said. This painstaking effort to ensure the utmost accuracy is honorable in this field.

This interview raises several questions about what it means to be a “true” and “credible” source. For example, one could rightfully argue that this account is highly accurate because it is coming almost directly from the mouth of someone who lived through it and even played an active role in the political resistance. Following this logic, one could deem this account to be more trustworthy than one coming from, say, a British historian writing forty years later and who did not live through or even near the action. However, others will argue that precisely because Firmenich was so closely connected that his account would likely be biased, while the hypothetical British historian would have no personal stake in the retelling and could weigh various accounts against each other to create and share a more objective truth.

Another non-fiction text about the Dirty War is *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparacidos and the Myth of the “Dirty War”* by Martin Edwin Andersen. This work also has a very significant title. First, the blending of English and Spanish signifies an international approach. It attempts to be true to the Spanish-speaking nation about which the book revolves,

while making it accessible to a broad, English speaking audience. Additionally, the word “myth” has a very strong connotation, usually implying that something is not necessarily—or even not likely—true. Lastly, he, like many others, uses “Dirty War” in quotations to suggest that perhaps the word “war” is not the most accurate descriptor.

His dedication reads: “To Patt Derian, Emilio Mignone, and the memory of the late bishop of La Rioja, Monsignor Enrique Angelelli, three people who spoke out and made a difference,” (Andersen). This addresses the question of what he is hoping to accomplish with the book and demonstrates the importance he places on human rights advocacy, and its literature.

It is useful to note the publication locations of all works when considering their literary and political significance. In this case, the publication cities are Boulder, Colorado and San Francisco, California, which are both non-Argentine and non-South American locations. This book was published in 1993, approximately fifteen years after the end of the regime.

His book is split up into many sections, most of which are marked by whimsical and intriguing subtitles, including: “The Best Enemy is a Dead Enemy,” (110) “Death of a Titan,” (111) “Doctors Who Heal, Doctors Who Make Pain,” (17) “Uncivil Wars” (45) “Dead Men’s Tales,” (307) “Silence of the Shepherds,” (191). Unlike Hodges, he strives for attention-grabbing phrases, puns, and newsflashes to keep readers engaged and splits up the account into various intriguing segments.

In Acknowledgements Anderson writes, “Unfortunately, several people who are main characters in this book did not accede to requests for an interview. They are Henry Kissinger, Mario Firmenich, Jorge Videla, Roberto Viola, Emilio Massera, and Albano Harguindeguy. Their testimony would have been valuable because all controversies have two sides, and theirs might have shed light on one of the most tragic events in the post-World War II Western world.

Until they answer the hard questions still pending, we can only evaluate their acts and try to interpret their silence,” (xii). It is very important that he adds this disclaimer. First, it demonstrates the degree to which he tried to present a fully impartial retelling of the events. Second, it reminds readers that these “characters” were unwilling to assist in helping him create an honest and accurate story, perhaps implying their guilt. These major actors in the Dirty War were not the soldiers or torturers who carried out orders to commit acts of violence. Instead, they were the politicians actually creating and implementing these policies. Lastly, his comment about attempting to “interpret their silence” is a necessary action when reading all accounts with gaping holes in information and testimony.

In Acknowledgements he writes: “The reconstruction of a nation’s past is an enterprise fraught with dangers even for the citizen-historian of the country under study. The risks increase exponentially for foreigners, particularly those whose understanding or hypotheses put their interpretation at odds with conventional wisdom [...]” (xi). This is also pertinent to human rights literature as a whole.

Furthermore, he adds, “This book—like the work of those who documented the Holocaust—is meant to ensure that the fictionalized account left by the military as their official record of events [...] will not be allowed, sometime in the future, to replace fact,” (6). This presents an ironic situation. Typically, scholars and historians look to government documents as non-fiction primary sources. However, as Andersen argues, they are not to be trusted to inform the public of the atrocities committed. While Andersen’s assertion may, at first, seem to be counter-intuitive, it does make sense that the perpetrators would not be willing to/eager to condemn themselves. He raises a very important question about human rights literature as a whole: Whose accounts are to be trusted?

## Chapter 4 Non Fiction News Articles

A “Bello” *Economist* article by Michael Reid published in September 2014 titled “Memory is Not History: ‘Dirty War’ memorials should not be used to rewrite the past” tries to draw a distinction between national history and personal memory. It is interesting to compare this view with that of Andersen, who discusses the falsehood of the historical evidence and the necessity to rely on personal testimony to gain insight into the “true” story.

Reid concedes that “there can be no doubting the importance of recalling the crimes of the past,” (4) but follows this by reminding the audience: “But there are dangers, too, in the region’s intellectual fashion for ‘historical memory.’ Memory is by its nature subjective and selective,” (4). He substantiates this claim by referencing historian Tony Judt who believes memory cannot serve as a “substitute” for history. He concludes his argument by saying, “The history of political violence in Latin America is more complicated than some of the museums and monuments suggest.” (4). This assertion is true, but he fails to address the idea that something could be valuable for what it can contribute, not just for what it will be unable to provide.

The author raises many good points. Any literature student or historian has been taught on countless occasions that first person narrators can be unreliable, that biases can cloud judgment and memory, that various first hand-accounts must be balanced against each other in an attempt to find the truth among various sets of emotionally charged testimonies. The author’s resistance to embracing memory as fact is valid, but he fails to present better alternatives. In any situation, it is hard to piece together an accurate story, but this difficulty increases tenfold when

the perpetrators, who clearly want a very different story to be told, have strong political power and influence and can virtually make these records disappear. When an honest “official” historical record is missing from a given period, what is there left to depend on if not memories?

The author also points out that the rhetoric around the victims’ experience during these years, as exemplified by a sign in a memorial park, is that “they died ‘fighting for the ideals of justice and equity,’” (6). The author notes that while this may be true, they were not necessarily champions of upholding human rights, either. Many of them planned and carried out acts of extreme violence as well. The author feels that “the historical truth silenced by ‘memory’ is that the cold war in Latin America was fought by two equally authoritarian sides,” (6). He notes that “Argentina’s coup in 1976 was triggered in part by the violence of the Montoneros,” (6).

While it makes sense that these memories cannot be used in isolation to fully comprehend decades of political struggles and widespread institutional violence and exploitation, his word choice, which makes it seem as though memories are inherently separate from “history,” is troubling. It appears that he feels “history” is one concept and memories are an entirely separate entity. This is a problematic assertion, because memories are important pieces of history. If trying to paint a full and accurate portrait of the Dirty War, one could not, as the author of this article argues, rely entirely on memories of individual victims. However, one could not succeed in doing so without these pieces, either.

The fact that the Montoneros (the left-wing activists) acted violently, too, does not mean that the victims being honored at the museums are any less dead. The letters written by victims that are on display in these museums, as Reid writes about, were still written by these people whether or not another event happened five years prior.



These displays of “memories” certainly should not *replace* “history,” as the author suggests, but it is an important part *of* history, and these memorials and exhibits serve as a useful form of human rights literature when balanced against non-fiction works such as *Dossier Secreto* and *An Intellectual Biography*, personal testimonies of people on other sides of the conflict, and various other sources.

Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Alexandra Schultheis Moore also address this in the introduction to *Theoretical Perspectives on Human Rights and Literature*, re-posing the question originally suggested by Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, authors of *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*, “Is what the survivor relays ‘true’ in the sense that it happened to her exactly in the way that she has claimed?” (8). They also further explain that “[...] such prioritization of factual veracity occurs within the epistemological tenets of individualist western notions, contexts, and applications of true value,” (8). Swanson Goldberg and Schultheis Moore also discuss the ways in which these various forms of “legitimated ‘truth-telling’” have been the cause of great debate in the intersecting disciplines of human rights and literature. This directly relates to the discrepancy between the position of Reid and that of Andersen on what types of stories can be trusted and which should or should not be at the forefront of the global understanding of the Dirty War.

The next article comes from an unlikely source: the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN). In June 2014 an article by Wright Thompson was published in ESPN the Magazine and on ESPNFC.com titled “While the World Watched” with caption: “At the same time Argentina hosted the 1978 World Cup, the nation’s dictators were raging their ‘Dirty War’ of repression, kidnappings, and torture. As the tournament again draws near, ghastly

memories are flooding back.” As the title and description suggests, it is cruelly ironic that one of the most “unseen” and hidden parts of history occurred while Argentina was being watched by millions around the world. This article, unlike *Dossier Secreto: Argentina’s Desaparecidos and the Myth of the “Dirty War”* and *Argentina’s “Dirty War” An Intellectual Biography*, uses “Hollywood” style language, pacing, and rhetoric to sensationalize the story.

We must consider the audience this was intended for. This was not published in a textbook, nor a newspaper, nor produced as a segment on the History Channel. When ESPN published this, it was with the intention of reaching out to a very specific target audience. Or, perhaps, it could be considered a more “general” audience. It is safe to assume that they were not looking to get the attention of historians or a Latin American studies student, but they just wanted to tell a group of people who very possibly knew nothing of the Dirty War, that this large-scale human rights violation occurred, and worse, that it occurred right under their noses. The article works to shame the perpetrators and to give the audience a sense of both shock and guilt that an event many of them tuned in for day after day, was right at the epicenter of a humanitarian disaster. This article was so important mostly because it brought the story to a new audience. It takes a prior knowledge of the event to actively seek out a book such as *Dossier Secreto: Argentina’s Desaparecidos and the Myth of the “Dirty War”* and *Argentina’s “Dirty War” An Intellectual Biography*, but this story could reach anyone browsing the website for sports news.

In order to understand how this unique example of human rights literature is operating, it is also necessary to analyze the rhetorical style. First, while his caption contained a brief introduction to the torture, his first paragraph barely addressed this. He draws in readers with a light-hearted story about a restaurant hosting a thirty-year anniversary party for the 1978

Argentine soccer team, with surprisingly poor turnout. He uses the first paragraph to present the discrepancy between Argentina's soccer fanaticism and national pride, and their discomfort with honoring and remembering the 1978 Cup. Thompson writes, "It seems odd to an outsider, a soccer-mad nation trying to erase one of its greatest teams, but in Argentina, the scrubbing makes sense. The nation has the highest number of psychologists per capita in the world: This is a country drowning in toxic secrets, including the one about a World Cup it needs to forget," (1). This sentence concludes the first paragraph, and the second consists of gruesome descriptions of the prisoner's conditions.

He writes, "men and women slumped, shoulder to shoulder, stewing in their own urine and feces. Infection ravaged their wounds. They ate rotten meat," (2). He then elaborates on the nature of their unjust situations, explaining that they were, "imprisoned by a powerful and cruel dictatorship, which managed every detail of this soccer tournament," (2). This again reiterates the twisted nature of the event. There was no "good government" and "bad government"; it was all one. The people ordering this abuse were the same ones being applauded all over the world for being hospitable hosts.

This article also had biographical elements to it, focusing specifically on a handful of victims and their personal experiences with torture and their feelings about the World Cup years later. Another stylistic choice was to switch back and forth between past, displayed in italics, and present. This keeps readers engaged with both the crisis and the resolution.

His diction is also extremely noteworthy. To describe the heinous manner in which the victims were abused, he uses light-hearted and almost upbeat language. The following description exemplifies this well: "Everyone got shocked, usually in the first hour of captivity, not as a punishment but as a sadistic welcome. Men took the cattle prod in the anus. Women took

it in the vagina. The young soldiers seemed fascinated with the female anatomy and delighted in painful exploration,” (7). This harrowing account, told with fanciful language, is shocking and upsetting for audience members. The language is what sets this article apart from a court document or official testimony about the same torture. These nuanced stylistic distinctions can alter how the audience takes in and processes the same story.

The 2012 *New Yorker* article “Children of the Dirty War: Argentina’s Stolen Orphans” by Francisco Goldman, has a similar focus to the film *La Historia Oficial*: the children of Dirty War captives that “disappeared” and were given to families with political power. Many biological relatives banded together after the end of the regime to find these loved ones. This lengthy article (approximately 9,000 words) focuses on the search for a disappeared child named Clara Anahí and her grandmother’s experience trying to locate her and honor the memory of her family. This personalized story is also interwoven with general facts and statistics about the various disappearances and the military practices, as well as a few other specific cases.

This article is far less sensationalized than the ESPN article, but it is still captivating. Instead of focusing on the actual torture and the horrendous conditions the detainees were kept in, it focuses on the families of the victims. It emphasizes that even once the regime was over, a large part of the nation continued to suffer. It draws attention to the manner in which certain parts of the population are trying to do the opposite of “forget” about the dark years and erase or bury the history, as the ESPN article suggested. These citizens are trying to dig it back up.

The article is told similarly to a novel, chronologically detailing the struggle of the “abuelas” and their struggle to match children of *desaparecidos* to their birth families and expose

the truth of the political cruelty of the Dirty War through their human rights organization. It details their mission, their successes, their setbacks, and their plans for the future.

This story is an interesting hybrid. It is purely non-fiction, not engaging in embellishments or fictionalization of facts. However, it does not stick to statistics, it operates by a personal attachment to the “characters.” It also operates similarly to a novel in that the story has a beginning, middle, and end. It does not begin with a final resolution, as many news articles do. Instead it stretches out the story, unfolding surprises and developments in the order they occurred in real life. A startling aspect of the story is that it continued into the 2000s, reminding readers that piecing together the broken families of the Dirty War is ongoing struggle.

A large part of this story was derived from news article headlines from local newspapers. In this sense, this form of literature is created by putting other mediums of non-fiction literature into a single comprehensive document. Presumably, the vast majority of readership did not ever see those newspapers, but his chronological recounting of the headlines in one location (and with details to fill in the blanks) allowed people all over the world to experience the public discourse about the DNA testing of these children.

Also in a rhetorically clever manner, the article ends with a quotation from Clara Anahí’s grandmother, which poses a sad reflection and question: “‘I’m alone in the world,’ she told me. ‘I was always expecting to find Clara Anahí, Every morning I wake and think, I don’t want to, I don’t want to go on. After a while, I think, But if I don’t move, what will happen? And I get up and go out to search for her. Who will look for her when I’m gone?’” (62). This conclusion serves two purposes. First, it encapsulates the hardships that people who have lost their entire families face. It also acts as a call to action. The author is urging readers all over the world to be

that person who will continue to look for these children, and in turn, history, even after this generation becomes unable to continue the search.

## Chapter 5 Novels

“Books can capture injustices in a way that stays with you and makes you want to do something about them. That’s why they are so powerful.” –Malala Yousafzai

Another important genre of human rights literature is the novel, a written, fiction account of the atrocities. A great work in this genre is Gloria Lisé’s *Departing at Dawn*, which tells the story of a young woman in Argentina who lives a life of fear and despair because of her involvement with the Peronist movement, which opposed the government in power in the 1970s.

Printed on the cover of *Departing at Dawn* is a particularly telling review by Ana Castillo: ““It never ceases to astound me how many people around the world deny a dark period in the history of their respective nations. Anyone anywhere today in need of a reminder that political change begins with speaking out should read this testimony.” This proclamation exemplifies the critical role that human rights literature plays, especially in the case of the Dirty War.

Although the work is a self-proclaimed work of fiction, Lisé begins her novel with an introduction explaining her personal experience with the Dirty War and the impulse she felt to tell and re-tell the story so that the atrocities and the victims would never be forgotten. Begging readers to help her atone for the sins of her nation, Lisé talks about crying every night about how little she could do in the name of justice. She then explains the epiphany she had that led her to the creation of her novel: “Then I decided that I could indeed do something: I could refuse to forget. I could hold in my memory all the details of these aberrations, so that one day in the future I might at least recount them to my own children,” (xi). This inclination epitomizes the

purpose of human rights literature and the immense effect that it can have on both local and global audiences.

The story was originally written in Spanish and then translated, carefully and meticulously, into English. The English translation made the story accessible to a variety of audiences. Additionally, Lisé uses casual and colloquial language to make the story more relatable and, again, accessible to a diverse range of audiences. This is a quality lacking in a work like *Argentina's "Dirty War": An Intellectual Biography*.

Another crucial distinction between Lisé and authors such as Hodges and Andersen, is her personal, lived experience with the events and the nation. She often uses the phrase: “my country,” (ix, xii) in her Introduction, reminding audiences that this story is very near and dear to her heart and that she has witnessed the stress and pain that she rights about first hand. Wearing this “insider” hat makes her work extremely convincing and moving.

The benefits of the novel genre are similar to those of a fiction film. Novels offer strong character development, which aids in the audience’s engagement with and enjoyment of the story. Additionally, having a plot that has been based around facts and historical events, but is embellished to make the story more fast-paced and intriguing is a major benefit.

On the dedication page, Lisé states: “The story that follows is entirely fiction,” which begs the question, is this a fair disclaimer? Does she have the right to say this? The point of her novel is to illuminate a dark history, a *true* history. She has based the story almost strictly on real events, people, and places, and while the specific characters may be fragments of her imagination, the word “entirely” seems misleading.

After this statement she adds, “In memory of Isauro Arancibia, his brother Atilio Santillán, and Trinidad Iramain, whom I was never able to meet, because they were killed



without ever being charged or having the right to a defense,” (Lisé). This is a very similar dedication to the authors of the other non-fiction works. Both novels and biographies are time-consuming, labors of love and the authors and historians were all driven to pursue and complete their books by the need to act in the memory of a victim.

The narrative style of *Departing at Dawn* is very unique. It uses a mixture of traditional novel form, poetry, letter writing, and, within these forms, uses first, second, and third person voices. It is largely sensationalized, trying to provoke a reaction from audiences and keep them engaged in the story. For example, the very first lines are: “They threw him off a balcony...” (1). From the beginning she ensures that readers are hooked, eager to know the how, why, and who of this violent act.

The next chapter takes on an entirely new form and a second person narration talking directly to the narrator’s mother, as if in an open letter to her: “Mother, I am on my way,” (4) it begins, followed by a series of “you” statements, including: “You didn’t say a word to me,” (4); “I could not look you squarely in the eye,” (5); “We will go on living, I swear this to you,” (8). This technique is useful because it gives the readers the chance to witness a personal exchange between people affected deeply by the events in Argentina. Being immersed in this seemingly private moment evokes an empathetic reaction from readers. Furthermore, this chapter serves to shed light on the personality, experiences, and fears of the narrator and her mother, which helps readers connect to the story as a whole.

She discusses the way that these military juntas became an ordinary part of Argentine life, “Once again the black lists would appear: of people, the press, and songs. There would be raids, political prisoners would be taken, congress abolished [...] Yes, they thought, this would be one more chapter, just like the others, in Argentina’s recent history” (20). This cavalier means

of retelling a socio-political environment that would be highly alarming and traumatic to people in most other nations is very powerful as a literary tool.

Similar to the work of Hodges, Lisé tries to place this in a larger political context and refrains from making it appear to be an isolated incident. She writes, “So the nights were filled with senseless violence, senseless unless one considered the past twenty years or more of alliances and exclusions, exiles and returns, amnesties and agreements among the protagonists in Argentine political life, not to mention the various parties and their dissolution plus the power of the military and the Church. With such a historical view, one might understand how the country’s shroud had been woven for a whole generation,” (24).

The author inserts many religious references, having various characters either fully rely on, or completely reject, the concept of Christianity and acting in the name of God. By doing this, she raises important questions and presents a factor that played an important role in the actions of the government agents and citizens alike. Often these religious notions were used to justify unjustifiable actions.

The following poem is repeated multiple times throughout the book, including at the very conclusion:

*Viditay, ya me voy  
y se me hace que no he'I volver  
malhaya mi suerte tanto quererte  
vidita, y tenerte que perder  
malhaya mi suerte tanto quererte,  
viene clareando mi padecer.*

*Darling of my life, I am leaving  
Never to return.  
Loving you so much,  
Life of mine, and having to lose you  
Is my bad luck, loving you so much,  
My suffering is clearly dawning (72)*

Giving the appearance that the novel is like a scrapbook of memories, the next chapter is a letter. The entire section is in a new font and in letter format, marked with a date stamp of June 10, 1976. This again gives readers a greater understanding for the way families suffered emotionally even if/when they were not being physically tortured by the government. For example, in this letter the mother writes, “I pray for wisdom to survive in these extremely difficult times. Mr. ThousandFive is bringing this letter to you because it is not a good idea to send it through the mail; at least, this heart of a mother is telling me it would be dangerous. There is a lot of activity here every night and sometimes during the day, with people being taken away, especially young people and students, but even some whole families,” (79). This is very powerful because readers are able to sense the mother’s fear and try to imagine a life a society so corrupt that one’s security is always in question and where peace-of-mind is rare.

When Berta finds out that she is on the military hit list, she reflects on the terrible situation she is stuck in. Lisé writes,

*She felt all kinds of things at once: the possibility of death [...] the horror of others’ torture that now felt like her own; disgust, powerlessness, humiliation; the worst fear you could possibly fear, the fear of falling from a building of a thousand floors, knowing during the fall that this was just the antechamber of the most horrendous death—her own and that of her people (86).*

After describing this relentless anxiety and dread, she continues to describe the ways in which Berta felt betrayed by the dream of political justice that she risked everything for:

*She felt guilty, a most intense shame for having believed in those absurd words of political hopes, that now nobody even dared utter, and for having stepped out of the expected story [...] And because she had believed in all that and had loved unconditionally the man who fully believed in such a dream, she was now trash, a woman who was compromising everybody who wanted to help her. Unfortunate as she herself was, she was also killing her mother and destroying her brothers because of what a disaster she was, just because she had allowed herself to get involved after hearing Atilio talk as she sat on the sidewalk. She caused so much trouble by loving him and loving everything he was saying. He was describing to the crowd a world where you could*

*actually manage to be alive. She had been foolish to tell her mother about all those ideas; her mother had responded that the family had already suffered enough with Peronism and now, oh, no, not my daughter too! [...] She had given everything possible to Atilio, who now, as always, was way ahead of her because he was dead and thus would not have to pass through hell—the hell he had left her in and, of all things, without him (87).*

This scene, one of the most powerful of the novel, is meaningful in a number of ways.

First, it highlights the intense irony of the situation. That someone on the “good” side could feel so much regret for doing what we, as readers, view as the honorable course of action. It also illustrates the unadulterated power that the regime had over people. They were able to make the life of a person who opposes their policies miserable, or even take it away completely. At this point, the narrator realizes that she will not be able to escape the wrath of the government any longer and panics.

This book, although claiming to be “entirely fictional,” is an incredibly informative work. The one hundred and seventy five page novel is able to accurately demonstrate the overwhelming fear and unrest that Argentina and its citizens experienced for decades on end.

About Argentina, Lisé’s protagonist reflects:

*[J]ust maybe somebody would discover in a buried bottle the brief history of a country that was once beautiful but had not been able to maintain the gentleness of its teachers in their white uniforms, or the excellence of its universities, or even the sound of trains making their round trip runs; a country that had managed to produce a destitute army capable of crossing the mountain range on foot under the leadership of a general with dark eyes who only wanted to free his brothers and sisters [...] And despite all that, it was a country that had been unable to find the words needed to construct its history, the one that should have been written, in which all of its people were respected and cared for as the worthy and irreplaceable persons who made that beautiful country unique and alive. During those days, Argentina was like an unfinished poem somebody was keeping in a bottle, for later (121).*

Lisé used a lot of meta fiction techniques, referring to literature and its purpose within her own work of literature. Berta describes the ways in which her aunt, an author, imagined their real lives as stories, a tactic that was comforting to her, and “helped her survive, because of the hope

and expectation for never-ending hugs and happiness shared forever,” (85). Additionally, she writes, “Even Berta’s current situation, which in reality made no sense whatsoever, could be forced into the same framework,” (85). This is symbolic of the ways in which Lisé herself is turning this horrible world into a novel that provides readers with a spark of hope. The author again uses meta techniques near the conclusion of her novel, having her protagonist say: “I am going to tell you a story, Aunt, about me and many people in this country. I don’t know how it will end. The sad part, Aunt, is that all of it is true,” (134). This is especially ironic, assuming that Lisé is intentionally using this as a mirror for her own actions, because she has her narrator insist that her story is fact, while maintaining herself that hers is fiction.

The story ends with an exchange of letters between Berta and her mother. From these, we learn that her ally, Mr. ThousandFive, had been beaten, tortured, and then eventually killed. While this, on the surface, is a terrible outcome, the novel ends with Berta revitalized and optimistic about her future and her ability to survive and make a positive difference.

Overall, this work of fiction was still largely informative and played an important role in the dissemination of knowledge to an international audience following the fall of the regime and the restoration of peace to Argentina.

## Chapter 6 Non Fiction—Court Documents

United States court documents are important to the understanding both of the Dirty War as a whole and specifically the literature about it, because they reveal how much the United States government and other global superpowers knew about the abuses in various years. It is also telling which documents got approved for declassifications and which ones, perhaps, the public will never know about. Most of these documents are marked with some version of “release” or “excise,” and a few are marked with the rubric: “deny.” How many documents received this “deny” mark? Are there hundreds of accounts that will never become public knowledge? How does knowing there could be gaping holes in information affect how we study literature about this time period?

One court document entitled: “[\_\_\_\_\_] Statement” (name intentionally omitted) contains many of the various perks from both fiction and non-fiction. It is focused on one specific person, and the readership feels a connection to her. But it is also non-fiction, making it impossible to discount.

Where does this fit in with Reid’s argument about memory being unable to replace history? The victim even included in her official statement: “From then on I don’t remember clearly,” (1). Yet, in this case, these testimonies are the only official documentation *of* the history.

Sharing the story of her brutal abuse, she testifies: “I was blindfolded, my hands were tied and I was put against the wall. An electric device touched my hands. Next I was on the floor. It seemed I was being hit. I don’t know. My clothes were being ripped off. Then I think I was on a table held down by 4 or 5 guys. They started using the picana (an electric prod.) Then they tied me down and threw water on me [...] They questioned me, but is was more just give it to her.

There. There. There. In genital area [...] They said they'd fix me so I couldn't have children,"

(2). These graphic—and yet simultaneously vague, scattered, and unclear—retellings match the torture described in the various news articles.

Aside from the content, there are several other noteworthy aspects of the document. First, all names were omitted. Second, it is marked from October 1976, meaning at the time it was current. This is significant because it means that the United States government had knowledge of these atrocities being committed in Argentina, even against United States citizens, as it was going on. These documents were not made public knowledge until the 2000s, approximately thirty years later (*National Security Archives*, 9). Lastly, it is noted that this specific victim was, in fact, a United States citizen. How does this factor change the dialogue and reception of such a story? Would the United States government have taken such care to document her experience if she was not an American? Also important to note are the stamps marked across the document, including: "Argentina Project/U.S. DEPT. OF STATE," "DECONTROL," and "UNCLASSIFIED."

Another useful document is titled: "Memorandum on Torture and Disappearances in Argentina." The opening paragraph to this Memorandum begins with: "The Government of Argentina acknowledges approximately 3,400 state of siege prisoners detained under executive power (PEN). Arrests and disappearances currently continue though not on the massive scale of the past two years." The document goes on to describe various torture techniques utilized by the guards in a tone so impartial and matter-of-fact that it is unsettling. This document has no apparent restrictions, marked as "Unclassified," "Release," and "In Full." It is noteworthy that this account heavily criticizes the Argentine government, but does not implicate the United States for their involvement (direct or indirect). It is possible, and perhaps even likely, that there

are dozens of documents still classified that explain certain aspects of the abuses and involve direct orders from the U.S. President and his administration.

In the document “American Embassy, Buenos Aires: Argentine Intelligence Source,” they again talk very calmly about the lives of dozens of people. They also discuss the process for granting partial freedom to various prisoners based on the degree to which they are considered to be part of the counter movement. The manner in which this system is discussed makes it sound as if it were a logical thought process and chain of events.

The documented is stamped with: “THIS INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION.” While no one can deny the need for select national documents to remain secure for the safety of citizens, it is also troubling to consider the power that the higher powers of government have to control information and public knowledge. It was the government that controlled the events of the Dirty War, and it is still the government (granted, an entirely different one) controlling information and literature we have about it.

While government documents are rarely considered to be works of “literature,” in the case of the Dirty War and other human rights violations, this category is fundamental. These testimonies, used in combination with novels, biographies, and news articles, play a pivotal role in creating and sharing a comprehensive history.



## Chapter 7 Film and Art

“I was in jail four and a half years. When I came out, I continued the same struggle against injustice, but instead of using weapons, I began to use art and cinema.” –Mohsen

Makhmalbaf

Fiction gives the writers and directors artistic license to create filler drama, a romantic relationship, a friendship, and other personal details that would be irrelevant to a non-fiction work (and perhaps impossible to confirm with certainty). It is these embellishments that engage audiences while exposing them to the same important political and historical facts that a non-fiction work would.

There are also many pros of visual expression over text. Perhaps the most convincing benefit of visual representations is the lack of anonymity. While a book discusses a person you’ve never seen face to face and can keep as a blur, as a “non-human.” In a film you are staring into the eyes of someone who has experienced extreme pain, and you cannot hide or dehumanize them. Audience members see their faces, feel their pain, and sense the fear in their eyes, even if they are just actors portraying real-life victims. From a two-hour fiction film, someone could receive the same difficult message in an “easy” way. For most people around the world, a movie would be considered a much more accessible means of receiving information than a 500 page biography.

While fiction films are in many ways superior to other mediums, there are also several drawbacks. First, film must be subtler in their descriptions of history and events leading up to the

beginning of the film. While it is appropriate for a historical non-fiction book to spell out socio-political contexts and years of economic and militaristic history, this is often unwelcome in novels and fiction movies. Given this, it is hard to explain all of the backstory necessary to fully comprehend why and how the events taking place during the movie occurred.

There are also many advantages to creating a work of fiction to relay information about true events, instead of a purely factual biography or article. First, fiction creates a literary space in which readers care about the characters, or otherwise feel an emotional attachment to them and are concerned for their well-being, and devastated when it is jeopardized. When characters are developed, suddenly they are not just statistics, but they create empathy in the viewer. Furthermore, fiction works are not exclusively about the tragedy, a counterpoint that makes them less dense as a whole, while making the sad moments more powerful. Arguably, doing this actually increases the “shock factor” over a book that shares harrowing accounts of torture and abuse on every page.

*Clandestine Childhood* (Original Spanish title: *Infancia clandestina*) revolves around the life of a young boy whose parents are members of the leftist extremist party and who are hiding from the government. The boy frequently witnesses the death of family friends and loved ones. He is used to a difficult life of lying and hiding. The movie ends when both of his parents are (presumably) killed and his infant sister missing. He is brought into an interrogation room before eventually being released to his Grandmother’s doorstep with no information about the well-being of his immediate family. This movie strives to highlight the life-and-death struggles of people who oppose the government and the ways families have been brutally torn apart.

At the beginning of the movie the words: “This movie is based on real events” flash across the screen. Being reminded that the story being told is “true,” even if the actual film is fiction, makes it harder for audiences to ignore the history they are trying to reveal. Often times there is a lot of chaos it is hard to understand what is going on. This could be intentional to demonstrate the fear and confusion felt by the children at the time. The audience is anxiously trying to figure out what is going on in the same way the young boy in the movie is.

A downside to many works of fiction is that they usually only tell very narrow stories. These works often focus on one person or family as opposed to the several thousand people involved. Another problem with fiction attempting to convey historical truths is that often audience members will try to discount the accurate portions by saying that the book or movie is fiction. It is easy to use this as an escape from feeling the guilt associated with the situation and it can keep the audience from fully feeling the weight of the story that is being told, which, in turn, hinders the four major impulses Mansfield describes. While *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparacidos and the Myth of the “Dirty War”* and *Argentina's Dirty War: An Intellectual Biography* may be slightly less engaging for the audience, if they are able to get their point across, that point cannot be brushed aside as an exaggeration.

At the beginning of the film text flashes across the screen, briefly explaining the context leading up to the start of the movie. While this is helpful to an extent and gives viewers some understanding of the political climate at the time, why the family is in hiding, etc., but it cannot possibly provide the audience with background information as comprehensive as that in Hodges' work, which spends several hundred pages discussing the history. In the original Spanish, the screen reads: “1974. Tras la muerte del Presidente Perón, grupos parapoliciales comenzaron a perseguir y asesinar militantes sociales y revolucionarios. 1976. Los militares tomaron el poder

por la fuerza. Se desencadenó la más violenta repression en la historia de la Argentina. 1979.

Desde su exilio en Cuba, los dirigentes de la organización revolucionaria Monteneros iniciaron la “Operación Contraofensiva”. Algunos militantes regresaron a la Argentina con sus hijos.” The English subtitles relate: “1974. After the death of President Perón, paramilitary groups started persecuting and murdering social activists and revolutionaries. 1976. The military seized power, unleashing the most violent repression in Argentina’s history. Exiled in Cuba, the revolutionary leaders of Monteneros initiate the “Counterstrike Operation.” Some activists go home with their children.” This background information is critical to understanding the plot of the movie, but for someone trying to fully understand the entire history of the Dirty War, a few sentences are insufficient.

Hodges’ book has a chapter subtitled with: “Terrorists of the Left,” (103). While Hodges goes on to elaborate on the use of this word and demonstrates skepticism, he at least concedes that there were several guerilla tactics used that may warrant the use of this label or a similar one. The acknowledgement that the leftist radicals were extremely violent and destructive was largely missing from *Clandestine Childhood*, who portrayed them as a group of victims.

Another piece of literature about the *los desaparecidos* is the film *La Historia Oficial*. This fictional film tells the story of an upper class couple and their adopted daughter. After talking to an old friend from high school who was kidnapped and brutally tortured and hearing about the things they did to women, especially pregnant ones, the mother slowly realizes that her daughter is likely one of the children of the disappeared, meaning she was taken against the mother’s will while the mother was held in captivity or killed by the government.

Using this plot as a guiding force, the movie exposes the audience to many important political movements in Argentina. For example, she visits downtown Buenos Aires where members of the *Abuelas de Plaza de Maya* non-profit stand holding signs speaking out against the injustice and often featuring pictures of missing loved ones. Additionally the protagonist is a school teacher and one day her students cover her blackboard in news articles about the violence and injustice. The camera flashes to these clippings and shows the audience an important aspect of socio-political progress at the time. However, like many others, she is upset and orders them to take it down. This is symbolic of the initial reaction to suppress the ugly truth. While she came around and became desperate to uncover this dark history, many people preferred to stay blissfully naïve. The style of this movie was very linear, taking place all in the present. There were not flashbacks scenes to torture or to the kidnapping of the daughter, and all information of these events were given through dialogue.

The writers of the movie clearly put a fair amount of effort into understanding and researching the events of the 1970s and took care to incorporate these details into the drama. The story that the protagonist's friend, a woman who was kidnapped by the government because of her and her husband's suspected involvement with the leftist party, told matches almost perfectly to the other accounts of the torture, including descriptions of sexual abuse, the use of an electric prod, and being taken suddenly in the middle of one's daily routine.

Unlike *Clandestine Childhood*, this movie did not start with a historical background check nor hints about the direction the movie will go in. Unless a viewer read or heard of a summary before watching, they would not have any clue what the conflict of the movie would be until it was presented on-screen. Similarly, the audience uncovers the secrets of recent Argentine history at the same time the characters do. The filmmakers used a number of subtle techniques to

give audience members brief insights into the socio-political atmosphere in Argentina at the time. For example, in one scene a radio tuned into a news station played in the background, saying: “It is too bad that some news media abuse their rights. By preaching destabilization, they encourage subversive ideas. The army is preparing to confront the infiltrators.” (7:50). Other reveals include, as mentioned, the conversation with the from who was a victim, and conversations with an *Abuela* about how her child was taken away.

Very similar to *Clandestine Childhood*, the movie does not end with a clear resolution. Viewers are left wondering—and worrying about—what will happen to the woman, her daughter, and all of the *Abuelas* trying to uncover details about their disappeared loved ones. It also ends with no indication of whether the husband and other perpetrators will ever be punished or caught. This open-ended finale sparks a fear and outrage in the audience and encourages them to pursue other forms of literature, news stories, etc., to fully piece together all that occurred.

While the husband—who, in addition to playing a role in the government abuses and kidnapping a child, physically abuses his wife—is painted in a terrible light, the wife is very sympathetic and likeable. People all over the world wonder how so many people could not know about what was going on right under their noses or how so many people gladly took other people’s babies without their consent, and this movie attempted to explain how this could come about.

The movie credits acknowledge the help of the *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* organization, and it was very clear that there was a collaborative effort made between the producers and the group. In fact, a lot of the movie was used as a nod toward the *Abuelas*. For example, when the mother sends her daughter away for the night without telling her husband she says, “¿Es terrible [...] No saber donde esta tu hija,” (106:47). English translation: “Horrible, isn’t it? Not knowing

where your daughter is?”). This line serves as a reminder as to how the *abuelas* and the mothers felt when the children were unjustly taken away and sold to wealthy government families without proper documentation.

The tagline on the movie cover reads: “A Truth Too Frightening to Ignore,” This serves a double meaning, referring both to the plot of the film, in which the woman was unable to continue to turn a blind eye to the violence and corruption, and to the audience members who must now confront the truth. The latter is a strong rhetorical marketing device used to guilt potential audiences into watching the movie to learn the truth that they can no longer “ignore.”

In addition to film, there are many other art forms that can be used to tell the story of the Dirty War. American University in Washington, DC hosted from January 24-March 15, 2015 an art exhibit called “Identidad” by Silvia Levenson. Levenson, an Argentine glassmaker, feels that glass is the perfect medium for expressing what it is like to be a survivor of the Dirty War. She says, “I feel that glass is the ideal medium for conveying this mixed feeling of beauty, fragility, and tensions that represent our human condition,” (1). Levenson made one piece for each of the 111 cases that the non-profit organization The Grandmothers of the Plazo de Mayo has solved, meaning families that have been reconnected following a series of abductions and murders.

This out-of-the-box form of artistic expression demonstrates the vast nature of human rights “literature” in the broadest sense of the word and the various means of telling a story or portraying a feeling from a given moment or experience in history.

It is noteworthy that this exhibit is on a university campus, a hub of learning and enlightenment, and in a city that serves as the center of United States and international politics.

Another powerful means of spreading an important message is through the use of pop culture and music. In 1987, within a decade of the atrocities, with the organization *Abuelas de la Plaza de Maya* growing, the famous Irish pop band U2 wrote and recorded a song called “Mothers of the Disappeared,” as a tribute to the women who lost their children and grandchildren during the Dirty War. Why did this group of men from Ireland think that they had the responsibility—or even the right—to tell the story of the suffering of women on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean? The song is even sang in the first person, saying, “we,” “us,” and “our,” literally serving as the voice of these women.

The lyrics read:

*Midnight, our sons and daughters  
Cut down, taken from us  
Hear their heartbeat  
We hear their heartbeat*

*In the wind we hear their laughter  
In the rain we see their tears  
Hear their heartbeat  
We hear their heartbeat*

*Night hangs like a prisoner  
Stretched over black and blue  
Hear their heartbeat  
We hear their heartbeat*

*In the trees our sons stand naked  
Through the walls our daughters cry  
See their tears in the rainfall*

While movies are criticized for being incapable of portraying an adequate amount of facts and history, the song is able to present even less. Needing to be both brief and easy to remember, the lyrics barely touch the surface of the socio-political struggles in South America at the time. However, these shortcomings must be weighed against the benefits of this medium.



An important question to ask is who is entitled to, responsible to, and deserving of telling this story. Is U2 an unsuitable group to tell the world this story if none of them witnessed it first hand? On the contrary, if they stay silent out of fear of misrepresenting the events, are they doing a disservice to their global audiences that would learn from the lyrics? While U2 may not have been the “right” people to tell the story, especially in comparison to someone like Lisé who lived in Argentina through the 1970s, they were still honorable in their attempt to bring the story—which desperately needed to be told—to a diverse and widespread audience who otherwise may not have heard of it. Furthermore, a song may not share all of the information necessary to a full understanding of what occurred, it might share *some* information to a given population of people that would never have encountered a book or full-length film about it. Lastly, it is possible that the vague—yet captivating—nature of the song lead many who listened to research the subject to better understand what the song is referencing.

## Conclusion

Literature, in a broad sense, from and about the Dirty War in Argentina has played an essential role in the uncovering of the violence, corruption, and oppression that occurred in the 1970s. The various genres and forms of literature each offer unique contributions to the understanding of the events that occurred, how different groups and individuals reacted to it, and how the nation eventually moved forward. While it is impossible to quantitatively rank the value of each piece of human rights literature, or even each genre, there are many benefits and shortcomings of each that can be studied and appreciated.

*Departing at Dawn* and other novels offer compelling accounts based on true events to share Argentina's dark history with audience members in an interesting and accessible manner. Texts such as Hodges' *Argentina's "Dirty War": An Intellectual Biography* and Andersen's *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparacidos and the Myth of the "Dirty War"* offer strictly fact-based information to readers and attempt to provide a complete and unbiased account of these same events. Other mediums, such as music and art, as exemplified by U2 and Levensen, and films such as *Clandestine Childhood* and *La Historia Oficial*, share specific aspects of the Dirty War with audiences in a captivating manner. Without these numerous accounts, both fiction and non-fiction, there would be a critical lack of understanding of the events of the Dirty War both within Argentina and internationally.

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Social Media Intern for Non-Credit Engagement profiles and clients; assisted the Penn State marketing team, Corporate Learning, and World Campus with their social media marketing. Utilize social media management tools to create and post content on Linked In, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media sites.

### Penn State LGBTQA Student Resource Center

August 2014-present

Programming and Community Outreach Intern. Responsible for submitting articles for the newsletter, organizing and publicizing events, and serving as a liaison between the Resource Center and over 700 student organizations, including 7 LGBTQA groups, 60 spiritual/religious groups, 100 fraternities and sororities, and 75 multicultural groups.

### Live It Penn State

June 2014- December 2014

Student organization intern for Live It, a joint venture between local businesses and the Penn State Alumni Association to ensure students make the most of their Penn State experience. Responsible for leading outings for a group of 120 new students and reaching out to over 100 student organizations to promote the Live It website.

### Intern, Center for Global Studies at Penn State University

Aug 2013- May 2014

Worked directly with Associate Director, and completed projects such as blogging, newsletter writing and editing, creating Excel spreadsheets, social media management, and assorted office tasks. Conducted grant research that resulted in an award of \$2.3 million for

