

Psychotic Determination in *Delirio* by Laura Restrepo

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Abstract

Delirio problematizes the premise that Colombia's socio-political conflicts throughout the twentieth century are exclusively related to the emergence of illegal apparatuses and proposes, on the contrary, that the inherent social inequality and prevalent corruption are the main determining factors of the historical struggle between a restrictive and oppressive power elite and a revengeful lower class. I focus on the concept of delirium and argue that in Restrepo's novel the Lacanian definition of delirium as a mechanism of compensation dialogues with Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of delirium as the manifestation of desire's recording on the social field. I conclude that the novel's characterization of delirium appears therefore in an inbetween region between a psychoanalytical perspective of the individual's personal history and a collective conception of madness as a social and historical phenomenon. According to the novel there is a specific phenomenon that made the 1980s in Colombia particularly violent: the exceptional influx of revolutionary flow produced by capitalism crashed with the extremely repressive reactionary libidinal flow of a society that wanted to hold onto traditional categories of class stratification.

Keywords: Laura Restrepo, *Delirium*, drug-trafficking, subjectivity, Gilles Deleuze, libidinal investments

Resumen

Delirio problematiza la premisa según la cual los conflictos socio-económicos que ha enfrentado Colombia durante el siglo XX se relacionan exclusivamente con el surgimiento de organizaciones al margen de la ley. Por el contrario, propone que la inherente desigualdad social y la prevalencia de la corrupción son los factores que determinan el conflicto histórico entre una opresiva élite de poder y una vengativa clase baja. Me centro en el concepto del delirio y argumento que en la novela de Restrepo existe un diálogo entre dos definiciones de este concepto: la definición de Lacan del delirio como mecanismo de compensación y la de Deleuze y Guattari que ve al delirio como el registro de la manifestación del deseo en el campo social. Concluyo que en la novela el concepto se ubica en una región intermedia entre una perspectiva psicoanalista de la historia personal del individuo y una concepción colectiva de la locura como fenómeno social e histórico. De acuerdo a la novela, aquello que determinó la particular violencia que caracterizó a los años ochenta en Colombia es un fenómeno de choque de fuerzas: el capitalismo produjo la fuga excepcional del flujo de deseo revolucionario y en consecuencia hubo una reacción de represión excesiva por parte de una sociedad que quería mantener las categorías tradicionales de estratificación de clases.

Palabras clave: Laura Restrepo, *Delirio*, narcotráfico, subjetividad, Gilles Deleuze, inversiones libidinales

In 2004 Laura Restrepo was awarded the Alfaguara Literary Prize for her novel *Delirio* (2004) by a jury that included Nobel Prize winner José Saramago. This prize has afforded the author international recognition; her novels have been translated to all major languages, and she is a popular invited speaker at international literary and political forums. She has written ten novels including *La novia oscura* (1999), *Multitud errante* (2001), and her latest *Hot Sur* (2012).

Delirio displays in parallel the microcosm of a wealthy Colombian family and the macrocosm of the country's socio-political crisis during the 1980s, with the objective of illustrating the interplay between individual and social processes of subjective transformation. *Delirio* presents the story of three generations of a family that hides under appearances a history of mental illness, violence and corruption. *Delirio* illustrates the relationship between the private family and the social fabric, and the strict determinations of social stratification. The novel problematizes the premise that Colombia's socio-political conflicts throughout the twentieth century are exclusively related to the emergence of illegal apparatuses; instead it proposes that the inherent social inequality and prevalent corruption are the main determining factors of the historical struggle between a restrictive and oppressive power elite and a revengeful lower class.

Agustina, a woman in her thirties who suffers from episodes of psychological disturbance, is the novel's center of attention; but the novel does not deal exclusively with the case study of one traumatized individual. Her symptoms are evidence of a psychological condition affecting the entire social field. The narrative uses the strategy of presenting short interspersed passages that illustrate similar behaviors, conditions, and symptoms of psychological distress in different characters.

The title of the novel, *Delirio*, comprises a definition of delirium that goes beyond clinical and psychoanalytical definitions of individual development. The novel places the individual and the social alongside each other in order to emphasize that delirium exceeds personal experience. It seems productive, therefore, to bring about two different definitions of delirium in order to analyze what the novel accomplishes by placing in parallel these two realms. It is my opinion that despite Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's attack on psychoanalysis there are many points of agreement and potential dialogue when it comes to the concept of delirium, especially when Jacques Lacan's seminar on the *Sinthome* is read in parallel to *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Essays Critical and Clinical*. I do not intend to pursue a colossal study of these authors; I simply aim to illustrate how in Restrepo's novel the Lacanian definition of delirium as a mechanism of compensation dialogues with Deleuze and Guattari's definition of

delirium as the manifestation of desire's recording on the social field.

This study is divided into three sections. In the first part I observe how Agustina's childhood memories display the elements of an un-triggered psychotic structure. I focus on the microcosm of the family as it illustrates this social unit's dependence on the determinations of the surrounding social field. In the second part I discuss Midas McAlister's story as evidence of the struggle between the revolutionary and reactionary libidinal investments of desire. In the last section, I analyze how the narrative presents the drug-trafficking machine as a psychotic machine.

Agustina's Childhood and the Psychotic Structure

Delirio assembles a coherent psychoanalytical matrix as its fundamental grid. The narrative observes how the incompetence of an unfit provider as a model of the law produces the failure of the main signifier and leaves a hole in the place of signification (Lacan 47). One of Lacan's most important contributions to the understanding of psychosis is that in describing this structural phenomenon as the foreclosure of the signifier of the law, he breaks away from restrictive definitions of desire as exclusively related to sexuality and puts to the forefront power and signification as the essential elements that underlie psychosis. *Delirio*'s microcosm illustrates how an individual's subjectivity is shaped in order to perpetuate the hierarchy of power within the family and ensure social inscription within the traditional elite. Gender roles are thus enforced and any deviation or transgression is repressed with violence. There is incongruence between values and expectations and actual practices and models. This inconsistency keeps the protagonist from assigning comprehensible meaning to the violent events surrounding her environment, which eventually triggers the psychosis.

Agustina's family is characterized by their adherence to strict and unquestioned heterosexuality, one that goes hand-in-hand with the valuation of hyper-masculinity. Her father, Carlos Vicente, positions himself at the center of power as supreme ruler and tries to canalize all desire into socially accepted practices. He assumes the teaching of gender normality to his sons and claims ownership on the body of his daughter Agustina, his wife, and even his sister-in-law. He frequently inflicts violence on the younger son, Bicho, because he is sweet, sensitive, fragile and compassionate; qualities interpreted as signs of his homosexual tendencies. When he scolds him he introduces the imperative of hyper-masculinity and the condemnation of any deviation, "¡Hable como un hombre, carajo, no sea maricón!" (95). It is evident that the regulation of sexuality does not relate to moral or religious values but to social and economic consequences. Any non-heteronormative behavior is repressed violently in order to avoid being

marked and inscribed with a negative sign, which will keep them from generating new alliances required for economic stability in the future. The violence against Bicho escalates and every beating Agustina witnesses is registered in her psyche as a failure of the main signifier and consequently a hole of signification. In other words, Agustina is so young and the assaults so unprovoked that she fails to assign meaning to what causes such pain in her younger brother.

Besides witnessing her father's wrath, Agustina also perceives an agitated environment outside the house. Her first experience with death takes place when the neighborhood watchman is shot in front of the family home. Agustina's parents are absent and their maid has momentarily left the children unsupervised. Agustina hears someone knocking at the door, so she opens and sees a dying man begging for a glass of water. When her parents return to find the dead man, they tell the children to go to their rooms. Agustina does not understand what she sees, and her parents' negligence to explain the event determines a new failure in the place of signification. In Agustina's psyche, her father's violence, the watchman's death, and any consequent violent event she witnesses fall within the same hole of signification.

The content of Agustina's delirious discourse is a signifying chain of elements where both familiar and social violence meet in a landscape of decomposition and death. In this chain the words leper, fear, hand of the father, infection, blood, rotting skin, cemetery breath, dirty, panic, and abandonment revolve around the same center of empty signification. When an event—the sight of spilled blood in the pool, her brother's finger, the father's wrath, street violence—generates a connection among the series of signifiers from the first signifying chain Agustina relives the trauma.

As a child Agustina's psyche substitutes signification with a delirium of divination as a way of subjective soldering the psychotic hole. Agustina's unconscious is invested by the same libidinal flow that characterizes her grandfather's delirium, which gives her the experience of being empowered with a different vision. She can foresee when the father is going to raise his hand and this gives her an advantage to warn her brother. She declares that she is empowered by a flow that shakes her and opens her eyes, giving her the ability to foresee the future. She performs rituals with bowls of water “quietos ojos que miran a la nada o al misterio” (15) to protect her brother. She is convinced they are like “las aguas del Estige” that make Achilles invulnerable. However, as she grows older she realizes these powers fail her and perceives the threat of psychosis invading her head:

Si él aprende a nombrarme me contamina, se vuelve dueño de mi nombre y se me cuela

adentro, llega hasta el fondo de mi cabeza y ahí hace su cueva y se queda a vivir para siempre, en un nido de pánico [...] mi pánico se llama La Mano de mi Padre, y a medida que voy creciendo me voy dando cuenta de que hay otros acosos. (119)

The microcosm of the family presents a psychoanalytical matrix marked by two phenomena. First, the individual is unable to assign meaning to her father's violent behavior, structurally the symbolic cannot be bound to the imaginary and the real; second, Agustina's delirium works as a *sinthome* that knots together the three realms maintaining a temporary subjective structure (Lacan 30). In her partner's mind, this delirium appears as a foreign language that he is unable to comprehend, precisely because the *sinthome* is beyond meaning, “como si Agustina habitara en un plano paralelo al real, cercano pero inabordable, es como si hablara en una lengua extranjera que Aguilar vagamente reconoce pero que no logra comprender” (2). Furthermore, the psyche enables the family to subsist in the delirium (Lacan 33). Agustina creates an environment of cleanliness to receive the purified father who is to return and restore order (79). However, as Lacan explains, this is a knot that constantly threatens to come undone. In Agustina's case, her mind keeps slipping away and the psychotic episodes push her close to a catatonic state.

Domestic violence, the watchman shot on the doorsteps, street riots, and the holes in the Chapinero house, punctures left by the bullets from el Bogotazo, are all reminders that violence is latent and it can crawl through the holes at any point and invade the household/nation, “va creciendo el número de los seres dañinos contra los que debemos protegernos... los francotiradores del Nueve de Abril, los estudiantes con la cabeza rota y llena de sangre, y sobre todo la chusma enguerrillada que se tomó Sasaima” (119). *Delirio* proposes a change of perspective on how to apprehend the social field. Throughout the novel it is demonstrated that there is no inside protection and outside thread. There is no difference between the private and the public. There is only one social surface and individuals undertake processes of subjective transformation according to the libidinal investments of desire that permeate this surface.

McAlister's Desire and the Macrocosm of Colombia's Socio-Political Crisis

Delirio adheres to a psychoanalytical premise of an individual's personality based on his or her own personal history. Additionally, the family is shaped according to the conflicts and changes of the social field and therefore, any psychological diagnosis as it refers to the family it also refers to its milieu. The novel's definition of delirium appears therefore in an in-between

region between a psychoanalytical perspective of the individual's personal history and a collective definition of madness as a social and historical phenomenon as explained by Deleuze and Guattari.

Deleuze and Guattari define delirium as the recording of both revolutionary and reactionary libidinal investments of desire that permeate the entire social field generating social, political, and historical determinations. They explain how the libido invests the social field with two types of flows, "revolutionary and reactionary," which underlie individual and collective behaviors and interactions (378). In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze explains that delirium's revolutionary flows can be "the measure of health when it invokes this oppressed bastard race that ceaselessly stirs beneath dominations, resisting everything that crushes and imprisons" (4). The higher the investment of revolutionary flows the stronger is the activation of reactionary investments, causing the emergence of psychotic machines whose sole purpose is to control all revolutionary flows. As Deleuze explains, "delirium is a disease, the disease par excellence, whenever it erects a race it claims is pure and dominant" (4). The passages where Midas McAlister relates his involvement with the drug-trafficking machine are used within the novel to illustrate the struggle between revolutionary and reactionary libidinal investments of desire.

Revolutionary investments

The novel places in parallel a member of the elite, Agustina's older brother Joaco, and a subaltern individual: Midas McAlister. They meet on the first day of classes at an exceedingly costly school, where McAlister's mother invested all her savings for his education, and Joaco beats him for wearing white socks, a clue to his humble origin. The first encounter between Joaco and McAlister illustrates a recurrent motif: the violence of the privileged one who disciplines the commoner for daring to cross the boundaries of the social coding. It is Joaco's violent reaction that makes McAlister recognize his identity as the other. Exclusion, violence, and humiliation are the punishment for attempting to cross into the territory of the elite, "se me tiró encima y me dio una paliza fenomenal, misma que le agradezco hasta el día de la fecha porque a bofetones me sacudió de encima de una vez por todas el empaque de provinciano huérfano de padre" (181). McAlister refuses to assume his position as the marginal and to patiently accept the burden of his class. Naively, he believes he has a special gift to interpret the codes of the social elite and assumes the challenge of imposture. McAlister identifies with Lacoste's little alligator logo what his classmates would consider as his mark of inscription among the high classes, but his efforts to master the code of appearances are worthless since he cannot strip himself of the colonial coding of servitude.

He gets his hands dirty and provides them illegal goods while they keep their impeccable façade.

McAlister is invested by a revolutionary flow that empowers him to cross from one territory of social stratification to another. He is characterized by his ability to get around the city, from the popular to the most exclusive neighborhoods, he relates to people from all social levels, and he is an expert in controlling the flows of money from Miami to the investors. McAlister admires his own fearlessness; he justifies the use of violence according to the business' requirements, and is in a position of marginality in relation to the law.¹ McAlister's desire is driven by the revolutionary investment of interest of the capitalist *socius* that generates this image of the driven individual who has the potential to cross social limitations and become a productive machine of surplus value. As Montes explains, "la definición de Midas como individuo depende del medio social en el cual crece y de los flujos del deseo que allí se fomentan" (255). McAlister has been indoctrinated with a discourse of self-determination, the capitalist ideal of the self-made individual who is able to turn himself from a middle class boy into a wealthy man, "yo sabía hacer dinero, princesita mía, eso se me daba como respirar" (184). However, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, the capitalist *socius* produces new codes of social delimitation according to former codes of exclusion from the prior regime still inscribed on the surface of the capitalist *socius*. In *Delirio*, the colonial coding of social hierarchy based on race and blood is still latent. There is a constant struggle between desire machines trying to flee the territory and cross social margins and a *socius* that reterritorializes them within new groups such as new rich, "traquetos", reaffirming in this way the superiority of the traditional elite.

McAlister does not only fail to break away from the code of the former social regime, but he uses the code to exclude Pablo Escobar's family from the gym, which evidences his own reactionary libidinal investment. Acting as if he were a member of the elite, he applies the exclusion of the other following the colonial code. This generates a domino effect. First, he is excluded from the drug-trafficking machine; second, he becomes a target of interest for the prosecuting state machine since the elite suspects he has captured the flows of money that belonged to them. Eventually McAlister becomes aware of the classifying codes of filiation that keep him and even Escobar from belonging to the elite. Alone, locked in his house, McAlister reflects on the fact that when it comes to economic success, the class of new rich exchanges positions with the elite in the hierarchy of power, but culturally they are still non Europeans and consequently unworthy of their recognition. McAlister falls into depression and returns to the mother's house, the locus of social marginality, psychological escape from symbolic stratification, and permanent escape

from the law:

Es como si el Midas McAlister ya se hubiera desprendido de todo y se hubiera instalado en el más allá... para mí son todos fantasmas, y escenarios de una obra que ya terminó... hasta el mismísimo Pablo un fantasma, y fantasmal por completo este país; si no fuera por las bombas y las ráfagas de metralla que resuenan a distancia y que me mandan sus vibraciones hasta acá, juraría que ese lugar llamado Colombia hace mucho dejó de existir. (209)

Reactionary investments

In the meantime, the elite, represented by Joaco and his friends, McAlister's counterparts, resort to violence to perpetuate their status. *Delirio* illustrates the other extreme of desire, its reactionary libidinal investments, in the way individuals assume positions of omnipotence, have reactionary tendencies, a determination to impose their power, and control all individuals and all flows of product and money. In the novel there is no signifier of the law because of an ineffective judicial, economic, social and political system, which instead of providing protection and well-being to individuals, activates paranoid mechanisms of control to violently suppress any social movement that might disrupt the status quo. This ineffective signifier is not identified exclusively with the state but also with the corrupt social and political elite that inflicts violence as a reactionary measure to defer its imminent fall.

The novel satirizes a group of corrupt individuals who spend their time in social clubs, gyms, and country houses. These members of the social elite lose their position when their involvement with the drug organizations is exposed. The disclosure of their connection to the cocaine mafia is the beginning of the fall of their supremacy as the ruling leaders within their families and society in general. This decadence is especially portrayed in the character of Spider Salazar, whose sexual impotence stands as a symbol of the elite's inability to maintain their power. On a final attempt to recover his virility, Salazar asks McAlister to hire a group of sadomasochistic performers. His masculinity has been subjected to humiliation, and this in turn makes him want to inflict pain; as Montes explains "en esta instancia el delirio es paranoico porque el flujo del deseo se concentra en un objetivo: lograr la erección del falo respondiendo al código social que impone su supremacía como garantía de la masculinidad" (256). A final, desperate attempt to maintain the status as the signifier of the law is to intimidate those who have always been at the bottom of the hierarchy of power: a lower class woman, in Salazar's case.

McAlister, the subaltern, has to clean up the scene of the crime. Since Agustina has acquired the reputation

of having paranormal abilities to locate lost individuals, he wants her to put on a show where she would tell everyone that she can visualize Dolores, the woman assassinated at the premises, alive and travelling abroad. McAlister tells Agustina the details and circumstances of Dolores' death, hoping she would help him with his farce, but as soon as Agustina finds herself at the site of the murder, images of the dead woman generate the irruption of the primal scene of her father's violence:

En el batucque de esa coctelera que es tu cerebro todo se convierte en un solo mazacote, patadas las que el espanto de tu padre difunto y el bestia de tu hermano Joaco le quieren dar al Bichi por andar mariconeando, pero que yo sepa a la Dolores lo único que no le dieron esa noche fue patadas. (260)

It is the combination of these two images of violence against two marginal individuals, her younger brother and the woman killed by Salazar, which finally defeats Agustina's psyche. As much as she creates compensating mechanisms, it gets to this unbearable point when psychosis is triggered generating the crisis that is introduced in the first page of the novel. Her attempt to undertake a process of subjective transformation and healing is overpowered by the extreme violence that has invaded the whole social field. Agustina is doomed to remain in a structure of eternal return to the signifying chain of trauma.

This scene is fundamental to the story because it is essentially the answer to the novel's enigma as to what triggered Agustina's breakdown. Dolores' death connected to the father's violence defines the transition from un-triggered to fully developed psychosis in the Lacanian definition. It is at the same time the illustration of what generates and constitutes the Deleuzian psychotic machine. Salazar, the elite he represents, and Agustina's father all fear being stripped of their power, so they violently repress the subaltern to reassert their status. This illustrates desire's extreme psychotic determination, the reactionary libidinal flow that invests individuals with the despotic desire to occupy the position of the father, to enslave the population, to privatize justice, to take over the territory by force, and to occupy the place of control in a society where there is a void in the place of the law. As the degree of violence used to occupy the position of control escalates, the ability to assign meaning to the experience diminishes. Violence deteriorates subjective consistency and eventually determinates the fall into psychosis.

The Drug-Trafficking Machine

The functioning of the drug-trafficking apparatus is a recurrent subject in different disciplines; economic, sociological, historical, political, environmental, and literary studies have aimed to describe its nature. The

analysis of its elements, developments, and fluidity has resulted in a variety of perspectives. One of those elements in question is its clinical diagnosis as some studies suggest that despite its illegality the drug-trafficking machine behaves as any other rational apparatus; while others define it as a chaotic, fluid, schizophrenic machine. *Delirio* presents a third possible diagnosis between these two polarities of chaos and order: a restrained fluidity repressed by specific systems of control that dooms the drug-trafficking machine to a psychotic vicious cycle.

As described in the novel, we can easily envision Pablo Escobar's organization as a capitalist machine in the Deleuzian sense, as it accomplishes the axiom of production of a surplus value of flows.² Its machinic index resides on its potential to permeate the surface of the earth with flows of laundered money, drugs, individuals and blood. Furthermore, it is an effective and expedite avenue for individuals invested in the interest for capital accumulation and acquisition of status goods. The drug-trafficking machine as a capitalist machine is supposed to liberate the flows of production but it turns into a despotic machine when it places Escobar at the apex of a pyramid structure and starts monopolizing the decoded flows of production. The illusion of an omnipotent individual is perpetuated in the novel through the display of a molar hierarchy of power. Pablo Escobar is located at the top of a descending line of power from where he is able to manipulate every single individual within the drug-trafficking machine.³ His immediate subordinates, his messengers like Mystery, his money launders, like McAlister, all his investors, like Salazar are under his ruling; he even finds ways to involve individuals from the control machine, like Rony Silver who works for the DEA. Every individual in the drug-trafficking machine assumes a position in the pyramid and becomes a debtor that must pay tribute to the despot.

This semblance of the ruling despot is absolutely intended as it works as the fundamental structural device of the novel. The ruling "Capo" is set in parallel to the ruling "father" thus defining the source of the law in both the microcosm of the family and the drug-trafficking machine. Carlos Vicente controls all bodies and all organs under his wing; in the same way, Pablo acquires a mythical likeness as the Robin Hood protector of people, especially of his own family, "Pablo le manda decir que las ofensas contra la familia son las únicas que él no perdona" (261). This protection from others, however, does not extend to the hand of the father himself who represses any possible flow of desire that might escape his control with a violent blow.

More than fulfilling the archetype of the protector, Pablo Escobar appears as the revengeful villain who has created a whole machine to grind his former oppressors.

His highest goal is to get the elite so trapped in the corruption of the illegal businesses that they will find themselves unable to get away from his hold. If the effective production of surplus capital and unaffected balance among all its individuals was its rational state, the uprising of the despot's desire to control the fluxes and subjugate the individuals marks its paranoiac psychotic state. What is interesting about this psychotic machine is that it does not repress capital production but uses the interest for accumulation as its strategy to enslave more elements to its system and deterritorializes the structure of power:

Él, nacido en el tugurio, criado en la miseria, siempre apabullado por la infinita riqueza y el poder absoluto de los que por generaciones se han llamado ricos, de pronto va y descubre el gran secreto, el que tenía prohibido descubrir, y es que a estas alturas de su corta vida ya es cien veces más rico que cualquiera de los ricos de este país y que si se le antoja los puede poner a comer de su mano y echárselos al bolsillo. (73)

In *Delirio* the father figure is associated with a diegetic character, a missing signifier, the ruling despot, and the social and political elite. The father figure is unfitting, violent, and psychotic, in addition it is ridiculed for believing in its omnipotence and underestimating the reactionary determination of the *socius*. There is always a resistance that will try to control it and return to its prior state of stratification. An example of this struggle of forces is Escobar's retaliation against the political elite for denying him the possibility to continue his political career:

Pablo Escobar está de mal humor... tanta bomba se debe a que el Partido Liberal lo acaba de expulsar por narco de las listas electorales para el Senado, Al hombre no le gusta el título de Rey de la Coca, dijo Silver, prefiere el de Padre de la Patria, No le falta razón, suena más democrático. (103)

McAlister's account is marked by a sarcastic, humorous tone that emphasizes his awareness of the ingenuousness that characterizes all characters, including him, for believing they could infiltrate the structure of power. *Delirio* maintains a humorous and melodramatic tone throughout in order to emphasize how ironical the turn of events is and the fact that no matter how different elements react, corruption is what predominates.

Furthermore, McAlister's joke about the president, "este berraco espía debe informarle al Pentágono hasta cuántos pedos se tira el presidente de Colombia" (103), insinuates the international policing apparatus has control over the state institutions. The state appears

only as a marionette moved with strings from a higher power. The thread of international economic sanctions forces the state to generate legal policies that allow the transnational apparatus to control directly individuals who might represent a threat to economic and social stability. The novel questions the actual purpose of all these international agencies. Silver, for example, does not stand for justice; he does not persecute drug lords for their crimes, and only uses the mechanisms of the transnational policing apparatus when he realizes he will not receive a return for his investments.

El Congreso ha aprobado la puesta en práctica del Tratado de Extradición y la DEA -léase Ronald Silverstein, mi amigo el Rony Silver, el 007, ha presentado un amplio expediente contra mí en el que se me acusa de lavado de dólares con pruebas suficientes y contundentes... soy criminal solicitado en extradición por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos y buscado en este preciso momento por tierra, mar y aire por cuanto organismo de seguridad, buró de inteligencia y policía internacional. (291)

The state uses its military and legal system to persecute the drug lords who in turn retaliate with car bombs in major public centers. *Delirio* makes a direct connection between the despotic father that is reterritorialized by the *socius* and his desperate retaliation with extreme violence. Madness defined by a violent determination, staged by Salazar on Dolores, “se me han despertado unas ganas locas de ver una hembra que sufra en serio,” (136) and by Pablo Escobar on the entire country: the desire to see them suffer “fue la proclamación histórica de su venganza: voy a invertir mi fortuna en hacer llorar a este país” (211).

In regards to the drug-trafficking machine, extradition generates an important agitation as its main lords get extradited or executed. There is a restructuring of hierarchies within the drug-trafficking machine but it continues functioning, even more efficiently than it did before. It is not the end of this capitalist machine but a crisis that helps it renovate itself. In economic terms, this struggle of reactionary forces can only generate profit. The war on terrorism and drugs justifies violence and the increase of prices. As McAlister expresses, they were filling their pockets thanks to “la gloriosa War on Drugs de los gringos” (71). Capital wins as the clash among legal and illegal apparatuses generates a surplus value of both dead bodies and a good amount of cash. The more control, the higher the prices, the production and in general the growth of the machine. Evidencing that as a capitalist machine the drug-trafficking machine can only push towards its optimization.

Conclusions

It is not accurate to define the violence within the 1980s only in relation to the drug-trafficking machine; on the contrary, it is connected with the political violence that has determined the country's history since colonial times. The novel suggests there is a specific phenomenon that made the eighties in Colombia particularly violent: The exceptional influx of revolutionary flow produced by capitalism crashed with the extremely repressive reactionary libidinal flow of a society that wanted to hold onto traditional categories of class stratification. *Delirio* shows the persistence of colonial entitlement over the lower classes, so that even present-day Colombia appears to be a society that privileges in favor of individuals of European descent who have inherited social, economic, and political power and perpetuates the culture of exclusion, which in turn produces a deeper resentment in the popular classes.

The drug trade, as a capitalist machine, emerges out of this class conflict and this history of inequality, but instead of creating a more tolerant and egalitarian society it triggers the reactionary libidinal investment of the *socius*: the elite, the pure race, the legitimate inheritors of power by filiation need to reterritorialize those who dared to deviate from the social and judiciary law. Corruption and violence are the predominant symptoms of this reactionary determination. The outlaw responds with extreme violence unleashing a domino effect of retaliations. In the end, the only real despot is capital as it captures all flows of desire for its optimization.

Following the psychoanalytical machine's archeological approach of digging out family history, the narrative proposes the confrontation with the facts and the awareness of the prevalence of corruption as the first step to find a solution to the individual and historical trauma. The Londoño family, as well as society, uses different mechanisms to blind itself to the truth of the delirious flows that permeate it. Society denies social injustice, violence, and the involvement of individuals from every social and institutional body with drug trafficking and money laundering and distorts it with discourses on war against terrorism and drugs by state and international regulators. The narrative encourages the unveiling of appearances, lies, and the expiation of sins. *Delirio* also proposes a process of acceptance and reconciliation. *Delirio* is fundamentally a love story and its intertextual connection with *Memorial de convento* emphasizes the importance of loyalty and relentless love that endures despite the psychotic determination. The final scene asserts the bond between Agustina and her partner Aguilar and emphasizes it is essential for society to eliminate prejudices of exclusion and violence, persistent since the colonial regime, to begin a process of psychological healing.

Notes

1 In “Construcción y deterioro del mito en la violencia plebeya,” Samuel Jaramillo explains some of the factors that determine the economic success of this illegal entrepreneurs: “la solidaridad de grupo, de aprecio por el arrojito, una codificación del papel de la violencia diferente al de la cultura hegemónica, una particular relación con el Estado y con la Ley” (128).

2 In *Blood and Capital*, Jasmin Hristov points to the fact that the drug-trafficking machine finds itself in the conjunction of processes of decoding similar to other capitalist machines: “The decoding of land flows as a consequence of the industrial imperative, landlordism as the former code is replaced slowly by corporate production; the decoding of flows of agricultural inputs, marijuana or poppy, from pre-colonial uses to industrial manipulation; and consequently, the deterritorialization of the laborer to marginalized positions into either the urban areas or the deep jungle forests... In the jungle, peasants were attached to the drug-trafficking machine to perform the same task they did before, but with a higher retribution, to create farmland and grow the most profitable crops: marijuana, poppy, and coca” (6).

3 Studies on Pablo Escobar do observe this paranoiac behavior as one of his characteristics. Escobar controlled absolutely every element within the processes of his enterprise: “subordinates, production, collection and labs, distribution, landing runways pilots, absolutely everything” (Krauthausen and Sarmiento 46).

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