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Abstract

Through semiotics, framing and marxist methods of analysis, this essay examines the heroic framing of Ernesto “Che” Guevara presented in the film *Diarios de Motocicleta*. The plot of the film follows the road trip Guevara takes with his friend Alberto Granado on an old motorcycle through South America. As they witness poverty and inequality across the continent, there are many instances where it would seem that Ernesto is beginning to form the communist ideologies which eventually guide him to be the face of revolution. The film downplays these ideologies by only commenting on classism through the use of material signs, which Ernesto overcomes physically rather than philosophically. This depiction of material problems with physical solutions creates a simpler situation for the audience to comprehend; one in which the morality of Ernesto is unquestionable, and his selflessness is emphasized through physical sacrifice.

Keywords

Che Guevara, Marxist, Framing, Alienation, Latin America

Swimming towards Change: Analyzing the Heroic Framing of Che Guevara in the Film *Diarios de Motocicleta*

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Through semiotics, framing and Marxist methods of analysis, this essay examines the heroic framing of Ernesto “Che” Guevara presented in the film *Diarios de Motocicleta*. The plot of the film follows the road trip Guevara takes with his friend Alberto Granado on an old motorcycle through South America. As they witness poverty and inequality across the continent, there are many instances where it would seem that Ernesto is beginning to form the communist ideologies which eventually guide him to be the face of revolution. The film downplays these ideologies by only commenting on classism through the use of material signs, which Ernesto overcomes physically rather than philosophically. This depiction of material problems with physical solutions creates a simpler situation for the audience to comprehend; one in which the morality of Ernesto is unquestionable, and his selflessness is emphasized through physical sacrifice.

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My first exposure to the idea of communism was through my social studies teacher in the seventh grade, who briefly described the economic system before highlighting the crimes of communist dictators. I came away associating communism with murder and captivity, priding myself on America’s capitalism, which I’m sure was my teacher’s intention. Almost ten years after that, while I had developed a skepticism for capitalism, I still connected communism with only negatives. This is why I expected a blood bath when my Spanish professor asked me to watch the film *Diarios de Motocicleta* which follows the life of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. I knew almost nothing about Guevara outside of his methods of guerilla warfare and Marxist ideologies. With all of the assumptions about this ideology instilled in me for so long, as well as a lack of knowledge for anything but his war crimes, how did it happen that I came away from the film thinking he was a hero? I will explore this question through the following essay, in which I will use Marxist analysis, semiotics and framing to analyze the creation of Ernesto’s heroic frame through the downplaying of his Marxist ideologies and the emphasis of his physical struggles.

As *Diarios de Motocicleta* follows the development of a Marxist, it seems only appropriate to analyze the film using Marxist analysis. As other theories of criticism analyze the

function of certain signs and symbols within society, Marxist analysis confronts the function of society itself. As Berger states “the mode of production (economic relationships) is the base or the ‘determinant element’ in our thoughts,” meaning that we process everything within the constraints of our economic system (41). The film takes place within a capitalist society, so the ideology of division between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is the ‘determinate element’ in the film and also the underlying source of conflict. Berger explains that this division of classes is created through a false consciousness created by the ruling class. False consciousness is the theory that all of our ideas are the ideas the ruling class wants us to have (44). These ideas force the proletariat to remain in roles of alienation, which perpetuates the underlying ideology of the ruling class that claims classism to be natural and unchangeable (50, 48). Guevara was killed by the CIA for his attempts to destroy this ideology, by any means necessary.

Interestingly, the film doesn’t touch on Guevara’s involvement in the communist revolution which he is remembered most for. Instead it tells the story of his life before becoming a Marxist, specifically the journey across Latin America he takes with his friend Alberto Granado. This story stresses Ernesto’s realization of his own privilege as he attempts to lessen the divide between classes, while hinting

at the Marxist ideology he develops through semiotic signs. Semiotic analysis is the analysis of signs and what they signify based on what meanings they carry in society (Berger 2). Signs like this are present throughout the film, as they work to associate the bourgeoisie with innocence and villainize the false consciousness of superiority brought on by capitalism, allowing Ernesto to step into a heroic frame when he alone denounces these symbols. “Framing” is a method which analyzes how the structure of an artifact’s presentation affects the audience’s thoughts. In this case I will be analyzing the partiality of the film, meaning I will deconstruct which aspects of Guevara’s life are downplayed or emphasized (Ott and Oaki 485). I have associated Ernesto with a “Heroic Frame” as many aspects of his morality are emphasized and while his economic stances are downplayed due to their subtle representations through symbols. Ernesto is also made a hero through the emphasis of his physical struggles in the film as he attempts to overcome the material symbols of division. In presenting capitalism through material signs that Ernesto must overcome physically rather than philosophically, the film downplays the Marxist ideology of Guevara and gives the audience a way to sympathize with the distress Ernesto feels in shedding his false consciousness surrounding injustice.

I will begin by addressing the aspects of the film that work to humanize the bourgeoisie, painting them as victims of their own making, which decreases the audience’s inclination to villainize the upper class. In pardoning the bourgeoisie of any blame regarding the injustices of capitalism, the film emphasizes the ideology itself to be the villain of the story, and gives Ernesto someone to save, which functions to put him into a heroic frame without identifying a specific group of people for him to be fighting against. This creates a sense that Ernesto is the hero of all classes and downplays Guevara’s conviction of the bourgeoisie while stressing the morality of his character.

This victimization of the bourgeoisie is done through the use of the color white in the scenes which feature the upper class. An unignorable presence of white is first displayed at the beginning of the film where Ernesto is shown packing things for his journey, and then speaking with family about his future travels. They sit at a large dining room table in a well-furnished home. His parents and siblings wear only white. The color appears again at the mansion-like home of

Ernesto’s girlfriend as well as among the doctors at San Pablo. This semiotic sign suggests that the bourgeoisie is associated with peace, thus symbolizing their false consciousness regarding the injustices in the world surrounding them. They do not recognize the privilege they have in their ability to live in ignorance towards the struggle of those less fortunate.

Ernesto too lives with this false consciousness as he fails to realize the struggle that exists outside of medical school fueled by a system that has always benefited him. In a letter to his mother, Ernesto explains how he feels “closer to the land” now that they are on the road and free from boring lectures and exams, a statement which reflects the “naturalness” he still associates with poverty. This proximity to nature is what gets them into trouble, however, when a few scenes later a huge storm blows their tent into the river, and it is swept away. While Alberto curses the river in response, Ernesto calls out “Just take it!”, with arms raised toward the water. The submission he demonstrates towards the natural force of the river reflects the helplessness he has associated with being a proletarian. He is driven by the false consciousness that the improvisation aspect of being lower class will be something exciting rather than a struggle and thus does not react harshly. This set back is simply contributing to the thrill seeking aspect of his motivation, and it masks the underlying Marxist commentary as just another event on a glorified road trip. This could be a reason for casting García Bernal, who is most known for his role in the film “Y Tu Mamá También” directed by Alfonso Cuarón which follows the crazy road trip between two teenage boys, released just three years prior to *Diarios de Motocicleta* in 2001.

The symbol of white fuels this ignorance towards the injustices of the proletariat as it also suggests a purity about the bourgeoisie, and an innocence which frees them of any guilt surrounding their privileges. This aspect of the film functions to take blame away from the bourgeoisie, which allows the message of the story to reach a broader audience as it does not convict any specific group and thus does not create the same tension that a real presentation of Guevara’s Marxist ideology might.

In excusing the bourgeoisie, the villain of the story becomes the ideology of capitalism itself, as both the proletariat and

the bourgeoisie are presented as victims of it. Ernesto's father is an example of this victimization. He disapproves of Ernesto's trip originally, but later when they are saying farewells, he has a change of heart saying if he were younger he too would go off on that motorcycle. This statement from his father suggests that he wishes he could be enlightened but it seems too late for him, which supports the ideology that classism is unavoidable or too ingrained in society to change now. The fact that his father wishes he had the same opportunity as Ernesto functions to depict the bourgeoisie as victims of their own creation alongside the proletariat, as he too cannot live the way he would like because of the hegemony brought on by the ideology of capitalism (Berger 41). Ernesto's decision to leave on this journey becomes something he is doing for the sake of his father as well as to expose himself to the struggles of being a part of the proletariat, which suggests he could be a hero to both classes of people.

As Berger suggests, "heroes can control men, but cannot control matter, and Marxist heroes are those who denounce consumerism" (55). Ernesto falls into both categories of a hero, as he is willing to subject himself to the forces of nature, and he is never concerned for material resources as he travels with his friend. The clearest example of Ernesto's rejection of consumerist culture is introduced through a subplot around fifteen American dollars given to Ernesto by his girlfriend Chichina. Alberto often asks Ernesto to spend the money to buy them much needed food and supplies as they travel, but Ernesto always refuses. He explains that Chichina gave him the money so that he would buy her a swimsuit if he made it to America, and he won't spend it on anything else. Even when Ernesto becomes extremely ill at one point in the film due to his asthma, he won't spend the money on a hospital. This suggests that the money, to Ernesto, is representative of his loyalty to Chichina rather than a resource to be utilized. In giving this sentimental meaning to the money, any use of the money outside of what he has promised to do with it appears shallow, thus painting Ernesto as a moral hero in contrast with a greedy Alberto. Ernesto has control over Alberto's material needs, signifying his "control over man" but chooses to endure his illness, demonstrating his lack of "control [over] matter". It is understandable that Ernesto wouldn't break a promise to Chichina just to feed his friend (who is often referred to as the "chubby one"), but in demonstrating that he won't even

use the money on himself, Ernesto sets himself apart from the rest of the consumerist driven society. This makes it easier for the audience to single him out as the hero in the story as he is never tempted by the capitalist ideology which controls Alberto.

This newly targeted antagonist, capitalist ideology, is interestingly never introduced directly in the film. As the example above demonstrates, it is clear to a Marxist critic what it is that has alienated Ernesto's father. However, to an audience not looking for such signs, this villain goes almost unnoticed in the story. In fact, the word capitalism might not even be used in the film at any point. Instead, the ideology of capitalism is represented through semiotic signs, just as the innocence of the bourgeoisie is represented through white.

The most noticeable sign of capitalist ideology in the film is represented by the presence of "white collars" in the costuming of the bourgeoisie. The symbol is mostly present among the doctors in the San Pablo Leper Colony as they, of course, wear white lab coats. The doctors also tend to wear white collars outside of the work setting. Alberto and Ernesto often don the collar as well when they are not on the road. White collars in society have come to signify the top portion of the working class, meaning the administrators and bosses to the "blue collars". These are the Wall Street corporate-world workers that signify greed and scandal and most of all new money. What is interesting about the injection of this symbol into the film is that those who don the white collar are not much wealthier than the rest of society. In fact, there is hardly any talk of how much money some characters have in comparison to others in the dialogue. The white collar, then, is the only real indicator of class, and if a character removes his collar, he removes any special treatment he might receive with it. In making appearance the only thing that signifies status, it is impossible for the characters to maintain superiority because there is nothing they have to demonstrate such dominance if they are ever found without their collars on.

While Ernesto seems happy to shed his associations with the upper class in order to have the true proletariat experience, Alberto often attempts to maintain his superiority by lying to people in order to get better treatment. His actions are an example of *hegemony* which Berger describes as the entitlement or "that which goes without saying" surrounding

a fundamental need to maintain dominance over the lower class (57). Alberto reflects this idea because he insists on his own superiority even though he has nothing to prove it. It is simply a given in his mind that he deserves better treatment than the lower class. In behaving this way, Alberto demonstrates the false consciousness fabricated around his status ultimately revealing that the division of class is not only immoral but also a mere illusion.

In one of the many examples of Alberto's "bullshit," as Ernesto calls it, takes place after they lose the tent to the river. Ernesto points up to a large white house, wondering if they could go there for help. But, Alberto refuses, saying that those "snobs" won't help them, and they should get help "among the people". Alberto only seems comfortable asking for help if he feels superior to whomever they are asking, which explains why he would ask someone with nothing for help rather than go to someone with potentially more provisions to offer. They ask a man living in a cabin nearby for a place to stay instead. Alberto insists they are doctors curing terrifying diseases all over Latin America, attempting to associate himself and Ernesto with the "white collar" status. The man laughs at him, though, as he and Ernesto stand dressed in their rugged brown jackets and pants. They have gone from being bourgeois to "bums" as the man calls them, implying that class is in fact movable. In stressing Alberto's struggle to maintain his superiority, his class is revealed to be a construction of hegemonic assumptions, which have no substance outside of what he believes about himself and outside of his "white collar".

The false consciousness of superiority becomes present again once Alberto and Ernesto arrive at the San Pablo Leper Colony. The colony is split into two sections: the doctors' side and the lepers' side. The Amazon River runs between the two, so the characters have to use a boat to cross the river. While this separation would seem to be a precaution to prevent the spread of leprosy, the doctors tell Ernesto that the virus is not contagious as long as it is being treated, revealing the separation as simply a tool for perpetuating the division of classes.

The river crossing scene is the most pivotal in the film because we finally see Ernesto do something about all the injustice he's seen on their journey, alluding to his efforts in the future to create unity. The Marxist commentary of this

scene is recognizable through the analysis of the paradigmatic signs which have represented the capitalist ideology in the rest of the film. The symbolism of the color white is present again in this scene as Ernesto starts on the doctors' side of the river among the "white collars" and white buildings. Displaying this color once more reinstates Ernesto's rejection of capitalist ideology as he chooses to swim away from the symbols which have represented the ideology for the whole film. His rejection is especially noticeable when he removes his own white collared shirt before swimming across to reveal an undershirt, similar to many worn on the opposite side of the river. In combating the physical symbols of capitalism, Ernesto displays his recognition and rejection of the false consciousness of superiority which has caused the division of classes.

While the political commentary of this scene would appear fairly obvious to those searching for it, in reality the scene further disguises these hints of Guevara's political ideology through creating a simpler situation for the audience to analyze. Through the use of "archetypal metaphor" as well as a contrast in dialogue and color presented on the lepers' side of the river, the heroism of Ernesto becomes easy for audiences of all cultures to recognize without having to emphasize the political representation of his swim.

There are three parts to this scene that work to create a heroic frame for Ernesto. The scene starts with foreshadowing of his heroism through the creation of a problem. Then the scene simplifies the division of sides through paradigmatic coding. After that the story changes to be about a hero and a victim which is presented through cinematic coding.

I will start with the creation of a problem and the foreshadowing of a hero. When Ernesto says he wants to go across the river, Alberto tells him he has to wait until tomorrow when a boat can take him. The logical response then would be to wait until the next day, but Ernesto insists saying, "*mi cumpleaños es hoy no mañana*," meaning "my birthday is today not tomorrow". Framed in a different way, Ernesto's response could easily be viewed as very foolish. He has no obligation to cross, and no one expects it of him in the context of the film. The audience, however, has been anticipating Ernesto to do something heroic since the first shot in the scene where he is depicted staring across the

river. He is shot from underneath, making him appear powerful which alludes to the icon he will become. The perspective becomes balanced again when his friend joins him near the water, suggesting that this power Ernesto has belongs only to him. Through separating Ernesto from his friend in the scene and emphasizing that he is the only one to recognize an issue, the scene creates a sort of pedestal for Ernesto. He is more than a foreshadowed hero, because he is now a foreshadowed martyr--alone in his beliefs. This creates a sense of empathy in the audience while also ensuring that Ernesto is depicted as the most moral of the two characters and which makes the audience more likely to side with him, despite the illogical decision he makes.

The next thing the scene does is simplify the problem Ernesto faces through paradigmatic patterns in color as well as material signs. Within the scene, there is a dominance of two colors: black and white. This would have been an anticipated effect by the filmmakers and not a subconscious add-on. They have chosen to shoot at night, meaning colors that would normally be lighter, but not necessarily pure white, appear to be so due to the crushing blacks that contrast them. This is most recognizable as Ernesto begins swimming across the water. The only light in these shots are in his arms and face as well as the small waves created by his movement. Everywhere else is a deep black color. In using the "archetypal metaphor" of light and dark, the meaning in this scene becomes recognizable to a broader audience (Osborn 116). Michael Osborn, in his essay "Archetypal metaphor in rhetoric: The light-dark family" says that archetypal metaphors are recognizable across cultures and through generations because they are rooted in connections to human experience (116). Darkness can be given such a negative connotation no matter where it is spoken about because darkness impairs human's most useful sense, the ability to see. Without it, we are unable to see the threats around us, thus the darkness becomes representative of all that is unknown, as well as all that is potentially harmful to humanity (118). Using this color to represent the very thing Ernesto is swimming through suggests that he is braving much more than a river as he swims and is representative of the moral confusion surrounding the communist revolution. In contrast, Ernesto is the only white light among all of this darkness, suggesting he is the sole carrier of hope that can navigate the unknowns of the river. Osborn says that light presents hope because of its direct connection to survival and

the energy we get from the light of the sun (122). Associating Ernesto with this fundamental aspect of life gives the audience a natural inclination to cheer for him as he represents survival itself, and no longer just the destruction of social injustice in Latin America.

In comparison to the doctors' side, the lepers' side is lit with very warm light. The colors are much more present here than anywhere else in the scene. The warmth of the light, the oranges and reds, symbolize passion and love, things that are somewhat lost in the purity of white symbolized in the hospital-like cleanliness of the doctors' side. This passion is supported by the enthusiasm of the cheers coming from the lepers side of the river. They all call to Ernesto using his first name, which contrasts with the occasional shouts of *muchacho* and *la puta madre* coming from the doctors. *Muchacho* translates directly as "boy" which creates a very impersonal relationship between Ernesto and the other doctors. Alberto is the one who shouts the profanity "*la puta madre*" which suggests an anger and frustration towards Ernesto rather than a general concern for his well-being. Alberto even says "*piense en mí tu mamá me va a matar*" which translates "think of me, your mom is going to kill me," associating selfishness with the doctors' side of the river, which may provoke Ernesto to continue swimming away.

The lepers use Ernesto's name again and again to encourage him, which symbolizes the unity and relationship he has formed with them. He is not just a doctor to them but also their friend. All of these things work together to make the lepers' side of the river seem more lively, more concerned with humanity than the doctors' side. The first leper to notice Ernesto swimming across is even dressed identically to Ernesto, which reinforces that the lepers side is where he belongs. Depicting Ernesto swimming away from the symbols of capitalism and towards symbols of unity serves to represent his rejection of capitalist ideology. To the audience, however, the scene is presented as a simple choice Ernesto makes to be with people who care for him on his birthday as opposed to people who treat him impersonally. This makes it easier for audiences to side with Ernesto without having to analyze the logic of his decision to make the swim, nor the politics of what his swim represents. The filmmakers have created a simpler situation which distracts from the political representations of his swim.

Through the contrast in the responses of both sides, the scene also suggests that Ernesto's swim has great value to the lepers, which gives him someone to be a hero for. As the doctors are constantly shouting at Ernesto to come back, the lepers immediately cheer him on despite the fact that his choice to swim across the river does not greatly affect them. If Ernesto finishes his swim, they just get to see him a few hours sooner than they would have. However, they cheer for him as if there is much more at stake. No one considers that they are encouraging him to put himself in extreme danger which makes the audience forget this detail as well. This response to Ernesto's actions gives him someone to be the hero for, which then creates a moral duty for him to finish the swim. This moral duty is also present in the sense that Ernesto is a doctor and that he is swimming towards people who are sick. He has relational value to the lepers as well as a logical value to them. The audience, in seeing that this action is benefitting someone, now has a simpler situation of morality to relate to Ernesto outside of the confusing issues of revolution. In doing this, the story shifts from a story of division to a story about a hero and a victim.

To the Marxist critic this final scene is a clear resolution of Ernesto's struggle with recognizing the injustice in South America. To the typical audience, the scene is a clear resolution of a created problem within Ernesto about who gets to see him most on his birthday, which distracts from the issues of class that the river represents. The story becomes much more about the value of friendship Ernesto has created with the lepers, and the morality he displays in acting as a hero for them.

Ernesto's heroism becomes even more recognizable towards the end of the river scene, as he no longer conveys the power of a hero as much as he shows signs of struggle. This change still supports the heroic framing of Ernesto, but adds a sacrificial aspect to his actions, making him even more admirable to audiences because they are finally forced to confront the danger of his actions when it's too late in the scene for him to turn back.

Water has been the cause of Ernesto's suffering multiple times before the river crossing scene. As mentioned earlier, he becomes extremely ill at one point due to his asthma, which is brought on after he swims in a lake. The asthma is brought on again while they are on a boat to San Pablo, this

time more intense to the point where Alberto removes Ernesto's white collared shirt in order to give him a shot of adrenaline and save him from suffocating. This scene is the climax of the film as it is where Ernesto seems to finally realize the injustice which his false consciousness had allowed him to avoid for so long. Leading up to his attack, the camera cuts between Ernesto's stressed breathing and shots of the travel conditions on the lepers boat behind them, implying that the injustice is the cause of his physical pain rather than the water and air conditions. As the asthma attack is brought on Ernesto is seen writing in his journal, as pictures of the lepers flash across the screen between shots. This suggests that he is thinking about them as he writes. Rather than expressing his thoughts however, even just by showing what he has written in a frame or two, the filmmakers have chosen to emphasize Ernesto's painful realization through the depiction of a physically painful attack. In doing this, the scene acts as a way for the audience to sympathize with Ernesto without recognizing the Marxist ideology he is developing, while also creating associations between injustice, water, and Ernesto's suffering.

The audience is drawn back to these associations when Ernesto traverses the river. His struggle begins to show as he nears the shore and his face seems to barely appear above the river before he gets a mouthful of water and is submerged again. We start to hear his fighting breaths louder than anything else, reminding the audience of his almost fatal attack earlier. At the same time, the doctors stop shouting and are just watching nervously, which indicates that the audience too, should be holding their breath now rather than cheering. A quiet drum beat is heard. The music contains a low base drum followed by more shallow drums. The slow and faint beat of the lower drum serves to reflect the slowness of Ernesto's movements as he becomes more weary. The higher pitched drums are quick, and reflect the shallowness of Ernesto's breath. This music emphasizes his struggle and shifts the focus from the shouts of the two opposing sides. The drastic changes in sound as well as the visual changes in Ernesto's swimming, presented in this part of the scene, draw attention to the potential that Ernesto won't make it across. Raising the stakes in this way stresses the Heroism of Ernesto, because his action now is a sacrifice as well as a risk because he is clearly suffering through this process.

This puts him in sort of a Christ-like frame, which is reflected when he finally reaches the other shore and everyone carries his almost motionless form onto the river bank. There are more Christian symbols in this scene such as Ernesto's decision to do this on his birthday as well as the water itself. In crossing the river on his birthday Ernesto's swim is reflective of Christ's birth in the sense that he has come to be the hero of everyone. There is also the aspect that Ernesto is swimming away from good conditions to spend the night in a leper shack, as Christ came from heaven to sleep in a manger. Then there is the symbol of the water itself. Ernesto starts the scene doing the arm stroke, (which could be a call back to earlier in the film when he disagrees with his Alberto, insisting that any revolution that will make a difference must be "armed") but eventually abandons it for the breaststroke. This change creates an image somewhat reflective of a baptism as his head continuously goes under the water and pops back up, suggesting a cleansing brought on by the water. The water is also what almost kills Ernesto though, which directly reflects Jesus' life, as his faith is what eventually led to his death. In creating these associations with Christ, the audience is provoked to equate the same morality onto Guevara as one would to Jesus. His suffering then becomes even more meaningful as it reflects Jesus' suffering for the whole world, suggesting that Ernesto suffered for the benefit of all people as well.

Through depicting Ernesto in a way that stresses his weakness, calling back to his asthma attack earlier in the film and then equating his suffering with that of Christ, this scene forces the audience to recognize the selflessness in Ernesto, which only makes it more difficult to watch him struggle. In emphasizing this aspect of his character, the audience has a way to humanize Guevara as well as sympathize with his struggle towards justice, without having to recognize any of his beliefs surrounding capitalism. The audience is invested in his life and survival by the end of the film. His motivation becomes irrelevant.

The water has almost killed Ernesto three times by the end of the film (not to mention the time it stole their tent as well). This makes it truly devastating for the audience when the black screen shows at the end of the film, stating that Ernesto "Che" Guevara was killed by the CIA. It leaves them wondering how could anyone kill Ernesto, after all he went through. The film offers no such explanation.

Any audience member would have to learn more about Guevara to understand why his life ended the way it did, and even then, depending on their opinions, there is still more to explain. The point of the film is far beyond these questions however. In an interview with Gael García Bernal, who portrays Guevara in the film, he explains how in becoming an Icon, Guevara is seen as one dimensional, lacking in human qualities that justify his beliefs (Garcia Bernal). *Diarios de Motocicleta* gives these qualities back to Guevara, first through excusing the Bourgeoisie he was born into from guilt, and then victimizing them so that Guevara has someone to fight for (in this case his father). Ernesto then can be viewed as a hero to audiences of any background, and he proves his place as the hero of the story when he rejects the consumerism which controls the people around him, but subjects himself to the forces of matter without question.

In excusing the bourgeoisie, the ideology of division becomes the antagonist in the film, but it is downplayed by its indirect presence through the symbol of white collars, again working to include audiences who are both for and against communism. Because the superiority of class is represented through the costuming, the film suggests that class is also something that lacks depth. It too is like a costume, which when removed, changes all assumptions about a character. This is displayed through Alberto's failed attempts to maintain his superiority without the "white collar" symbol.

The false consciousness is again represented through the water, specifically the Amazon which divides San Pablo. The river scene works to distract from this Marxist commentary by emphasizing Ernesto's other motivations for crossing the river outside of what it represents symbolically. The water is shown early on as an obstacle to Ernesto which reiterates his heroism when he decides to traverse the river, and gives the audience a way to sympathize with his character outside of his Marxist ideology. His weakness brought on by the water is accentuated again to add a sacrificial aspect to his heroism and stress the risk he has taken to cross the water. His Christ-frame solidifies the audience's investment in Ernesto so that by the end of the film, Guevara is more than humanized, he is now also glorified for his actions.

Guevara is presented as a hero in this film at the cost of his beliefs which are hardly mentioned. This would seem almost

an insult to his memory, however the film accomplishes something much more useful to the preservation of Guevara's ideologies. Through their depictions of Guevara, the film forces its audience to confront his good qualities. This ultimately provokes audiences to explore Guevara's beliefs anyways, especially because the film hardly touches on them. Those who knew little about him now have a reason to read his material. Those who knew only negative things about him (like myself) have a reason to further explore these beliefs in search for the morality and selflessness displayed through "Ernesto" in the film. Rather than attempting to recreate Guevara's struggle through the communist revolution, the film provokes the audience to explore it themselves, which is the biggest favor they could have done for Guevara's legacy.

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