FROM THE CHILEAN LABORATORY TO WORLD-COMMUNICATION

ARMAND MATTELART'S INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY

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Foreword by Peter Simonson

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CHAPTER THREE

The Years of Exile: From Popular Unity to the *Unité de la Gauche*

The bombardment of the Casa de la Moneda by the troops under General Augusto Pinochet's command on September 11, 1973, epitomized in a single act the brutality that was to come after the coup d'état put an abrupt end to Chile's brief and unprecedented experience of transition to socialism. The history is well-known: Salvador Allende's death, and the torture, killing, and exile of hundreds of thousands of Chileans was the condition of possibility for the seventeen years of dictatorship that radically set back the country's economy, society, culture, and political life.

Armand Mattelart, like so many others, was thrown out of the Andean country just a few days after the coup d'état. The compromising objects he kept in his house; the fear for his own life and that of his children; the abrupt departure without his wife and most of his belongings; the friends and coworkers who disappeared, were killed, or went into underground resistance: All of these memories would leave an indelible mark on his psyche and his personality. According to his own account, the nightmares that afflicted him relentlessly every night did not let up until December 1991, when the prohibition against him was lifted and he was able to set foot on Chilean soil for the first time since his exile (Mattelart, 2010: 126).[1] But that was not all

[1] We cannot linger here on the chronicle of the events that preceded his banishment. Mattelart on several occasions has told of his personal experience of the coup, his traumatic flight from Chile, and the nightmares that troubled him until 1991 (Beigel, 2011; Mat-

that he took with him from Chile: his experience in the *Chilean laboratory*, the collective passions and joys that it entailed, would also accompany him as an inexhaustible stimulus for his work and intellectual intervention. The status of *exile* thus becomes an ever-present axis for describing the thinking and the rich and singular life trajectory of this young Belgian who, after arriving in Chile at the age of twenty-six, had opted—in his own words—"to expatriate himself for good," to live definitively in Latin America and who, at the age of thirty-seven, together with his two small children and his wife, was forced out of his adopted country.

But wasn't he going back to his natural habitat, to the continent where he had been born and grew up, to his wife's native country? Why speak of the status of *exile*? Insisting on this status might seem odd for those who, from Latin America, might assume that his return to Europe simply meant going back home after a long stint working in Chile.[2] But what cannot be denied is that, in addition to overcoming the anguish of forced deportation, the Mattelarts had to cope, especially in the early years of their return to France, with certain challenges in resettling (during their time in Chile they had made almost no effort to build up a professional network in Europe because at the time they had no intention to return), which included precarious economic circumstances, and problems finding housing and employment. These experiences, of course, are common among many exiles, but in this unique case, what does exile imply as an intellectual experience? What does exile entail—as Edward Said proposes—as a metaphor for thinking about a certain intellectual disposition?[3] If underlying the metaphor of the exiled

telart, 2010: 122–123; Mattelart 2011 [1983]: 9). We have also compiled the following personal testimonies: Armand Mattelart (interview with the author, 2011), Michèle Mattelart (interview with the author, 2011), Tristán Mattelart (interview with the author, 2011).

[2] And yet this status left such a deep mark on his lived identity that at the end of the prologue to the English edition of *How to Read Donald Duck* [*Para leer al Pato Donald*] (June 1975), the authors added the phrase "in exile" after their names as if it were a badge of identity (Dorfman and Mattelart, 1975: 10). Many years later, in a continuation of this lived experience of his own status, Mattelart would offer a retrospective of his life where he stated that his expulsion by the dictatorship "cut short this project and made me an exile in the continent where I was born, lived, and completed all my studies" (Mattelart, 2011 [1983]: 9).

[3] Edward Said (1996: 14, 26) proposes exile as one of the possible metaphors for thinking about representations of the intellectual, in the normative sense of Julien Benda and his classic work *La trahison des clercs* [*The Treason of the Intellectuals*] (1928). In his view, intellectuals are by definition marginal: They do not feel entirely adapted to the society where they are born or to the one that adopts them, and they are deprived of the advantages afforded by privilege and power. The intellectual—wrote Said (1996)—"never feels at home," is like an exile: He "therefore exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-

intellectual put forward by the Palestinian critic is a *metaphysical and normative* component, this will allow us to develop understandings and reference points for reconstructing and interpreting Mattelart's intellectual and life journey.[4] His status as an exile, more than the result of a deliberate choice or a metaphysical condition, can be interpreted from a sociological standpoint that—by specifying the network of relations and the positions that Mattelart occupied in the French academic and intellectual field—will allow us to position him in a borderline zone between the Chilean laboratory and European society. Like all borderline areas, it is a space that implies distance but also points of contact and encounter. Inhabiting this area would enable Mattelart to translate the memory of his Chilean experience and the intellectual disposition that came out of it in terms that were understandable for the society receiving him. In other words, the idea of Mattelart as an exiled intellectual will also align with the idea of a hybrid, composite figure: the idea of a *mediating* intellectual, a *translator* who can foster dialogue between different areas of social activity, different intellectual traditions, and cultural formations from different national settings.

The "Lessons" of Chile in Post-1968 France

Without an academic and professional network in France, since their intention had been to stay in Latin America, the Mattelarts faced steep obstacles on their arrival: They had to find their political place, not to mention employment. They had forged some contacts in Chile with French intellectuals who had gone to the Andean country, attracted by the Popular Unity (UP in its Spanish acronym) experiment, which helped them begin to build a nascent professional network. The cultural and political climate was highly favor-

detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another" (60). This in-between figure, in transit, inhabits several worlds at the same time; because of this, Said suggests, their condition would be a privileged one for seeing things differently, from a double perspective. From this position, the intellectual does the work that defines their restless and disrupting role: destabilizing truths established as common sense and critiquing the existing order. What is at play, Said insists, goes beyond the *actual* experience of exile; it involves a *metaphorical* figure: Theodor Adorno, who "was very predisposed to being a metaphysical exile before he came to the United States" (66), is one of his prototypes.

[4] As Carlos Altamirano (2006: 31–47) observes, the *normative* view is characterized by asking not what an intellectual is or what their social function is, but, prescriptively, *what it ought to be.* In this sense, we add, it must be seen as a figure embedded in the *intellectual habitus* itself, i.e., as an ideological self-representation that while trying to justify the position of the intellectual in the social world, nevertheless is in part the product of the trajectory and position of the intellectual within that world.

able given the widespread solidarity with Chile and French interest in the Chilean road to socialism. While the early years of the Cuban Revolution had raised expectations among many left-leaning French intellectuals and solidified their public stances (the paradigmatic cases were those of Jean-Paul Sartre and Régis Debray), in the late 1960s and '70s certain aspects of Cuba's policies (support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Padilla "affair," among others) undercut hopes that had been invested in the Cuban model. The shift, to be sure, also was tied to local developments: One important sector of the left was readjusting its position as attempts were made to find a political-institutional channel for the social mobilization that was galvanized in May 1968.

In this scenario, Chile had become a point of reference. In 1971, recently elected as secretary of the French Socialist Party, François Mitterand had traveled to Santiago de Chile and stated that he was awestruck by Salvador Allende's moral resolve and the originality of the model he was promoting; Chileans—trumpeted *Le Monde* (November 14–15, 1971)—were calling Mitterand "the French Allende" (in Leenhardt and Kalfon, 1992: 18). In this perspective, some sectors of the French left—the most prominent being the Socialist and Communist Parties—managed to put together a common platform in June 1972. But the interest sparked by the *Chilean road to socialism* in certain intellectual and political sectors in France exploded after the coup d'état, when hundreds of demonstrations expressed solidarity with the Chilean people. The motivations, once again, were internal. The political debate in the run-up to the 1974 elections managed to transfer the dilemmas of the *Chilean road* and its commitment to democratic mechanisms onto the French political map: The revolutionary left saw little hope for a transition to socialism within the framework of liberal democracy, while the French right, fearful of a unified left, turned the Chilean case into a warning sign. In France Chile became fodder for electoral wrangling (Leenhardt and Kalfon, 1992: 18).

Within this framework of mobilization, one of the first ties the Mattelarts established upon their arrival in France was with a group of journalists who had visited Chile and who edited two journals: a weekly, *Politique Hebdo*, and a monthly, *Politique aujourd'hui*. At the time, the journals, founded by Paul Noirot, had close ties to the Unified Socialist Party (PSU in its French acronym), and brought together a variety of political currents: sectors of the radical left and what would soon be called the "second left."[5] Through these

[5] The phrase "second left" is attributed to Michel Rocard, who coined it at a Socialist

early contacts, Armand Mattelart was invited to publish in the January 1974 edition of *Politique aujourd'hui*—he would join its editorial board—dedicated, as its cover intoned, to the "Latin American challenge after Santiago." An editorial written by Paul Blanquart, Anne Valier, and Daniel Vasthy demonstrated the interest that one part of the French political and intellectual world took in the Latin American situation and its points of contact with political debates in France. The editorialists opened with a query: Were the topics covered in the special issue that far from what was happening in France? The enormous echo in the country of the September 11 coup and the profound anxiety felt by so many social sectors, "are they not indicators of a visceral, instinctive awareness that Santiago could be Paris tomorrow?" (*Politique aujourd'hui*, January 1974: 2). The Chile that was engrossing France was not the country where Allende won the election but the country that killed him, they declared. The analysis of the Latin American case served as a way to gauge the adversary (the worldwide system of imperialism) and its ability to bend developments in its favor under a wide range of circumstances. [6] At a time when class warfare in France was near the boiling point (who was going to pay for the oil crisis if not the working class, the editorialists asked), the lesson of Chile cried out for attention: "It is imperative to reflect on the lessons that the Chilean comrades have put on the table in their experience of the last three years, with regard to relations with the middle classes, with regard to the use of the apparatus of the bourgeois State, with regard to the vanguard and its relationship with the masses, and with regard to the army" (4). The editorialists were in part sharing their views and doubts about the unity of the French left. In this regard, and in line with one of the journal's fundamental objectives—to circulate socialist practices and research from

Party convention in 1977. In Michel Sellenart's view, it was a left-wing movement that kept its distance from the more orthodox Marxist positions and was open to new issues like everyday life, the status of women, self-management, etc. To put it schematically, the idea suggested two cultures: one Jacobin, state-centered, that accepts the alliance with the Communists, and the other decentralizing, inclined toward civil society and the third sector that rejects the alliance, called the second left (Sellenart, 2009 [2004]: 420). In François Cusset's more critical view (2008 [2006]: 29), the movement of the New Left—social democratic and modernist—"was born of the conversion to the 'realism' of the libertarian, self-directing left." Cusset places intellectuals like Pierre Rosanvallon, Alain Touraine, the PSU, and the newspaper *Nouvel Observateur* in this camp.

[6] For the editorialists of *Politique aujourd'hui*, the Chilean experience laid bare the risks faced by proponents of a peaceful transition to socialism: What ultimately motivated Richard Nixon's advisors to act, they argued, was what might happen in France and in Italy. If the Brazilian case illustrated the military option in a country lacking strong democratic traditions and with outlawed Marxist parties, the Chilean case drew attention to the bourgeoisie's response capabilities in a country with deep-rooted democratic traditions and a working class organized in Marxist parties, as in France.

around the world, they noted—they were determined to give a voice to Latin American colleagues, remarking that in the span of a few years "the continent had become one the of most advanced fields for Marxist research" (5). Among the invited colleagues was Mattelart, who took advantage of the opportunity to publish his first text in the French media since his exile: an article signed in November 1973 titled "La bourgeoisie à l'école de Lénine: le 'gremialisme' et la ligne de masse de la bourgeoisie chilienne" ["The Bourgeoisie in Lenin's School: 'Guildism' and the Mass Line of the Chilean Bourgeoisie"] (1974d: 23–46). There he extended and deepened one of the lines of research he had developed in Chile:[7] how in the face of the UP's steady consolidation the bourgeoisie had jettisoned its "democratic" tactics, banking on the control of the liberal state's apparatuses, such as Parliament and the judiciary and taken up a "mass line" that involved organizing and mobilizing the population along sectoral lines and for insurrectional purposes. Mattelart then analyzed how this mobilization had required a change in the dominant conception of the mass media: The bourgeoisie had scrapped its traditional communication model, where the media are conceived as vehicles for information and entertainment, and started politicizing everyday genres and mobilizing specific target audiences in different ways, driven by corporate interests ("guildist, or *gremialist*, ideology") but with an eye to laying the groundwork for an insurrection against the popularly elected government. In short: The bourgeoisie "had gone Leninist," i.e., it had "formed its mass line," turning the press into a "collective organizer" for the reaction.

The interest that the Chilean situation had sparked in the journalist Claude Julien, then chief editor at *Le Monde Diplomatique*, served as another point of entry into the French cultural world for Mattelart. This contact actually built on connections that had been forged in the Chilean laboratory. As Mattelart himself tells it, Alfredo Guevara, then president of the Cuban Institute of Cinematic Art and Industry (ICAIC, in its Spanish acronym), had suggested to Julien—who had met Michèle Mattelart[8] at a colloquium on the Chilean

[7] See Mattelart (1998 [1973]), especially the section "Los reaccionarios aprendieron más rápidamente que las masas" ["The Reactionaries Learned Faster than the Masses"]. For a genealogy of guildism (*gremialismo*), see also Mattelart, Mattelart and Piccini (1970), Mattelart, Castillo, and Castillo (1970).

[8] Michèle Mattelart's entry into the French political and intellectual circles upon her return to France very much followed its own course, although somewhat in parallel to Armand Mattelart's. Shortly after her arrival in France, Michèle Mattelart was already participating in the Chilean solidarity movement (she coordinated the collection of signatures for the release of Carmen Castillo, the wife of Miguel Enríquez, of MIR). She also ran the newspaper *Urgent Amérique latine* (an activist newspaper created by exiled Chilean journalists that compiled contributions about Latin America from *Le Monde diplomatique*,

case and Latin American dictatorships held in Washington—that he contact Armand Mattelart (interview with the author, 2011). Julien would then make a proposal to Mattelart to write for the collection of articles he was preparing for *Le Monde diplomatique* about the situation in Chile, "Rêves et cauchemars de la junte" ["The Junta's Dreams and Nightmares"] (*Le Monde diplomatique*, July 1974). Mattelart's contribution, "Un fascism créole en quête d'idéologies" ["A Creole Fascism in Search of Ideologies"] would open the collection and launch an uninterrupted collaboration that would last decades, up to the present day, resulting in dozens of published articles.[9]

Once the urgency and initial shock produced by the coup d'état in Chile had passed, spaces began to open up in the French cultural and political field for taking a deeper look at Popular Unity's experience. By 1974, Mattelart proposed to the Anthropos publishing house the manuscript of what would become *Mass media, idéologies et mouvement révolutionnaire. Chili 1970–1973* [*Mass Media, Ideologies and Revolutionary Movement: Chile 1970–1973*] (1974). The group running the publishing house founded in 1960 also published the journal *L'Homme et la Société. Revue internationale de recherches et de synthèses sociologiques.* Mattelart's ties to the journal—where several heterodox Marxists collaborated, including some Latin Americans[10]—dated back to 1969,

the left-wing press, and *Politique Hebdo*), published articles in *Le Monde diplomatique* about the Chilean situation, and together with Armand Mattelart wrote the script for the documentary *La Spirale*. In parallel, she took part in the debate about the Chilean question in leading French cultural magazines, where some of their current topics, such as feminism, were overlaid with interest in the Chilean experience. See the edition devoted to Chile of *Les Temps modernes*, with articles by Ruy Mauto Marini, André Grunder Frank, and Armand Mattelart, among others (no. 342, January 1975), and Michèle Mattelart's article "Le coup d'état au feminin" ["The Coup d'État against the Feminine"] (*Les Temps modernes*, no. 345, April 1975). Owing to the resonance of that article and interest in her analytical perspective, Julia Kristeva invited Michèle Mattelart to contribute to a special issue of the journal *Tel Quel* devoted to feminist research ("Les femmes et l'ordre de la crise" ["Women and the Crisis Order"], no. 74, 1977). Making these networks visible allows us to give an account of the points of contact on both sides of the Atlantic that we are throwing into relief, at the same time that it points to the modes of constructing a certain legitimacy as author figures, by means of which the Mattelarts (who often published as co-authors) augmented their possibilities for publishing in the French media.

[9] In the article in question, Mattelart (1974a) proposed an analysis of the perspectives that had emerged 10 months after the coup d'état in Chile, did a meticulous reading of the "Declaración de principios de la junta" ["The Junta's Statement of Principles"] of March 1974, and discussed the genesis of the far-right groups and their "organic intellectuals" (especially Opus Dei) that put together a political platform that he characterized as integralist (in the Francoist tradition) and technocratic.

[10] The journal was founded in 1966. Those who participated or collaborated at the time were Henri Lefebvre and a group of heterodox Marxists, including Nikos Poulantzas, Samir Amin, Joseph Gabel, Pierre Naville, Manuel Castells, among others. From Latin America, intellectuals such as Michael Löwy, Theotonio dos Santos, Henrique Cardoso,

in Chile: He had sent its editorial committee an article about the ideological reading of Thomas Malthus, published in *Cuadernos de la Realidad Nacional* (Mattelart, 1969).[11] Anthropos immediately accepted the manuscript and published the book, with translations of the texts published by Mattelart in *La comunicación masiva en el proceso de liberación* [*Mass Communication in the Process of Liberation*] (1998 [1973]) (a compilation of Siglo XXI's editions of many of his articles from *Cuadernos de la Realidad Nacional*); plus the interviews Mattelart had conducted with workers from the industrial belts of Santiago, published in *Comunicación y Cultura* (1974); and the article published in *Politique aujourd'hui* about the bourgeoisie's mass line that we mentioned above. Drawn by the book's publication, Serge Daney and Serge Toubiana, at the time the editors in chief of the prestigious *Cahiers du Cinéma*, proposed to Mattelart a long conversation that was published in the journal in its December–January 1974–1975 edition, titled "Appareils idéologiques d'état et lutte de classes—Chili 1970–1973. Entretien avec Armand Mattelart" ["State Ideological Apparatuses and Class Struggle—Chile 1970–1973: Interview with Armand Mattelart"]. In their introduction, Daney and Toubiana pointed to the productivity of "transporting whole chunks of the Chilean experience" to France or Italy, and the need to "come up with the means for thinking about those lessons," even at the risk—they were implicitly warning against the possibility of Eurocentric leftist thinking—of being "accused of exoticism."[12] As we see, the political interest in the Chilean experience was folded into an interest in thinking about the *lessons* and the questions that this process entailed for the specific theory and practice of cinema as it related to a revolutionary process. 1968 and the disputes within the university system and the cultural apparatus had laid bare the problem of ideological struggle in France, creating conditions for the emergence and spread of perspectives and concepts such as "ideological

Emilio de Ipola, and André Gunder Frank.

[11] The article was accepted and published in no. 15 of *L'Homme et la Société* (January–March 1970, pp. 183–219) under the title "Una lecture idéologique de l'*Essai sur le principe de population*" ["An Ideological Reading of *Essay on the Principle of Population*"].

[12] They wrote: "It may be said that Chile is not France and we could be accused of exoticism. The danger is there. But for us, how could anyone think for a second that we could avoid turning our eyes toward Chile? […] From the moment an experience like Chile's takes place, it challenges the thinking of the international workers' movement and its failure is our concern. To a certain extent, whole chunks of the Chilean experience could be transported to France or Italy. We still need to come up with means for thinking about these lessons, to come up with a theoretical corpus that can specify the context and the place where the questions are being formulated […] [and] that would allow us to mark off substantial theoretical and practical ground, which should without fail produce returns for our specific field, which is cinema" (Mattelart, 1974–1975: 6–7).

state apparatus," which the interviewers insisted on including in the title of the interview with Mattelart despite its absence from the book in question, and which indicated its pervasive presence in the leftist culture of France at the time. Within this framework, Mattelart summarized and translated in the *Cahiers du Cinéma*—in dialogue with intellectual luminaries of the caliber of Daney and Toubiana—the questions that the *Chilean laboratory* had posed for the intellectual world and for the French left, specifically: How does one undertake a cultural transformation with materials from an inherited cultural industry that is highly developed? How will the dominant classes respond and how will they make use—assuming freedom of expression is respected—of their mass media? What international forces are put in play when a traditionally democratic country undertakes such a political process?

La Spirale*: A Cinematic Adventure*

These same questions underlay the screenplay that Mattelart was writing at the time for *La Spirale* (1975),[13] a documentary that we dare say served as a veritable passport in exile. This film is highly significant for his intellectual journey because it represented not only one of his first job opportunities after his exile but also because analyzing the film's conditions of production allows us to reconstruct a network of relations that contributes to our viewpoint regarding his trajectory and what it means for the intellectual history of communication studies and the sociology of cultural formations: on the one hand, the existence of a space for sociability, of an international network of political-intellectual association where, on the basis of certain similarities between the political-cultural maps of France and Chile, Mattelart would act as a kind of *cultural mediator* and *go-between*; on the other, because *La Spirale* itself became a mediation, a fundamental link in the intellectual processing of an experience, the *Chilean laboratory*, that would leave its mark on Mattelart's trajectory and shape his theoretical and political stances.

With regard to the former point, if Chris Marker, activist writer, photographer, and filmmaker, proposed to Mattelart as soon as he set foot in France

[13] *La Spirale* (France, 1975, 134 minutes); Armand Mattelart, Jacqueline Meppiel, and Valérie Mayoux. With collaboration by Chris Marker. Produced by Jacques Perrin (Reggane Films). Participation: Jean-Claude Eloy, Jean-Michel Folon, François Périer, Med Hondo. It premiered in France in 1976. To reconstruct the production history and conditions of *La Spirale*, I have made use of personal interviews with Armand and Michèle Mattelart. See also the interviews made by Paul-Louis Thirard (Mattelart, 1976), Michael Palmer (Mattelart, 2008), and Didier Bigo (Mattelart, 2009), as well as Mattelart's own articles (2008, 2010).

in October 1973 that they make a documentary about Popular Unity, it was because they had already forged a relationship in the heat of the Chilean process. Marker had visited Chile in 1972 while accompanying the Greek filmmaker Costa-Gavras, who had traveled to Santiago to film a movie about the Uruguayan Tupamaro guerrillas, *State of Siege* (1973). Marker's interest in Chile—according to Mattelart's retrospective account—was to observe how the left-wing forces dealt with cultural policies using cinema; more specifically, whether the process of democratic transition to socialism was producing alternative cinema from within popular collectives.[14] Marker, who had not only promoted experimental and activist filmmaking in France but also understood the need to create alternative production and distribution channels,[15] met with Armand and Michèle Mattelart in Santiago because he was interested in their work on communication, ideology, and cultural policies. As Armand Mattelart tells it years later (2008), at this meeting they agreed "that the question of media constituted a blind spot in the history of the revolutionary movement's thinking" (157). The encounter would spark a number of shared projects. Marker was so taken with *How to Read Donald Duck* that he resolved to have it translated into French and immediately, upon his return to France, urged his friend and editor François Maspero publish it at his now iconic publishing house, Éditions Maspero. (Maspero hesitated for a time but finally rejected the idea and Marker had to abandon his proposed translation, which would eventually come out through other channels.) For his part, Mattelart convinced his friend Héctor Schmucler, then one of the editors at Siglo XXI Argentina—who was likewise enthusiastic about the project—to publish a Spanish version of the diary of the Soviet filmmaker Aleksandr Medvedkin about his revolutionary experiences with the "cine-train," which Marker had recovered and edited in French with his collective SLON the year before (Medvedkine, 1973). In short, friendships sometimes become the affective embodiment of collective processes.[16] No sooner did

[14] Marker's interest was well-grounded. It is important to bear in mind that the UP's victory and the boost it gave to the state film promotion body, Chile Films, jump-started film production in a country that had not developed its film industry under the previous administration, enabling the emergence of experimental avant-garde cinema. This was not part of the cinematic renewal that had already taken place with the wave of new Latin American film; it was about politicizing the popularity of movies "used as a medium in the service of the social transformation process" (Schumann, 1987: 191–192).

[15] To this end he founded the cooperative Société de Lancement del Oeuvres Nouvelles (SLON) and later Images, Sons, Kinescope, Réalisations, Audiovisuelles (ISKRA). With Jean-Luc Godard, who was fascinated with the "cinetrain," he had created the "Medvedkine group" in late 1969, taking the name and idea from the Soviet filmmaker.

[16] The network of connections that tied the French intellectual and cultural world to the

Mattelart arrive as an exile in France than Chris Marker suggested that he go see the producer Jacques Perrin (who had also accompanied Costa-Gavras to Chile and met with Salvador Allende and Augusto Olivares) to ask him to finance a documentary about the Chilean process.[17] Thus Marker formed the group that brought together Armand Mattelart and the film editors Jacqueline Meppiel and Valérie Mayoux. Production took over two years, between 1974 and 1975, and was also supported by other international networks of political and intellectual exchange that Mattelart established and organized. Aside from his relation with Marker, Mattelart's ties with the ICAIC, with which he had forged a close collaboration in Chile, were decisive. In exchange for exclusive rights for a Spanish-language version (which at the time did not get off the ground), the ICAIC opened up its files for Mattelart, and, together with Jacqueline Meppiel, he did a careful inventory of visual materials. In addition to Santiago Álvarez's newscasts and the reports from Cuban television, the filmmakers had access to the materials from Chile Films' newscasts that had been sent to ICAIC to be archived in Havana. Mattelart estimates that almost a third of the visual materials used in *La Spirale* came from the film library in Havana.[18]

The process of producing *La Spirale* turned into a propitious moment for intellectually processing some of the lessons from the Chilean experience. In

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Chilean process is broad (Alain Touraine, Christine Buci-Glucksmann, among others, traveled to Chile during the UP years), and it took on added importance in the case of filmmakers: among others, Régis Debray interviewed Salvador Allende one year into his government for Miguel Littin's film *Compañero presidente*; Chris Marker made contact with Patricio Guzmán and, having taken an interest in his work, saw to the distribution of his film *El primer año* in Europe; he also played a key role in the conception, filming, and production (after the coup) of *La batalla de Chile*. This network of exchange grew stronger with the help that Chilean filmmakers would receive after 1973, which gave rise to a perhaps unprecedented phenomenon in the history of cinema: the existence of a "national cinema" forged in exile (Ruffinelli, 2001).

[17] As Mattelart tells it in retrospect, when he arrived in France, Marker disclosed to him that Jacques Perrin had promised Augusto Olivares (Allende's personal advisor and news director of National Television, killed on the day La Moneda was bombarded) that he would make a film about Chile, especially if a coup d'état occurred (Mattelart, 2008: 157; Mattelart and Bigo, 2009: 2).

[18] Since they had no images of their own, they had to select materials from about twenty different sources: film libraries, television archives in France, Belgium, the United States, and especially Cuba; films by Chilean filmmakers such as Patricio Guzmán, Miguel Littin, and Pedro Chaskel; but also documentarians who had taken an interest in the popular movement in Chile, such as Saul Landau from the United States, Jan Linqvist from Sweden and Santiago Álvarez from Cuba, among others. *La Spirale* shares this international pedigree that characterizes other Chilean films from the same years. It is no coincidence that Patricio Guzmán, in order to finish *La batalla de Chile*, perhaps the most emblematic of them all, also relied on the essential collaboration of ICAIC (Ruffinelli, 2001).

late 1973 Mattelart wrote a script outline about the "Chilean bourgeoisie's mass line" (which later became an article published in *Politique aujourd'hui* in early 1974, as already mentioned) that served to structure the documentary project. On the basis of his dialogue with Jacqueline Meppiel and Valérie Mayoux (who had not been in Chile and were learning about the country's political reality at the editing desk) and above all in coming to grips with the 52 hours of film that had to be cut down and organized, Mattelart would hammer out a series of hypotheses about the Chilean experience. It would be at the editing desk where he would bridge the gap between the drafting of the script outline about the bourgeoisie's mass line that he had written to start the project and the finished film, two years later, for which he did not have a prior screenplay. On the basis of this material, Armand, along with Michèle Mattelart, put together the extensive voice-over script that was then revised by Chris Marker, who added his signature style to bring the project to fruition. In sum, the dialogical character of the film was built through indispensable intellectual mediation from which Mattelart formulated a view of the Chilean laboratory, above all from the necessity of finding a principle for organizing and prioritizing the enormous quantity of available visual material.[19]

La Spirale premiered in French theaters in April 1976, and in May it was screened in the "Perspectives" section of the Cannes Film Festival. It then had a somewhat uneven run on television and at universities. From a cinematic viewpoint, it can be said that *La Spirale*, a classic expository documentary, presents an analysis of the gradual development of the strategy deployed by the Chilean bourgeoisie and US imperialism, i.e., the construction of a mass line on which Allende's overthrow was built. A simulation game, "Politics," is the organizing thread that structures the story; it uses scale models (designed by the visual artist Jean Michel Folon) to represent the game while a voiceover interprets the documentary images outside of the plotline. "Politics" is a simulation game commissioned by the Pentagon

[19] A few years after the film premiered, Mattelart (1981b) referred to the production of *La Spirale* as a formative experience: "Spending days watching movies, newscasts, documentaries filmed during the UP government […] was a political challenge because it forced me, during the entire time, to reflect on the process that was cut short by the coup d'état […] [F]or two and a half years I was able to see the different players in the Chilean process exactly as the Chilean bourgeoisie presented them through their reporters and also as the forces on the left presented them. That was very painful because in those newscasts—we had 52 hours of film to work with—you can see the outlines of the social structure, the diagnosis of the relation of forces within the process that the different actors had" (81–82). At this point we will not go into the therapeutic role that Mattelart attributes to his work on *La Spirale* in several of his accounts.

in 1965 and developed at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, with the participation of the think tank ABT Associates, of Cambridge, Massachusetts; it serves to analyze hypotheses of "internal revolutionary conflict" in an imaginary country, which coincidentally bore a remarkable resemblance to Chile. *La Spirale* stages "Politics" through Folon's scale models as a way of organizing the plot thread—one can read a reflexivity strategy there—while at the same time presenting (and denouncing) the actual existence of the game, i.e., as an example of the power strategies that the film sets out to analyze. In this sense, the voiceover points out at one point that, on the basis of "Politics," "the Pentagon discovers that society is divided into classes and for the first time tries to analyze it."[20] *La Spirale* then proceeds to analyze the functioning and dialectics of power, which can be read not just in the priority given by its narrative plot to the Chilean right's destabilizing strategy (at the expense of an analysis of the popular experience), but above all in its form, in the representation and choice of "Politics" as the narrative thread, as the place of enunciation that simulates the other's gaze—since strictly speaking it is the film itself that proposes the analysis of the developments in the conflict and the movements of the social forces. As Mattelart (2008: 162) observes in retrospect, *La Spirale* proposes an "inverted system of references," an analysis of the process from the perspective of the dominant classes' strategy that dialectically leads to reflection about the UP's strategy and tactics. From this angle, the film serves to clarify the profound unity of the process. The choice of "Politics" as the narrative thread and the enunciative ambiguity that it stages thus underscores a view of the ambiguity and complexity of the functioning of power and hegemony that distinguishes Mattelart's theoretical stance and that he would maintain, as we will see, in the rest of his work from that point on.

From another angle, it is important to emphasize that *La Spirale's* premier in 1976 helped to raise Mattelart's profile in the French cultural world, where as a virtual newcomer he had little presence. If the film had a notable impact in political-cultural commentary and French cinematography, it was because

[20] Briefly: The game defines twelve social forces in an imaginary country, proposes different conflict scenarios—for example, and not coincidentally, the nationalization of a mining company—and predicts the possible movements of each social force. The existence of "Politics" suggests that the US Armed Forces used not only military games and hypotheses as an input for planning but also simulations set in civil society that focused on the political dimension of conflicts. In other words, the Chilean case can be read as a laboratory for an intervention strategy by the world's hegemonic power. Mattelart learned of the existence of "Politics" shortly after starting to conceive the film, thanks to his ties to journalists from the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) in the United States, and a group of students from the University of California, Berkeley.

it addressed two issues that to a large extent took center stage after 1968: on the one hand, as we have seen, the interest in the Chilean experience as a way to frame and interpret the stakes and the challenges that the French left was dealing with, especially after the PS and the PC forged their unity platform; on the other hand, in a context of intellectual politicization and the emergence of new production technologies, like the Super 8, the question of the *practice* and *theory* of cinema as forms of political intervention (Casetti, 1994). Within this framework, *La Spirale* drew the attention of the press and specialized journals and became an object of dispute among critics, one more stance to be taken in their political positioning.

Finally, one can identify two axes for organizing the positions that critics took with respect to *La Spirale*. On the one hand there were readings of the film's specifically cinematic elements to interpret the existence of politics in language and its ideological effectiveness. Along this line, Louis Marcorelles, Robert Grelier, Dominique Lecourt and Ignacio Ramonet, among others wrote about the film in specialized journals, espousing different points of view.[21] On the other hand, one can see a more explicitly political axis of analysis in commentaries about *La Spirale*, linked to the way the criticism positioned itself in relation to the Chilean experience—the oft-cited *democratic road to socialism*—and how this related to positions that were crystallizing with respect to the process of unifying the French left. The strictly cinematic debate would obviously not have had the scope and impact that it did had

[21] Louis Marcorelles (1976a, 1976b), in a series of articles for *Le Monde*, compared *La Spirale*'s modes of enunciation with those of the first two parts of Patricio Guzmán's *La batalla de Chile* (1975-1976), preferring Guzmán's open, polyphonic cinematic treatment to *La Spirale*'s more straightforward expository strategy. At the opposite extreme other critics preferred *La Spirale* for the way it organized its ensemble of materials to serve the purpose of exposition and political analysis. Robert Grelier (1976: 91–97), in the *Revue du Cinéma*, highlighted the way Mattelart's documentary, unlike more avant-garde, experimental cinematic offerings, subordinated the use of language to expository purposes, thus leaving it open and allowing spectators to pose their own questions. Dominique Lecourt (1976) wrote in *Le Monde* that *La Spirale* put politics in the driver's seat, and that by subordinating technical questions and stylistic writing it promoted the spectators' intelligence and encouraged their critical appropriation of the contradictions of the Chilean process. In the same tenor, in a dossier that appeared in *Le Monde diplomatique* about Chilean political cinema, Ignacio Ramonet wrote glowingly of the quality of *La Spirale*'s research and its skilled exposition. Comparing *La Spirale* and *La batalla de Chile*, he praised the former's capacity for analysis and observed that the latter skimped on the political analysis, settling for simply "showing the struggles." Subordinating "open" testimony to activist filmmaking, Ramonet (1975) asserted that Guzmán's film "vividly illustrated *La Spirale*'s arguments." The critical debate would follow its course, and eventually shed political criteria in favor of more aesthetic considerations, with *La batalla de Chile* gradually gaining prestige for its enunciative strategies, to the detriment of *La Spirale*'s expository approach. See Pick (1980), Ramonet (2000), Shoat and Stam (2002).

it not been tied up with assessments of the *Chilean road* and the ghosts that haunted the world of the French left. [22]

Cultural Imperialism, a Latin American Issue?

Armand Mattelart's introduction into the political-cultural world of France was channeled through certain cultural formations and intellectual networks of the French left. Mattelart became a sort of *translator* of the Chilean experience, transposing it onto the coordinates of a France that, in the mid-1970s, was debating a series of issues that had points in common with the Chilean debate. Which of the topics and perspectives that he had developed in Chile might interest the French intellectual circles? Which topics or theoretical stances might prove to be illegible or clash with their cultural and intellectual traditions?

Practically upon arrival from Chile, Mattelart proposed to the Anthropos publishing house the publication of the manuscript that became *Mass media, ideologies et movement révolutionnaire. Chili 1970–1973* [*Mass Media, Ideologies and Revolutionary Movement. Chile 1970–1973*]. While the communication landscapes in France and Chile were quite different, it should be noted that in the years following the events of May 1968 a heated debate took place in France about the democratic appropriation of the media and new technologies, in a context where the consensus regarding the public monopoly of radio broadcasting was beginning to crack. The extension of this debate

[22] In strictly political terms, Ignacio Ramonet (1975) thought highly of *La Spirale's* analysis of the United States' destabilizing strategies but took it to task, "as a leftist," at the end of his article for not including an analysis of some of the UP's mistakes or MIR's warnings about them. The French Communist Party's weekly *Humanité-Dimanche*, however, seemed to grasp better than Ramonet *La Spirale*'s critical stance toward the policy of the Chilean Communist Party: It concluded its review with a negative comment about the film: "Better no doubt to think about the Chile of today and tomorrow than to nurse grudges about events that cannot be undone" (*Humanité-Dimanche*, 1976; in Mattelart, 2008: 169). The person who perhaps best appreciated *La Spirale*'s aim, drawing out and translating its implications for the French political debate, was Régis Debray, who wrote in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (1976) about "La leçon de *La Spirale.*" Drawing on his knowledge of the situation in Chile and Latin America, Debray argued that *La Spirale* offered "the first concrete analysis of a concrete situation that, to our knowledge, film has ever produced […] thus restoring to immediate history its true nature of *strategy*, that is, of a fight to death where each side must be determined in terms of the other." If *La Spirale* posed a dilemma that was dear to revolutionary theory, i.e., "what freedoms should be permitted for the enemies of socialism," the question took on relevance not only due to the events in Chile. Anticipating the electoral victory of the unified French left, Debray then turned to "the prudent activists of the socialism of tomorrow" to offer them what was essentially a heads-up: "One day you will have to deal with this contradiction, without vacillation or naïve fantasies." *La Spirale*, for Debray, would help them deal with this dilemma.

created conditions for reading the texts that Mattelart had written in Chile (recall the keen interest that the directors of *Cahiers du Cinéma* had for that first book published in French), while also spurring an emerging process of strengthening communication studies in France, which had lagged somewhat behind what was happening in the United States and Latin America.

It is significant that the most notable articles of an issue that *Le Monde diplomatique* put out in December 1974 devoted to the question of "cultural imperialism" were written by two foreign researchers—Armand Mattelart and Herbert Schiller—and they focused on processes that had emerged outside France. It is also noteworthy that the editor presented as novel an argument that moderately informed Latin American readers at the time would have found commonplace: affirming that the power of the empire was not only military, because economic imperialism did not exist without intellectual and scientific domination (*Le Monde diplomatique*, December 1974).

Aside from writing two articles for the issue, Mattelart introduced the editors—which is to say the French intellectual world—to one of the pioneers of the so-called political economy of communication, the US scholar Herbert Schiller (an author who was unpublished in French; to this day his books have not been translated), who published "Les mécanismes de la domination internationale" ["The Mechanisms of International Domination"] (1974), an article that took up the ideas of *Mass Communications and American Empire*. As the rest of the issue's articles make clear, a certain novelty in the discussion of the topic did not imply distance from the reality of a France that was beginning to question itself about the mutations of a cultural universe more and more exposed to the pressures of the economy and models originating in the US. What is relevant for our work here is the fact that the articles cited Mattelart's publications in Spanish and in French.[23] For his part, Mattelart contributed "Une stratégie globale pour l'Amérique latine" ["A Global Strategy for Latin America"] (Mattelart, 1974b), an article where he analyzed through empirical case studies what he understood to be a redefinition of cultural relations in the Third World: New social actors were developing new cultural functions while old actors were redefining their participation

[23] The other contributors to the issue were Jean-Claude Texier with an article titled "Métamorphoses d'une industrie de la pensée?" ["Metamorphoses of a Thought Industry?"] and Igancio Ramonet with "Cinéma français et capitaux américains" ["French Cinema and American Capital"]. Among his references, the former cited *La cultura como empresa multinacional* [*Culture as a Multinational Corporation*] (Mattelart, 1974) directly from the Spanish and analyzed the mutations of the French publishing industry which, he felt, was falling more and more under the seductive sway of the US model. The latter cited "Hollywood en vente?" ["Hollywood for Sale?"], an article Mattelart wrote for the journal *Ecran* (1974f), and analyzed the growing ties between French cinema and US film studios.

in the cultural process. With this idea, Mattelart was referring to the new ties being established in the field of cultural production between large US companies, the state, the military apparatus, the information apparatus, universities, and private foundations. As one example he offered the case of educational television and the children's program *Sesame Street.* These "new alliances" threw into relief the existence of new modes through which cultural imperialism operated: "[T]he division of labor between the political, the economic and the cultural that has until now governed the penetration of U.S. cultural imperialism is fading away," he concluded (9). The second article he published in the issue, "Les armes de la contre-révolution culturelle" ["The Weapons of the Cultural Counterrevolution"] (Mattelart, 1974c), was closely related to the first. It tied the assessment of the destabilization strategies against Salvador Allende's government to the analysis of the global redefinitions of power and culture that he proposed in the first article: The way the dominant classes had taken the ideological offensive proved that more and more "the traditional instruments of cultural imperialism can accomplish functions that are different from those they have been assigned over the past fifteen years" (8).[24]

One aspect of these interventions deserves note: While Mattelart took processes that occurred in Latin America as material for his analyses, the articles' publication in *Le Monde diplomatique* suggests that he was trying to formulate more general conclusions that could be applied to other parts of the world. We can read in these publications one dimension of his role as *translator* or *cultural go-between*: For one thing, he was trying to approach new processes that were emerging in French society on the basis of problematics and perspectives forged in the Latin American experience; for another, in order to do this he was introducing heretofore unknown international networks and intellectual traditions (the case of Schiller) into the French sphere, which in those years tended to isolate itself in the French-speaking world. In this way Mattelart helped give shape to an emerging problematic concerning processes of growing cultural internationalization and commercialization.[25] In this sense, *Multinationales et systèmes de communication*

[24] Mattelart offered the example of how US advertising agencies located in Chile had shifted from pushing the *American way of life* to participating in the ever more explicit design of political models for "shaping the consciousness of the masses" of the population against the UP. He also described the SIP's (Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa/Inter-American Press Association) role in delegitimizing the popular government following a plan conceived in 1950 by the US State Department.

[25] Several decades later, Bernard Miège (2004), one of the luminaries of communication studies in France, would recognize the value of this intervention. He writes: "Armand

[*Multinationals and Communication Systems*] (1976)—the first book Mattelart wrote directly in French since his exile, where he elaborated on the theses of these articles—can be read as an attempt to present a perspective unusual to the European audience: trying to think the notion of *imperialism* without the accustomed drama, without the "exoticism of its eruptions"—military invasions or coups d'état—that reduced it, as Mattelart wrote (1977 [1976]: 9), to a problem that only concerned Third-World countries. The Chilean experience, he argued, offered conclusions that were valid for the European situation: It shed light on the way a system in its totality operated in the case of class confrontation. The transnational nature of the ideological deployment that was put into motion in Chile suggested that it was time to rethink these mechanisms and their implications at the global scale. That is to say, it served as the inspiration or point of departure for the formulation of one of the book's key theses: that the internationalization and concentration of production (within the framework of the consolidation of "state monopoly capitalism" and a structural economic and political crisis without precedent) extended to the production of cultural goods, which was being reshaped by the worldwide spread of the U.S. model. In other words, the nature of the production apparatus and the reproduction of hegemony were being modified in significant ways. The author argued that this called for revising certain notions, *cultural imperialism* among them, in order to activate a perspective that would extricate it from the purely cultural sphere (Mattelart, 1977 [1976]: 265).

For the moment we will present these theses in a highly abridged version, as an aid for understanding vicissitudes in the publication of *Multinationales et systèmes de communication* and the interpretation we can offer for these difficulties. As it happened, Mattelart at first and practically as a matter of course proposed the publication of the manuscript to François Maspero, the now-mythical editor and promoter of leftist culture, with whom he had

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Mattelart plays a sort of *passeur* role, a go-between: well-versed in Latin American thought, he is also thoroughly acquainted with the arguments of Herbert Schiller's works, and insists in several books (1976, 1979) on the importance of a new kind of ideological apparatus that accompanies the restructuring and offensive of US imperialism […] According to him, hegemony thus takes place in the field of knowledge and technological communication. These analyses will become known by the phrase 'cultural imperialism': Schiller and Mattelart contributed in December 1974 to an issue in *Le Monde diplomatique* on this topic" (48). Another example from the same era is the article that Mattelart (1975c) published in the January–February 1975 edition of *Politique aujourd'hui* focusing on the "challenge" that transnationals represented for the French economy. In that same year it was published in Spanish under the title "Hacia la formación de los aparatos ideológicos del Estado multinacional" ["Toward the Formation of the Ideological Apparatuses of the Multinational State"] in the fourth issue of *Comunicación y Cultura* (Mattelart, 1975a).

established ties through Chris Marker's attempt to get Maspero's publishing house to put out the French edition of *How to Read Donald Duck*. Maspero read the manuscript and quickly contacted the author to explain why he was rejecting it. In Mattelart's retrospective telling (2010: 137; interview with the author, 2011), Maspero contended that the book fell outside the French left's interpretative framework, broke with its ways of thinking and cultural references, and could even prove to be a "demobilizing" book. With similar reservations, other editors also rejected Mattelart's manuscript. We can assume that the analysis of the links between communication and processes of internationalization, between economics, culture, and technology that Mattelart was undertaking in the book broke with a tradition that had deep roots in France, where culture was still conceived as a space that was impervious to the pressures of economics and technological determination, and where, as we will see, communication studies (and not just its critical branch) was still an emerging field. *Multinationales et systèmes de communication* was eventually published by Anthropos and in a few years—proof that the issue of the internationalization of cultural production could be discussed from a perspective that interpreted and drew on local processes—was published in England, the United States, Italy, Brazil, Portugal, and Mexico.

Both the difficulties in finding a publisher and the eventual publication by a press outside the centers of prestige suggest a certain breach between the book and the horizons of experience of French readers. It is possible that this discrepancy had to do with the notion of *imperialism* that conceptually organized Mattelart's research problematic and that was familiar to the Latin American public and intellectual world. This can help to make sense of the observation that Mattelart made in an article published a short time later in the journal *Homme et la Société* ("Idéologies, information et État militaire" ["Ideologies, Information and the Military State"], 1978a), where he urged people to give up the stereotypical image of Latin American dictators (then popularized in Europe by the boom in Latin American literature) in order to analyze the modalities of the "permanent state of exception" and the military regimes of the Southern Cone as new templates of domination that could spread around the world. Thus, in the Spanish version of the article, published as a book, Mattelart wrote in the foreword that an analysis of the Latin American situation—after jettisoning the Eurocentric stereotypes—could be useful for "detecting lines of continuity with other realities that continue to arise within the framework of democratic norms" (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1978: 8), i.e., the realities of Western Europe.

This decentering of the horizon of experience of French culture and intellectual life might explain why (aside from the fear of lawsuits that its publication could trigger, in a context of censure and persecution) some years earlier François Maspero had rejected Marker's proposal to publish *How to Read Donald Duck* in France. Dorfman and Mattelart's book finally came out in 1976, published by Alain Moreau, a small alternative publishing house, in a series directed by Bernard Cassin, at the time editor of *Le Monde diplomatique* and one of its Latin America specialists. The modification of the original title is indicative of the distance we are pointing to between the horizon of expectation that can be read in the work—a products of the conditions in which it emerged, as we have analyzed—and the horizon of experience of its French readers: the book changed the title of the Latin American version from *Para leer al Pato Donald. Comunicación de masas y colonialismo* to *Donald l'imposteur, ou l'impérialisme raconté aux enfants* [*Donald the Impostor, or Imperialism Told to Children*. Leaving aside the loss of the nod to Althusser's famous text (which can be read first as a sign of a certain Althusserian presence or style in South American intellectual circles in the late 1970s, and then as a distancing from a certain conception of how ideology functions that the *Chilean laboratory* had brought to light), the term "colonialism" that appears in the subtitle in Spanish might have raised hackles in a country where the colonial past and the social divisions opened up by the war in Algeria were still fresh. And its association with the term "mass communication" in the original version, that is, a conceptual stretching of the narrow political-military meaning, could have produced some bewilderment among French readers. To conclude the argument about the book's disconnect with the horizon of experience of the reception culture, it is worth noting that, unlike the thousands of books sold and the dozens of editions that have come out in Latin America—in fact, the book is still being published by Siglo XXI—and its dozens of translations into different languages, *How to Read Donald Duck* had only one printing in France. [26]

In this context, Michèle Mattelart, in charge of the translation and foreword of *Donald l'imposteur* (1976), did not have an easy job: explaining what there was in this book written in Latin America that could speak to *incredulous* French readers. [27] After contextualizing the book's origins within the

[26] It is worth pointing out that in France the market share for Disney comic books was not as large as in other countries, since they had to compete with the robust local production, which even included a children's magazine put out by the French Communist Party.

[27] The use of the adjective and the irony are not gratuitous. The book's launch in Chile several years earlier had not been overlooked by the French press. In the context of the interest in Allende's election, *France Soir*, one of the highest circulating daily newspa-

cultural battles of the transition to socialism in Chile, and especially within the debate about Quimantu's editorial policies, the writer of the foreword tried to draw attention to what she saw as an incipient cultural transformation in France that had commonalities with the Latin American situation: She showed that "Disney's imperialist inclinations were being affirmed in the Hexagon (France)" (8), not only in quantitative terms (for example, based on the growth of the number of moviegoers watching films from the United States) but also in the operating mode of a culture industry that, in her view, was beginning to subvert certain norms of French culture: Disney promoted the premiere of its movies by simultaneously launching records, foods, costumes, i.e., with a merchandising campaign that blanketed everyday life. These superproductions—wrote Michèle Mattelart—"underscored the all-encompassing characteristics of the offensive and the effectiveness of a promotional system that pulls marketing recipes off the shelf that have already proven their mettle on the other side of the Atlantic in the form of cold cash" (9). These imperialist inclinations, then, implied for her that an industry-driven operating logic was permeating the field of cultural production in France. The local press's strategies for coping with the economic crisis were already evidence enough. In this sense, she warned against the risk of focusing exclusively on what was happening in the United States, i.e., against the risk of "seeing the speck in your brother's eye that you don't see in your own" ("*voir dans l'oeil américain les poutres qu'on ne voit pas chez soi*," 14). Or to put it another way, it was about avoiding overly simplistic conceptions of imperialism that—given the lack of its most brutal and conspicuous manifestations in France—could interfere with the intelligibility of the subtle yet profound cultural transformation that was unfolding before their eyes. [28]

pers in the country, had printed the headline: "Donald Duck vs Allende." Claude Vincent concluded his report with irony and misunderstanding with respect to the cultural issue: "If the opposition has the brave Donald Duck as their leader, then President Salvatore [*sic*] Allende can go quietly about his nationalizations" (*France Soir*, December 31, 1971).

[28] The review of the book that Robert Escarpit (1977) wrote in *Le Monde diplomatique* provides insights for appreciating the reception of Mattelart's book in France and, in this sense, helps us to shed light on his role in certain processes of the international circulation of ideas. Escarpit expressed enthusiasm for Mattelart's work on mass communication: It was extensive and original, he asserted, although little-known in France because most of it had been written and published in Spanish. While calling out Walt Disney as the purveyor of the most repugnant aspects of U.S. ideology might seem to be easy and obviate the need to write a whole book about it—wrote Escarpit—Dorfman and Mattelart accomplished something quite different from "thrashing out banal truths that are plain to see" ("*ressasser des truisms*"): They remorselessly dismantled the mechanisms of the underlying propaganda and persuasion.

Along these lines Michèle Mattelart showed that in the case of Disney, the U.S. producer did not export its comics directly; instead it had decentralized production, establishing affiliations throughout the world with local producers who looked for the best ways to adapt the comics to the national context. The comics then being published in France, she argued, looked less imported than those published in 1955. Her work as the book's translator had allowed her to analyze a highly important point: when she compared the translation of the same chapter of a Disney comic published in Italy, Latin America, and France, she found that the Italian- and Spanish-language versions were more faithful to the English-language original. The French version, on the other hand, showed greater adaptation: The translators had eliminated all references to conflicts that could be identified with contemporary history (very different from the case of the Latin American versions that Dorfman and Mattelart had analyzed, which were full of explicit references). In short, concluded Michèle Mattelart, in the age of cultural multi-nationalization, the key for a producer to achieve universality was to adapt to the local frames of reference, to look for a national truth.

This way of thinking about imperialism converged with the reconceptualization that Mattelart was then proposing in *Multinationales et systèmes de communication* (1976). There, in response to certain overly linear approaches, Mattelart called for a more complex notion of *cultural imperialism*, one that would look at the mediations that linked the process of internationalization to national cultures or, to put it another way, that would consider the specificity of the national factor in the dynamic of dependence, since imperialism ran up against local cultural traditions that grew out of a particular configuration of local class relations and the relation between national and foreign bourgeoisies. Along these lines, in his introduction to *Communication and Class Struggle* (vol. 1), written practically at the same time, Mattelart (2010 [1979]) laid out the theoretical difficulties he found in France for reflecting on these issues: "The notion of a monolithic, triumphant imperialism steamrolling all diversity and homogenizing cultures can provoke a legitimate refusal to recognize its clear existence," he wrote. Instead he proposed "doing away with the idea that imperialism invades the different sectors of a society in a uniform way and replacing it with an analysis that accounts for the particular contexts that facilitate this infiltration" (106). In Mattelart's view, the difficulty in reflecting on imperialism was not simply a question of concepts. It could be explained through certain peculiarities of the French cultural tradition and French geopolitical history: its colonialist past, the

liberation of Paris, the effects of the Marshall Plan on the imaginary of the United States in France, etc. He wrote:

> The fact that the signs of cultural colonization are less visible […] leads many sectors of the public to go so far as to laugh under their breath at any talk of imperialism, especially cultural imperialism. Those who speak about these things are accused of "third-worlding the old continent" by those who find said continent quite capable of resistance. (Mattelart, 2010 [1979]: 106)

As he lays out his analysis, Mattelart gives us an idea of how he lived his peripheral position with respect to much of leftist culture and the French intellectual field: Laughing under their breath at his attempt to put cultural imperialism on the agenda, accusations of "third-worlding the old continent," it is not far-fetched to think that he was referring to his own trajectory and the way he experienced his position. What is certain is that even as he encountered these difficulties, he would embark on a kind of theoretical and conceptual battle to draw attention to certain issues.

"Lessons" from the Peripheral World (or the Dispute over the Profile of an Emerging Discipline)

Just as with some of his earlier books, Mattelart had trouble finding a publishing house interested in *De l'usage des médias en temps de crise* [*Media Usage in Times of Crisis*], written together with Michèle Mattelart (1979). Nicos Poulantzas (Marxist political scientist and contemporary of Althusser whom Mattelart had met at the University of Paris-8) had agreed to publish the book in the "Politiques" series that he directed at Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).The managing editor of PUF, however, alleging its excessive length, asked the Mattelarts to reduce it by a fifth and, in response to their refusal to do so, rejected its publication (Mattelart, 2010: 143). The book eventually came out thanks to the Alain Moreau publishing house, the same one that had published the translation of *How to Read Donald Duck.* The difficulty in finding a publisher might have had less to do with its 450-page length than with its implication for French universities, not just in its content but also in what it said in the paratext.

The book was divided into four parts: sections I and II ("Le nouvel ordre culturel" ["The New Cultural Order"], "Les ideologies de la sécurité", ["The Ideologies of Security"]), section III with its provocative title "Leçons

du monde périphérique a l'usage des pays européens" ["Lessons from the Peripheral World to the European Countries"], and finally, in the form of an epilogue, a perhaps even more provocative "Appel à la recherche critique en France" ["Argument in Favor of Critical Research in France"]. Sections I and II offered a deep analysis of the social and cultural reorganization that was taking place around the world in response to the crisis of the 1970s, and the central role played by communication in the new modes of accumulation and organization of labor, but also as a favored modality for bringing about consensus and exercising power. Section III consists of three chapters. The first looks at the research into communication and culture that the Mattelarts had done in Chile and Mozambique, and the "lessons" that these experiences offered for the study of media and communication. Put briefly: The authors contended that, based on the ways the Chilean bourgeoisie had modified their understanding and their practice of mass communication in the arena of class struggle, but also based on the new communication practices that emerged through popular organizations and new social relations that were emerging in Chile and Mozambique, it was possible to reflect on the non-natural character of communication practices and techniques, i.e., to question the universal notion of "mass communication" and demonstrate the historicity of what the Mattelarts at the time were calling "mode of production of communication." At another level, the authors highlighted the general processes and the specific dynamics within the Latin American intellectual field that had led to the emergence of novel conceptions regarding communication. The example they cited was the research that Michèle Mattelart and Mabel Piccini had done about television reception in the popular sectors of Santiago de Chile. Theirs was a study—as we have seen—that introduced complexity into the analysis of the communication process and the functioning of ideology, offering a pioneering account of the polyvalence of messages and audience activity based on specific reception conditions. In the third chapter of the "Leçons…," called "Voyage à Mozambique" ["Journey to Mozambique"], Armand Mattelart described the lessons concerning popular communication he learned from his work in Mozambique, a country then exploring possible communication alternatives within the framework of political and cultural decolonialization. Finally, the epilogue can be read in a number of ways. On the one hand, the Mattelarts seem to be displaying their credentials for admittance into the academic field of communication studies in France; at the same time, they were making a case for their disciplinary orientation, insisting on the need to build scientific practice in France on a different foundation. By outlining a sort of

map of the status of university research in communication in the country, they drew attention to the underdevelopment of critical traditions and the predominance of functionalist empiricism or technological determinism built around Marshall McLuhan's ideas. By way of contrast, the Mattelarts did a survey of the French centers, schools, traditions, and theoretical references that could constitute a broad framework for critical thinking about communication, approaching it not from the technical or mediatic perspective but through its philosophical, political, and cultural implications: Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Jacques Rancière, Nicos Poulantzas, Robert Escarpit, or Lucien Goldmann. Rejecting any reductionist definition of the field's object, they proposed constructing it by using the tools of contemporary theories of the state, power, ideology, social reproduction, and culture. Finally, the Mattelarts proposed a research program that would break with technological determinism, the exclusive focus on content analysis, and the lack of historical approaches (the counterexamples, obviously, were the analyses proposed on the basis of the cases of Chile and Mozambique). But above all, they advocated for a redefinition of the relations between the university apparatus, left-wing parties, and forms of popular organization and cultural resistance movements. They advocated closing the gaps that separated these social spheres, as a condition for creating a critical project—in the theoretical-epistemological sense—that could not exist outside new forms of association that would contest and construct alternative forms of hegemony. [29]

In conclusion, one can read in *De l'usage des médias en temps de crise* (for instance, in the paratextual decisions it makes: the unsettling names of its chapters and parts, such as "Journey to Mozambique," "Lessons from the Peripheral World to the European Countries," "Argument in Favor a Critical Research in France") Mattelart's construction of the figure of a heterodox, provocative author who positions himself on the borderline of a new disciplinary field marked by a low level of institutionalization and a lack of critical traditions. We can also detect the fingerprints of a multi-faceted intellectual figure who calls for mobility and the crossing of borders—of

[29] The "absence of a global critical approach to the mass media in France," they wrote, was one of many indicators "of the crisis of the university apparatus, more and more detached from the national reality defined in terms of classes, and also an indicator of the crisis of mass organization […] There is a gap between the development of forms of cultural resistance and popular creation and their recognition by universities as an object of scientific inquiry. There is a gap between parties' practice and these popular, small-scale, everyday endeavors, these forms of responding to the hegemonic culture that fail to grow into a political strategy for creating grassroots cultural powers" (Mattelart and Mattelart, 2003 [1979]: 254–255).

national spaces, but also of theoretical traditions and the social spaces and practices where knowledge about the social is produced—as a condition for knowledge production. On the borderline of genres, the last "argument" polemically and provocatively proposed—in his own version of the aesthetic or political manifesto—a dispute over the direction and makeup of an emerging disciplinary field, questioning its own definition of its limits. Mattelart positioned himself in a border zone, a place of intersections, which had at its core not so much an appeal for the interdisciplinary as an appeal for intellectual work marked by the notion of praxis and true commitment to actors in the social world. More than a normative stance, it was a political and epistemological way of thinking, as we will consider more closely in a later chapter. Beyond its disruptive and provocative dimensions, the publication and dissemination of *De l'usage des médias en temps de crise* contributed to cementing Mattelart's status, reinforcing Mattelart as an author figure and reference point for communication studies in France. [30]

[30] For a negative perception, see Rita Cruise O'Brien's review in *Culture, Media and Society* (1981, 3: 200–202); there she expresses a certain bewilderment and confusion regarding the genre in which the authors thought they had written their book. She wondered who it was addressed to: specialists? radical students? non-committed students? A more positive assessment appeared in *Communication et langages*; it stated that the Mattelarts' experience in Africa and South America suggested that there were "resistances to the hegemony of the large-scale culture industries," and urged the authors to make use of these glimmers of hope to "deepen their critical analysis in order to intervene in a more concrete way in the formulation of cultural policies" (Clémençot, 1980: 126). Likewise, in *Amérique latine* Pierre Corset (1980: 102) focused on the new directions that the research on Chile and Mozambique opened up for French readers by suggesting possibilities of resistance to large-scale cultural industries. See also the review by Bertrand Poirot Delpech (1979) in *Le Monde* and, above all, the references to Armand Mattelart made in second issue of the English journal *Media, Culture and Society* by Patrice Flichy (1980) in his overview of the different trends in mass communication research in France. There Flichy stated that Armand Mattelart had been "the first in France to study the problem of internationalization in the sphere of communication" (182) and that his greatest contribution had been "to develop a dialectical vision of cultural imperialism" (183). Finally, he observed that *De l'usage des médias en temps de crise*, by analyzing the transformations in media and culture as a global response to the crisis, was anticipating the way a new balance between security and freedom could spread to Western democracies (183).