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**CINEMA AS A TOOL TOWARDS
SYMBOLIC REPARATION AND
NON-REPETITION:
A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE**

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To Dylan

And all children around the world affected by systematic violence:

I hope these guidelines help you all to have a brighter future.

ABSTRACT

Current symbolic reparation mechanisms for children are lacking. Art, and particularly films, have the potential to symbolically offer a sense of repair to child victims of armed violence and systematic violation of their human rights, to give re-meaning to trauma experienced and help to shape their identities. This research designs a proposal of guidelines for making children's films within transitional justice contexts, from a human rights perspective and a children's rights-based approach. For this, 57 films were reviewed, and 3 feature films were selected and analysed (*My life as a Courgette* (2016), *My neighbour Tororo* (1988), and *Big Hero 6* (2014)). The films selected were related to the external context of the child that caused the victimisation, the inner abilities of the child to overcome the trauma, and the interaction between them to make decisions that break the cycles of violence and achieve non-repetition. The analysis led to the proposal of 20 guidelines on children's cinema for the design of reparation mechanisms for child victims of systematic armed violence to help children coping with violence-related trauma. These guidelines are aimed at international organizations and the filmmaking industry. To make these films possible, it is necessary to follow some ethical considerations and develop financing mechanisms.

Keywords: guidelines, children's film, symbolic reparation mechanisms, children's rights, armed violence, trauma.

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INTRODUCTION

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups during conflicts, social armed violence, and systematic violations of human rights. Children affected by these types of environments represent nearly half of the world's forcibly displaced population (UNHCR, 2019; UNHCR, 2015). It disrupts their access to basic needs and neglects the protection established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Moreover, these types of situations can cause the death of children's relatives (as parents or siblings), bringing additional difficulties to the mourning process of the child. It can also lead to experience collective trauma, which can be established as part of the children's identity or be transferred intergenerationally (Zara, 2018, p. 302; Hirschberger, 2018, p. 2). The consequences of collective trauma can be enduring and result in generations of victims and perpetrators ongoing in preventable cycles of violence, hatred, and revenge (Ajdukovic, 2004, p. 121; Zara, 2018, p. 302). But for them to be prevented, social relationships should be improved, and traumas should be healed after the violence occurred, to promote reconciliation. (Jeong, 2005, p. 157).

Despite this, children have not been prioritized in reconciliation processes or in symbolic reparation mechanisms. Most commonly, children are only considered within measures regarding truth, justice, or material reparations. However, their right to reparations (CRC, art. 39) also includes the necessity of helping them mitigate and heal psychological trauma to ensure guarantees of non-repetition. It can be achieved by delivering symbolic reparation mechanisms through the use of art with a children's rights-based approach throughout their childhood. These types of mechanisms should guarantee non-discrimination (CRC, art. 2), the child's best interest (CRC, art. 3), the right to life, survival and development (CRC, art. 6), and children's participation (CRC, art. 12). Therefore, this study seeks to design a proposal of guidelines to develop children's films as collective symbolic reparation that help them mourn the losses and overcome the trauma to prevent these events define children's identity.

Films use narrative and symbols to tell stories, which can influence society's norms and perceptions (Everett, 2009, p. 118). When it is used in symbolic reparation processes, it can help generate a compensatory effect for past crimes and deliver a sense of reparation to groups that share similar losses or experiences (Nurzia, 2014, p. 7). Furthermore, narratives used in films can help to (re)define people's identity and

didactically provide children with tools to overcome situations and visualise other methods to respond to them in the future. Cinema can also be beneficial for children as they do not always manage the proper comprehension to express how they are feeling or what is disturbing them about complex experiences, especially children younger than 12 years old (Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006; Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 3). Cinema can offer the opportunity to do so with images and not only with dialogue and words. A symbolic reparation film it should be by principle a human rights film. It means the story should be truthful to the past events and the reality and promote healing and tolerance (Nurzia, 2014, p. 16; Prasad & Prasad, 2009, p. 168).

To achieve it, this study is founded in Lumsden's (1997) theory to break cycles of violence by reintegrating the psychological healing to cope with the impact of trauma through a complementary approach to peacebuilding directed towards children. The author's theory is based on three zones that should be addressed for this to be successful. The first zone is the external environment of the child, which includes the social and cultural relations. The second zone is the inside world of the child, including perceptions, hopes, fears, and motivations. Lumsden suggests that the development of the inner capacities would shape the decision-making mechanism that would be affected if the "shattered self" has not been healed from past traumas. The third zone is the intermediate point between psychological and the social zones (named the interception between first and second). This last zone is the one that would allow a bridge between creative exploration and cathartic expressions, potentially leading to decision-making process that could break cycles of violence. In this last zone, Lumsden also suggests that children may explore attachment to "transitional objects", being mainly objects or belongings with symbolic power to remind the child about absent persons to whom they share a deep emotional bond. In this thesis, these objects will be referred to as "amulets".

In general terms, this investigation adopts the definition of "children" established in the CRC (1990), article 1, being every person under 18 years old. Moreover, children are usually divided into groups accordingly to their evolving capacities. In this scenario, children between 4- and 12-years old share mainly the same understanding about death and grieving process (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 2; Hoyos López, 2015, p. 29). This is why, this study proposes to centre the attention to develop a children's mechanism of symbolic reparation through film to children between 4-12 years, who have lived in a socially violent environment, and who need to heal and mitigate the trauma caused by

this violence and multiple losses, to break cycles of violence, rebuild society and achieve a lasting peace and democracy.

In order to develop this qualitative and explorative investigation, the methodology consisted first in research on the available literature to combine three fields that usually do not interact between each other: cinema, transitional justice and symbolic reparations through art, and children's rights. This resulted in a creative new approach to the subject that shaped the development of the guidelines. Secondly, an exhaustive review was made of easy-access available short and feature films that could be considered symbolic reparations or dealt with violence and trauma issues. This review included films from different countries and cultures, developed by various production houses, without limitation of film genres or released years. In a third step, films were chosen to be analysed following three main criteria: **i)** Animated films directed for children; **ii)** That the protagonist was a child character who had lost a relative due to a traumatic death; **iii)** That the story shows tools for the child to deal with grief and loss. Following these criteria, three features were selected because they completely fulfilled it and, furthermore, each of them tackle as a main theme one of Lumsden's zones: *My life as Courgette* (Barras, 2016), *My neighbour Totoro* (Miyazaki, 1988), and *Big Hero 6* (Hall & Williams, 2014). After that, an analysis was made of each one keeping three main lenses, a human rights perspective, a child rights-based approach, and the zones proposed by Lumsden. It led to a better understanding of the challenges surrounding the development of the guidelines and a later stage of proposing them. To achieve the most suitable development of the guidelines, the *Guidelines on the Use of Art in Symbolic Reparations* published by the Symbolic Reparations Research Project (2017) will be used as a reference for content and structure.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations that needed to be taken into consideration during this proposal development. In first place, as it is dealing with a creative approach to symbolic reparations for children, there is a lack in literature from this point of view, which also resulted in bringing together different disciplines that are not used to being merged nor dialogue between them. At the same time, there is not consensus among authors about films genre, making it difficult to define what is or not a children's film. Some governments have tried to define it in cinema categories, but usually they do not share the same criteria for it. Secondly, most of the times there is a lack of information on the filmmaking process of films, making it hard to recognise if films have taken a

children's rights-based approach during their realisation. Lastly, it would be impossible to review all the films that have been made since the Lumière brothers did the first one back in 1895. There is no information regarding how many films have been made ever since; the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) collects more than 3,600,000 titles, from which about 10% are films registered in their system (Millán, 2017). Therefore, this limits the proposed analysis to the films that could be identified and reviewed by the author of this study within the time it lasted.

This thesis, to respond to the methodology and limitations explained, is structured in four chapters. The First Chapter is the most theoretical, where a literature review will be conducted that allows the merging of transitional justice mechanisms for symbolic reparation, children's rights, and human rights cinema. To achieve this, the narrative will offer different authors perspectives about transitional justice and reparation mechanisms, the effects of trauma and the difference with collective trauma, the definition of children's context beneficiaries in this study and their rights, to finally go to possible artistic expressions used as symbolic reparations and cinema as a suitable mechanism for children.

At the beginning of the Second Chapter the theoretical aspects will be reviewed that allow films to shape identities, by using a psychological perspective. Next, some available definitions about children's films as a genre are provided to define what could be considered a children's film for this study analysis. Later, a review on the film selection methodology will be shared to explain the challenges and complications suffered and the decision-making process to select the films. Subsequently, it will lead to the analysis on the feature criteria-fulfilled films. The analysis of the films will be mostly based on Lumsden's zones: *My life as a Courgette* (2016) will be linked to the first zone to lead an analysis on the children's right situation within on screen; *My neighbour Totoro* (1988) will be linked to the second zone to lead the analysis to the internal tools the film's children have to deal with fear, uncertain, and death; lastly, *Big Hero 6* (2014) will be linked to the third zone to show different paths to break cycles of violence after a traumatic death among children. The chapter will end with a general explanation of the lessons learned that can be applied in the search of the most appropriate elements to contribute to the guideline's development.

The Third Chapter will lead to a discussion regarding the concept of symbolic reparation used to date and their interception with children's right to receive repair. It will

conduct to a proposal of expanding what can be understood as symbolic reparation through arts to benefit primarily the best interest of children. After it, possible mechanisms would also be commented to finance a film made with the purpose proposed by these guidelines. Thereupon, it will be considered the possible challenges faced regarding Lumsden's zones, human rights perspective, and children's rights-based approach. Finally, it will be followed by the proposal of 20 guidelines on the making children's cinema in symbolic reparation mechanism for children's victims of systematic armed violence and a later discussion of the ethical considerations that should be taken within the process.

To close, the study will end with the Four Chapter, where it will draw to the final reflections of the thesis study about guidelines proposed. For this, a general overview of what has been done in the previous chapters will be a starting point and a summary of the main findings achieved during the analysis carried out in the second and third chapter. Moreover, the principal concerns found during the study will be recapitulated together. It will result in discussing the following steps that need to be taken before filming the first children's film as symbolic reparation to heal trauma and ultimately break the cycle of violence since childhood.

**CINEMA AS MEANS TO ADDRESS TRAUMA
WITHIN A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE CONTEXT**

Civilisation as we know it has been marked by centuries of conflicts, invasions, and wars, which have determined the evolution of various societies worldwide. In recent decades, these societies have become more “humanised,” developing new social and civil stability forms that ensure respect for human rights. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenants on Human Rights (1966), it is recognised that human rights are a matter of international cooperation and involvement (OHCHR, 2008, pp. 1, 5). However, massive human rights violations have continued to date in conflict zones or repressive and undemocratic regimes.

This chapter conducts a review of the available literature on the main theoretical aspects of this research, in order to offer a better understanding of this thesis approach, its area of influence and its limitations. For this, different mechanisms of reconciliation and reparation in transitional justice processes are explored. Next, the effects of trauma and collective trauma in cycles of violence are reviewed, which will help understand the importance of this study. Later, the children’s context and their rights situation will be presented regarding environments of systematic armed violence and human rights violations. Finally, the chapter will end with the discussion of some possible artistic expressions in symbolic reparations processes and the role films can play towards non-repetition.

Transitional justice is the efforts shared by national and international actors to transform a society that has experienced severe human rights violations into a peaceful and democratic society. Transitional Justice is defined by Bell (2009, pp. 5-6) as a recent and evolving field, a sphere of knowledge and practices that propose a set of legal inquiries and alternative justice mechanisms to bring accountability and to deal with human rights abuses. This process allows victims of human rights violations to have accountability and to recover the principle of dignity. In addition, it is supposed to give victims’ closure for the atrocities experienced in the past, allowing society to (re)build its path into a sustainable civil and peaceful democracy.

Through the activities of the United Nations, the international community has established that transitional justice needs to be understood as a comprehensive strategy,

including measures of truth, justice, and reparation to ensure guarantees of non-repetition (Human Rights Council, 2015, p. 7). These three measures are understood as **i)** Access to all relevant information, including causes and conditions that led to the victimisation, those responsible for these acts, and the remedies implemented; **ii)** Access to justice for an effective judicial remedy and a fair and impartial trial according to international standards; **iii)** And finally, reparation measures that are adequate, effective, prompt and proportional to the damage suffered (United Nations, 2005, pp. 6-9).

In contexts where repressive and undemocratic regimes rules and within conflict zones, mass human rights violations tend to be committed, affecting the whole society. In these scenarios, it is needed to involve the entire society in the reconciliation process (Clark, 2008, p. 334). Still, in most cases, children have been considered only in truth commissions and tribunals on transitional justice processes. Most often, children have been left aside during reconstruction and restorative mechanisms which have mainly been directed in material reparations but not in symbolic mechanisms. Historical memory processes are also sometimes directed towards children through basic education, where academic reforms in transitional justice processes tend to modify history textbooks to include past events into the academic programmes.

In many cases, the biases are significant and deepen the conflict instead of healing (Subotic J. , 2013, p. 269). However, focusing efforts on children should be a priority, as these types of situations undermine childhood. It is essential to support children in achieving a sense of healing and rebuilding their trust relations with adults. When discussing post-conflict reconstruction with children, all vulnerabilities must be considered through holistic and multidisciplinary actions that facilitate resilience, child participation, and collective decision-making towards sustainability (ICRC, 2011).

The *2005 Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation* was a key feature in the evolution of transitional justice, which incorporates a victim-friendly approach (Sandoval, 2017, p. 568). The document entails 13 principles or key forms to approach the right to a remedy and reparation that go beyond the three main pillars: restitution, compensation, and rehabilitation (Sandoval, 2017, p. 565). The right to remedy is usually displayed during post-conflict management. The legal basis for a right to a remedy and reparation is included in multiple international instruments: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 8), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 2), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Racial Discrimination (art. 6), Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (art. 14), Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 39), Hague Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (art. 3), Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (art. 91), and Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (arts. 68 and 75) (OHCHR, 2008, pp. 5-6).

Reparation mechanisms have a dual dimension under international law. First, they have a substantive dimension in that they have the duty to redress the harm suffered. Secondly, a procedural dimension shall redress by providing effective domestic remedies as specified in international law (OHCHR, 2008, p. 6). Reparation mechanisms offer five categorisations depending on what they are intended for: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition (OHCHR, 2008, pp. 7-8). In general terms, reparations express the willingness and commitment of the State to address the root causes of past violations to avoid them to happen again (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2021).

By looking at the *2005 Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation* and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, art. 39), there is no doubt that reparation is a child's right. Violence and armed conflicts leave a significant number of deficiencies in the lives of affected children, making it often necessary to prioritise those most visible violations, such as access to water, food, health, education, among others. Symbolic reparations and psychosocial responses are often neglected or left with little access to resources. However, the necessity to not forget to address children's psychosocial trauma is stressed often (Machel, 1996). It should follow a child rights-based approach, meaning non-discrimination (CRC, art. 2), protecting the child's best interest (CRC, art. 3), their rights to survival and development (CRC, art. 6), and finally, facilitating children's participation in the decision-making process that would affect them (CRC, art. 12) (Save the Children, 2002).

There are two main types of reparations: material and symbolic, and both can be implemented individually or collectively. The best-known form of material reparation is collective economic reparation, which is usually implemented through developing social investment and social service packages (de Greiff, 2006, pp. 468-470). Consequently, this type of reparations requires a strong financial outlay (assumed by those who perpetrated the rights' violations) that is not always available. Besides economic, material measures

also include restoring rights, restoring unfair criminal convictions (ICTJ, 2021); which means restoring those things that have been stripped from a community or person (income, housing, education, opportunities, among others).

The second type of restoration is symbolic measures, which may be categorised as rehabilitating or satisfaction measures that seek to lead to non-repetition (OHCHR, 2008, p. 22). Symbolic reparations are a more emblematic approach to remedies, being more linked to restoring the dignity of the victim and their family and friends. Symbolic reparations can include official apologies (from private to public communications), renaming public spaces, creating days of commemoration, and generating spaces for collective memory about what happened (de Greiff, 2006, p. 453). Some other creative forms to deliver symbolic reparations through artistic expressions may include temporary exhibitions, documentaries, dances, performances, street mural paintings (SRRP, 2017, p. 2), but also other types of films and Television programmes. For reparations to be comprehensive enough programmes, they need to combine economic or material measures with symbolic measures. It should remain to be defined if it is better a collective or individual approach or even a mixed one, depending on cases by case strategy.

Collective symbolic reparation represents a space of mourning, to the collective recognition of victims, which aims to promote the social construction of collective memory to avoid repetition (Naidu, 2004). It is easier to repeat atrocities when their consequences have been forgotten and wounds have not been healed; therefore, all these actions aim to non-repetition and promote reconciliation. Films, in particular, have the ability of rehabilitate the social fabric at young age and support people to heal trauma. Narrative storytelling has the capacity transmit a sense of mutual recognition and reconstruct their identity (Nurzia, 2014, p. 7). Within the scope of this thesis, it will focus exclusively on cinema as a tool towards collective symbolic reparation for children how have suffered trauma and injustice. It can further aid the process of achieving non-repetition while helping to heal psychological wounds and promote reconciliation – at a low economic cost, but with a massive reach. Cinema as a suitable mean to repair will be reviewed in the last section of this chapter, but before continuing to expand on collective symbolic measures, it is crucial first to review the consequences of the trauma generated by massive human rights violations to understand the importance of this study.

Trauma and collective trauma

The term “trauma” in mental health refers to an emotional response to a distressing event and might lead to immediate or longer-term psychological reactions (APA, 2021). A variety of experiences can be referred to as traumatic events (Mohammadi, 2020, p. 8). Some examples of traumatic experiences are the death of a relative or loved one, wars, parental abandonment, witnessing a death or homicide, rape, domestic abuse, among others (Cafasso, 2017). Each individual responds differently to traumatic events; although the signs are sometimes not visible, the emotional reactions and consequences can be devastating and have a lasting effect on a person’s life (Cafasso, 2017). Some possible responses are “increased separation anxiety, developmental delays, sleep disturbances, nightmares, decreased appetite, withdrawn behaviour, and a lack of interest in play. Younger children can have learning difficulties; older children and adolescents can show anxious or aggressive behaviour and depression” (Machel, 2000, p. 20).

Instead, “collective trauma” refers to a traumatic event that affects a group or even an entire society (Hirschberger, 2018, p. 1). Collective trauma can be occasioned by traumatic events that are shared and experienced by entire society or groups such as civil and interstate wars, genocides, ethnic and identity conflicts, revolutions, terrorism, violent protests, riots, *coups d’état*, political violence, among other types of collective sufferings (Conteh-Morgan, 2004, p. VII). All these scenarios can lead to violent and traumatic deaths. Hirschberger (2018, p. 2) suggests that the reconstruction of the traumatic events is still ongoing in an attempt to make sense of the experience. This continuous reconstruction of what happened is linked to the unconscious desire of not wanting to forget it and neither to ultimately remember it (Zara, 2018, p. 302). By establishing itself as part of the group identity, the memory of these events takes on different shapes and forms as it is passed from one generation to another, persisting beyond the participants and survivors live (Hirschberger, 2018, p. 2). War experiences are associated with substantially increased rates of mental disorders, particularly Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (identified by its acronym, PTSD) and Major Depression (Priebe, et al., 2010). The consequences of mass trauma are long-lasting (Ajdukovic, 2004, p. 121).

Collective trauma can result in generations of victims and perpetrators being trapped in the cycle of trauma and violence, swapping roles in a quest to safeguard the victim’s honour that leads to revenge and to seek redress for the pain caused (Zara, 2018,

p. 302). In this regard, Hirschberger (2018, p. 3) establishes that the effects of collective trauma in the construction of meaning are not limited to the victim group, but also to the perpetrator group, who needs to redefine the conception they have of themselves after the traumatic event occurred, to avoid its repetition. This is what Hanif & Ullah (2018, p. 5) define as the dichotomy between victims and perpetrators that can lead to past traumas never being healed and being transferred generationally by both groups – victims and perpetrators. Thus, this endless cycle of violence, hatred, and revenge is transmitted, shaping the vengeance desire into a loop instead of healing to build coexistence. Jeong (2005, p. 157) explains that by improving social relationships, healing traumas, and working towards reconciliation, it is possible to stop the cycles of violence, hatred, and revenge.

Collective violence disrupts normal patterns of social activities, fractures social relationships and damages social structures (Ajdukovic, 2004, p. 122). It can also lead to entire societies bearing the consequences of PTSD. People who live with PTSD have intense and disturbing thoughts and feelings related to the traumatic experience; they may feel sadness, fear, or anger, and they may feel detached from other people (APA, 2020). A person who was not directly exposed to the traumatic event can also suffer PTSD. The American Psychiatric Association (2020) explains that a person learning the details about the violent death of a loved one can also suffer the consequences, causing significant distress and problems in individual daily functioning. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has established that in those cases where the right to life has been infringed, the suffering of the direct victim is extended to their close ones (Calderón Gamboa, 2013, p. 161). The consequences of homicide are experienced by children, partners, and parents, among other emotionally close relations.

Zara (2018, p. 309) raises the question about the legacy that will be left to children born and grown in violent contexts, who have a past and present full of trauma. To help them mitigate it, interventions to restore groups and individual identity will require restoring interpersonal ties based on feeling heard and understood to induct collective resilience on children (Zara, 2018, pp. 305-307). In addition, community-based interventions may help deal with collective PTSD symptoms and integrate their traumatic experiences (Ajdukovic, 2004, p. 125). The indirect effects of conflicts are profound, under-appreciated and preventable (Prasad & Prasad, 2009, p. 167). Children may display a wide range of emotional and physiological reactions following trauma related to armed

violence. Attention and immediate readdress is often given to physical wounds and basic necessities and security; however, the full impact of conflict on children becomes apparent when considering the enormity of the psychological harm caused. Without addressing the issues, large numbers of children will be forced to endure preventable suffering and may be drawn into ongoing cycles of violence (Wessells, 2016, p. 198).

For a child, the death of a parent or sibling from natural causes is already a generator of considerable psychological pain (Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006, p. 116). It represents a significant loss by itself. Combined with the multiple loss and vulnerabilities armed violence implicates, the psychological pain can be worse than imagining and overwhelming. The traumatic event will profoundly affect the child. The good news is that international actors can help children cope with a parent's death from a human rights perspective and for them to enjoy life again (Costa & Holiday, 1994). Interventions with children would support the well-being of children in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict settings (Wessells, 2016, p. 198). Otherwise, there is the possibility of psychological trauma to add additional destructive situations to post-conflict countries (Lumsden, 1997, p. 377).

Furthermore, Ajdukovic (2004, p. 126) assures that the only way to interrupt the cycle of violence is to find ways to deal with painful collective history and overcome conflicting narratives about *who-did-what-to-whom*. At an early age, for a child who has lost a family member because of violence, it is not a question of who the killer nor their characteristics was. Grieving and mourning shall be a priority. Children, and people in general, may show grief through physical reactions, strong emotions, and frequent thoughts (KidsHealth Medical Experts, n.d.). Although contexts are different, symptoms may be similar (Ajdukovic, 2004, pp. 120-121).

Children who are victims or witnesses of violence often exhibit Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including children who learn of the experience through friends or family. It leads to difficulties mourning when a child loses a parent, siblings, or friends due to traumatic incidents (Pynoos & Nader, 1990). To heal past traumas, they need to become visible, consolidating the recognition between parts (victims and perpetrators) to heal wounds (Zara, 2018, p. 309). It seems like reconciliation can only be achieved when social reconstruction leads to strengthening community resources, building social norms and tolerance, healing from violence and loss and recovering from the trauma (Ajdukovic, 2004, p. 133).

That is why this study considers possibilities to offer collective symbolic reparation to children who have grown up or have been affected by socially violent contexts. The main reasons to focus on children in this regard are the following:

- i) Children affected by conflicts and violent contexts grow up with their own traumas and socially transferred traumas;
- ii) The authors mentioned throughout the chapter argue that cycles of violence can only be interrupted if psychological wounds and traumas are healed and society is rehabilitated; and
- iii) Reparation mechanisms usually only include children through material reparation (for example, by trying to financially return opportunities that they might have lost due to the loss of a family member) and through the historical memory taught in basic education.

However, it is based on the hypothesis that it is possible to include children in other forms of reparation, such as symbolic reparation, to help them heal the wounds of these experiences from childhood and achieve non-repetition. The importance of focus on children will be explored more comprehensively during the next section.

Children's rights and their experience of violent trauma

This thesis focusses on children who have been affected by violent contexts, such as social armed violence, internal conflicts, wars, among other, where victims and perpetrators may have exchanged roles during that conflict, being able to consider neighbours or known/close people mutually. They usually differentiate between each other in two antagonistic groups, "them" and "us." In such contexts, the child may attend or have attended school or share recreational spaces with the perpetrator's child or with children who are part of the "others" group. Children living in violent zones are more likely to develop various types of psychopathologies, especially PTSD, depression, anxiety, or other traumatic grief (Morgos, Worden, & Gupta, 2007).

This differentiation between groups can lead to an "ingroup biased" approach to crimes (Kuran, 1998, p. 40), as has been widely documented in the literature (Roter & Busch, 2018, p. 162; Wimmer, 2002, p. 202). Thus, group members find it hard to recognise themselves as possible perpetrators as well (Subotic J. , 2013, p. 270), making reconciliation processes difficult. However, the results of this analysis might be applied

to children from other violent situations different than the range of this study (such as violence from international actors, intrafamilial violence, family abandonment, among other examples). Moreover, the psychological consequences are indifferent to the actor who exercises the violence (Ajdukovic, 2004, pp. 120-121).

A child is every human being below 18 years old, as is stipulated by the first article in the CRC. Children affected by conflict and armed violence constitute 40% of the world's forcibly displaced population (UNHCR, 2019), although, in the past, they have represented more than half (UNHCR, 2015). It is the singular characteristic of contemporary armed conflicts that children suffer the most (Klot, 2009). Conflicts disrupt essential services such as housing, transportation, communication, nourishment, sanitation, water, and health care (Prasad & Prasad, 2009, p. 166). Basic needs that require to be addressed. As a result, children in this situation are being denied the protection promised to them in the CRC: the right to life (art. 6), the right to be with family and community (art. 9 and 10), the right to nourishment and health care (art. 24), the right to adequate standards of living (art. 27), the right to education (art. 28), the freedom to the development of the personality (art. 29). The infringement of one of their rights compromises the enjoyment of the other rights, therefore leading to experience the systematic violation of their human rights and leading them into a State of general suffering.

For more than 25 years, there has been evidence that some resurgences of conflicts (as former Yugoslavia and Rwanda) are linked to the inability to break the cycles of violence, which is why hatred has been transmitted generationally, affecting especially children. Lumsden (1997, pp. 377-380) also points out that this is why post-war rehabilitation must include efforts by international actors to break cycles of violence since an early age. Lumsden proposes that, in order to break the cycles of violence effectively since childhood, strategies should be directed to three essential zones: The first zone (1Z) is the outside world (which includes the social and cultural environments of the child), the second zone (2Z) is the inside world or internal tools (which are the set of internal skills the child has to deal with psychological distress), and finally, the third zone (3Z) is the convergence between the internal and external environment (which should lead to transformative spaces and reconciliation).¹ This 3Z also leads to some “transitional objects” or “amulets”, as it will be called within this thesis, which are the possessions to

¹ Annex A shows an infographic to help understand Lumsden's theory about the three zones.

whom the child gives a symbolic and psychological meaning to help they cope with traumatic experiences. This thesis will follow Lumsden's theory to break cycles of violence with children making use of these three zones and the amulets to promote it through children's cinema.

The focus of this work is on children because it will be up to them to achieve lasting peace, mainly depending on their ability to learn to resolve conflicts in a way other than violence (Clark, 2008, p. 343). After a transitional justice process, it will be the next generations who will make the decisions that can trigger a resurgence of violence or, on the contrary, stop it (Subotic J. , 2013). Barsaluo (2008) brings an additional variable to this point when he mentions that the trauma of unresolved violent events from the past can be transferred to the new generations and become part of the children's or even an entire society. That is why it is intended to provide tools to children framed in the process of collective symbolic reparation so that they can mourn the losses and overcome the trauma before those negative feelings settle in the personality and identity of future adults.

The understanding and consequences of violence in children can usually be noticed in their drawings about war or violence. Children's drawing are also a good example of their participation in reparation activities. A series of graphic examples is introduced by discussing drawings made by children's from different countries and violent contexts to see the universality of the consequences faced by children.² The compendium shows the understanding of violence through children's eyes, serving as evidence of the situations they have been forced to live in and their feelings regarding it.

"I Dream of Peace: Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia" (UNICEF, 1994) is a book of drawings and writings by children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia reflecting their feelings about the war as they deal with war-related psychological trauma. During that time, former Yugoslavia was going through an ethnic conflict and war (Finlan, 2004). Those drawings showed the cruelty of violence from an innocent point of view. The war led the children to lose their home and stability; some also lost their parents and siblings, especially male relatives who were the mainly targets during the genocide, while women were primarily targets of rapes (Weitsman, 2008; ICTJ, 2009).

² Annex B contains the compendium of drawings of armed violence by children from former Yugoslavia (1996), Darfur (2005), Iraq (2014), Cameroon (2016), Palestine (2018), and Venezuela (2020) can be reviewed.

Venezuelan children have also been affected by humanitarian crisis, governmental violence, and possibly crimes against humanity in the country (Organization of American States, 2018; Human Rights Council, 2020). It has led to the escalation of armed violence. “*The ‘Culebras’ from Caracas: The city from the children’s perspective*” (Caracas Mi Convive, 2020) was an investigation led by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) where children from the most impoverished communities in Caracas, Venezuela, were asked to draw what they disliked about the places where they lived. The children drew in great detail guns and different weapons, shootings, dead bodies: part of what they experience every day in their lives. The drawings showed on more than one occasion illustrations of *snakes*, which the children described as “those that bite, spit poison, and kill people”, of which they expressed fear. In local slang, a “*culebra*” (translated to English as a snake) refers to the cycles of violence and revenge that occur between young men and are transmitted generationally (Medina & García, 2020). A study with data collected since 1996 shows that in Venezuela, children and young men (between 15 and 29 years old) are the primary victims as well as the perpetrators. The leading cause of death for this group is armed violence. Most of them belong to the same popular sectors (Zubillaga, Chacón, & Sánchez, 2020, pp. 33-42).

Children growing up in these kinds of violent environments can describe in detail situations that involve violence and the weapons they see daily. As they are still really young, they are not always capable of understanding what is going on; therefore, they easily normalise violence. They lack the shyness adults have when talking about violence and death, so sometimes they do it without realising the connotation of the events. During the film *The future of Iraq* (Al-Obaide, 2018), a group of Iraqi children in a refugee camp was asked about the violence surrounding them back home. In the scene, two boys in detail dramatised a killing and an execution that took place in front of them – it was ‘normal’ for them. Iraqi children were also asked by another research to draw their understanding of war and peace, founding consistent drawings involving war activity (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, pp. 6-9). The drawings share fundamental aspects with former Yugoslavia and Venezuelan drawings.

Aradau and Hill (2013, p. 374) point out that the illustrations made by children affected by the Darfur conflict are an example of childhood trauma. Beyond the contexts, the drawings are “disturbingly consistent” with the historical record of the murders. Children’s drawings describe the loss of loved ones, family, and friends, and the loss of

their homes: Things associated with deep attachments. It is even more horrible to see such chaos through the eyes of children, often without any training or education (Aradau & Hill, 2013, pp. 372-373). The drawings invoke childhood as sincere, innocent, and vulnerable, and the art of drawing is immediately linked to the child witness. They seem to show visually authentic testimonies of their experiences (Aradau & Hill, 2013, p. 375).

From the children's drawings, it comes to attention that child from different countries and continents (former Yugoslavia, Europe; Venezuela, South America; Iraq, Asia; Darfur, Africa) fundamentally share the same consequences and traumas related to armed violence. A book collecting 150 drawing from children across the world since the I World War to the current conflict in Siria found that the view of war from children's eyes usually share similar images of their traumatic experiences (Girardeau, 2017). Children's drawings also allow them to actively participate in their process of re-shaping traumatic experiences and the interventions facilitates them a space to talk about their emotions and fears. Apparently, trauma and the difficulty in mourning is repeated independently from the children's continent and culture. Ajdukovic (2004, pp. 120-121) express that even if the context where violence is different, the consequences are similar, independent of the age of the person affected. Infringements of children's human rights is a universal problem, especially in violent contexts as the ones described at the beginning of this section.

Child protection systems (CPS) include international and local laws and policies, human and financial resources, governance, monitoring system, child protection and response services, and non-formal support of families and communities (Wessells, 2016, p. 201). The CPS has been defined as the structures, functions, and capacities to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children, being human rights and children's rights its foundation (UNICEF, OHCHR, Save the Children, World Vision International, 2013, pp. 3, 13). The report considers that international actors can play a decisive role in child protection for their extreme vulnerability to violence and highlights a child-sensitive and child-centred approach as one of the key strategies to achieve it.

This study follows a children's rights approach connected to the main guiding principles of the CRC: Non-discrimination (art. 2), protection of the best interest of the child (art. 3), their right to life, survival, and development (art. 6), and their right to participation in the decisions that affect their future (art. 12). In the regard of creating a collective symbolic reparation mechanism toward children, these four basic principles

should be guiding and all rights violated should be seen in connexion with these guiding principles. It implies not to discriminate between children on any basis, including non-differentiate between victims and non-victims. Also, to look for their best interests while making decisions and programmes that take care of their previous experiences to be careful of non-harming nor revictimise them. Besides, ensuring these programmes not interfere with the protection of their life and development. Lastly, assure the children participation and including their perspectives and tailored to their evolving capacities to design strategies to address children's violence exposure throughout the child's life cycle (UNICEF, OHCHR, Save the Children, World Vision International, 2013, pp. 20-21).

The Graça Machel United Nations Global Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (1996) highlighted five key aspects of armed conflicts and their effect on children's rights and development. One of them was the physical and psychological recovery and reintegration of child victims. The study places great emphasis on how difficult it is to achieve lasting peace if children's rights continue to be violated on a large scale. Just to offer an example given by Wessells (1998, p. 643), children who are at risk of continuing cycles of violence find it harder to stay concentrated in classes and thus, to learn. Peace and well-being of children are two inseparable concepts. Furthermore, if children are not helped to mitigate these traumas, as explained in the previous section, the other rights of the child will be affected and remain unprotected.

The concern and understanding of the need to provide children with tools to deal with trauma and break the cycles of violence and revenge are born from a study previously carried out by the author. During the investigation of the short documentary 'Colateral' (Cisneros Rincón, 2019), it was found that children growing up affected by police violence and extrajudicial executions are growing up with the desire to murder policemen to take revenge and give their families justice. The grandson of the protagonist family was four years old at the time when different State security forces had assassinated his uncles. This evidence was also found in other journalistic reports by Cisneros Rincón (2018), which involved families with children of the same age.

Initially, it is considered that the understanding of death and its significance varies according to the age, cognitive evolution, and maturity of the child (Hoyos López, 2015; Moraza Rivera, 2003). Children under six years of age have a limited understanding of death, but from the age of 8, they may develop a general sense of what it means. At that age, their knowledge of war, especially if they have lived through it, generally includes

soldiers, weapons, fighting, shooting, killing and death. Slightly older children are already able to add more abstract ideas, such as consequences, reasons, and feelings associated with trauma (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 2). Findings indicate that children tend to understand the meaning of war before they understand what peace is. Findings also confirm that in regard to peace, children move from concrete to abstract descriptions. Peace may be, then, the absence of war.

Grief in children is also usually divided into four groups: early childhood (0-3 years), 4-6 years, 7-12 years, and 13-18 years. Children between 4-6 and 7-12 largely share their concept of death and how they grieve. The big difference is the sense of reversibility that the first group has versus the understanding that this is a fantasy of the second (Hoyos López, 2015, p. 29). It is primordial to understand that the authors discussed were referring mainly to death from natural causes, as it changes when death is something daily. Death as a result of violence is accepted as part of life by the children affected, who often witness and cope with the death of a loved one (Costa & Holiday, 1994, p. 206). Therefore, it is essential to facilitate children's skills and abilities to deal with grief from an early age (Rabal Alonso, Cremonte, Casanova, & González, 2020). However, Gorosabel and León (2016) argue that many authors have underestimated children and their understanding of death. This is even more reasonable when children have lived war and its consequences; so, they have been forced to see and appreciate its harshness and therefore urgently need to learn to deal with its effects to overcome them.

Death can generate fear and anxiety in children, so the way they are treated in these circumstances affects their development and well-being (Siracusa, et al., 2011). Being able to talk about death with adults reduces the anxiety levels it generates in children (Moraza Rivera, 2003). Children who are allowed to speak of loss and death and participate in funeral rituals cope much better; children can benefit from symbolic acts to deal with death, grief, and the grieving process (Hoyos López, 2015, pp. 28-29). The child's participation should be considered a core necessity to promote their healing during their grieving process.

Furthermore, the authors agree on the importance of adults allowing them to express themselves about their feelings after the loss (Hoyos López, 2015, p. 31). It is crucial to help them understand the emotions that accompany death from an early age and emphasise that life goes on (Moraza Rivera, 2003, pp. 139-141). Helping them develop these emotional competencies will not only be helpful for children but for the whole of

society (Gorosabel-Odriozola & León-Mejía, 2016, p. 104). Education about death should emphasise the value and meaning of life; therefore, it is recommended that these interventions be carried out in group activities that provide precise, simple, and truthful information (Moraza Rivera, 2003, pp. 134-141). These authors also agree that school education can facilitate these discussions and help children internalise their previous experiences and better cope with death and grief.

Creative proposals can allow children to handle the conflicting concepts they have in their inner or outer world and give them a new meaning as part of a metaphorical space of transition. It can be achieved through four components: creativity, healing, education, and communal rites (Lumsden, 1997, pp. 380-381). The result from this study will lead in a complementary approach to peacebuilding by using collective symbolic reparation and arts. It will reinforce the already available symbolic and material reparation mechanisms for victims of massive human rights violations. Child participation will be fundamental to effectively achieve it. Fantasy, creativity, and imagination are also emerging treatments developing to tackle stress and trauma response, facilitating a safe emotional space to understand the self and the others (Haen, 2020; Rubinstein, Lahad, Leykin, & Aharonson-Daniel, 2020; Howard, 2019).

Collective symbolic reparation: Forms of expressive art

After the scope of this thesis has been delimited, it is possible to focus on the capacities of art in the mechanisms of collective symbolic reparation. Symbolic reparations link restoring dignity and healing trauma, following measures of rehabilitation and satisfaction to avoid repetition (OHCHR, 2008, p. 22). As the Symbolic Reparations Research Project (SRRP) suggest in their *Guidelines on the Use of Art in Symbolic Reparations* (SRRP, 2017, pp. 1-2), there are many forms of artistic creations that have the potential to symbolically recognise victims and help them make sense of painful events to allow them to move on and promote reconciliation. When creating interventions with children, art and games can be powerful tools to accomplish this goal: It can be done through theatre plays, music and singing, drawing, games, painting memorials, cinema, among many others.

Some locally-based NGOs have been working from former Yugoslavia after the conflict ended, especially on children from different cultures and ethnicities or their

caretakes, such as parents or teachers³. Also in Venezuela, different NGOs and organised civil society groups have developed small-scale and disjointed activities that give children a space to talk about these fears and emotions through artistic interventions⁴. All those are valid interventions that provide tools for children, teenagers, and youth to express their emotions and concerns. These could create a social transformation by fostering individual and collective reflection, promoting public dialogue, and changing social relationships between beneficiaries and their environment. This is what Jeong (2008, p. 159) calls “a safe environment to share experiences and feelings”. Achieving peace requires that cultural interventions and violence prevention activities contribute to helping children and their families re-signify the past so that post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes have an increasingly broader focus (Wessells, 1998, pp. 643-644).

Whether these interventions that did not involve the State can be considered within symbolic reparations is a debate that will be covered in the third chapter. Of these projects carried out by organised civil society, the social commitment to mitigate the adverse effects of violence on children and youth is striking. It seems to denote that communities that have been affected by systematic violence recognise the important role art has to rebuild societies. The vast majority of these initiatives have involved children in participating actively, both in conceptualisation activities and in the exploration of artistic resources, naturally following an approach in the basic principles of children’s rights. Suppose civil society and communities have organised themselves to try to protect children and mitigate the trauma caused by violence. In that case, it is questionable why transitional justice and reparations mechanisms have neglected this type of intervention.

³ Some NGOs in former Yugoslavia are: *Learning through Research: Local Social (Childhood) Histories* allow students to exchange images and stories from their childhood to gain a better insight into the differences between, common features of, and their cultural backgrounds. *Theatre for Ethnic Dialogue* aims to allow space for young people to constructively communicate complex concepts and experiences related to inter-ethnic conflict through drama and theatre. *The Third Way* proposes Serbian citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or political orientation, to submit opinions and ideas about how to deal with the past in such a way as to narrow existing divisions and thus promote peace both in Serbia and in former Yugoslavia (Clark, 2008, pp. 342-344).

⁴ Some NGOs in Venezuela are: *MEDATIA* organises university students to carry out theatre interventions in the most impoverished communities of the country to enhance the imagination, creativity, the capacity for cooperative work, responsibility, and the commitment of children in vulnerable situations (MEDATIA, n.d.). The *Free Convict* musical band led a community-based intervention with children from an excluded community from Caracas to compose a song against violence and in favour of hope (Caracas Mi Convive, 2019). The *Fundación Plano Creativo* uses the cinema to promote the integration between children and young people at risk, who live in vulnerable areas of Caracas through the realisation of collective short films (Fundación Plano Creativo, 2019).

Films mix character's stories with the audiences' personal experiences, allowing to shape re-meanings to past experiences (Bruun, 2009, p. 172). The cycles of violence can be prevented since childhood by leading early efforts through primary interventions (Spatz, 1998). Films are comprised of symbolic visual elements and narratives to transmit a shared sense of collective. In this sense, film can represent the stories of the oppressed and abused - thereby generating a compensatory effect for experienced injustice. As such, cinema can offer a form of identification to victims who share trauma or equivalent losses. As Nurzia (2014, p. 7) argues, films can offer victims a symbolic sense of reparation. These cinematographic narratives can offer society the opportunity to reconstruct its identity, promote discussion about how to deal with traumatic events in the past, and provide tools to overcome and visualise other mechanisms to deal with comparable situations in the future.

Arts in general, but specifically films, are in the unique position to help us think creatively and imagine new realities and processes social and individual discomforts (Sommer, 2015, p. 408). Films can also have a didactic component that makes them useful for children's education and provides them with learnings and inner tools. Therefore, it can give society the means to transform and transcend the initial conditions to lead to social violence and victimisation (SRRP, 2017, p. 1). It is worth mentioning that children between 4-12 years old do not always have the necessary language to express and verbalise their emotions regarding the death of a relative (Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006). Consequently, cinema is a channel that can facilitate this process by allowing them to share and understand the story with images when the trauma is difficult to be expressed with words.

Sommer (2015, p. 408) mentioned that the process of making art seems innocent, but it is a constructive measure to regain humanity through a creative response to trauma. When this process is accompanied by the different actors involved, such as victims, perpetrators, and civil society, it gains unimaginable strength in the reconstruction process. Films may be used as collective symbolic reparation mechanisms as part of a reconciliation process; therefore, human rights cinema is excellent in this role. Cultural products of various kinds are also part of a collective memory exercise; for example, films can influence norms and perceptions (Everett, 2009, p. 118). Narratives can also serve to strengthen the social fabric and reinforce democracy.

It is important to remember the need for more comprehensive and complex strategies than to commit to a single form of reparation, as is cinema as collective symbolic reparation in this study. However, this thesis does not seek to cover all the possibilities; but rather develop guidelines for children's cinema for an additional, complementary, and creative tool to reinforce the social reconstruction process. Children are a fundamental group within society who barely receive support in contemporary conflicts – even though they suffer the most during conflicts (Wessells, 1998, p. 635). Children affected by the violence remain invisible in different cultures over time. Jeong (2005, p. 158) expresses that helping victims overcome feelings of marginalisation is essential to create the conditions to rebuild the social fabric. Films can provide support for achieving this goal.

Human rights films have been questioned for their effectiveness in providing changes beyond the screen. Nevertheless, they can also educate people about social issues, triggering debates that can lead audiences to transform societies and promote changes (Nurzia, 2014, p. 15). The primary difference between human rights films and other kinds of films is that the story must correspond to true facts and is told with honesty so that the audience can hold a relevant discussion regarding the facts and the situation presented. For a fiction film to still be considered a human rights film, it must stay truthful to the facts and avoid manipulation (Nurzia, 2014, p. 16). The documentary is the most typical genre of human rights film, although animation, fiction, experimental, reportages, and essay films can be suited depending on the narrative and story. Human rights films can also help give a face and a name to atrocities and stories of sorrows and celebrate the resilient human spirit (Tascón, 2012). Even the decision-making process to define sources to use, gathering information, the conception of the narrative idea, and the possible promotion and distribution strategies constitute resources to repair and move the audience towards an end (UNSAM, n.d.). Children can have a core participation while making films process, assuring their right to participation. They just need a safe space to be promoted, that seeks to assign activities and roles according to their evolving capacities.

Cinema and narrative can serve to help the audience to give meaning to their own experiences. Assisting children in understanding violence is the first springboard for them to cope with the consequences of war and feelings associated with it (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 2). Films that seek to mitigate the effects of armed violence should promote peace and tolerance instead of fuel hatred and suspicion (Prasad & Prasad, 2009, p. 168).

Another advantage of films is that they inspire dialogue and increase awareness, which in turn helps to break the isolation if they are watched in group activities involving several children (Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006, p. 118). These group interventions should provide precise, truthful, and straightforward information (Moraza Rivera, 2003, pp. 134-141). This could promote a feeling of belonging and recognition among children.

This type of intervention can make it easier for children to feel more comfortable speaking and dealing with their traumas. Most of the film's content comes from images, making conversation easier if they do not handle the language properly (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 3). It also promotes catharsis and emotional expressions in a secure environment (Lumsden, 1997, p. 381). Arts are considered a natural way of creating resilience by forming connection between comprehension, emotion, and effective problem solving (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 4). It is probably because even fictional films have a profound positive potential in repairing and rehabilitation. The next chapter will review the films available for children and their potential to heal trauma related to violence, keeping as the main focus their ability to serve as a symbolic reparation mechanism within a transitional justice process.

CHILDREN'S CINEMA:

A TOOL FOR OVERCOMING TRAUMA IN THE FACE OF LOSS

There are three points of view linked to the reparation processes according to Lumsden's approach: the violation of children's rights, the internal tools that children have in order to overcome it, and the cycles of hatred, violence, and revenge that must be broken for the repair to achieve non-repetition effectively. In this analysis, cinema will be used for its potential to allow children to be represented in the stories of others and the potential to transmit positive social values through pedagogy. The cinematographic elements included in the dramatic arc of the chosen stories will also be analysed. Lumsden's theory explained in the previous chapters will be used as a general lens through which to tackle the films selected of the three zones (external environment, internal tools, and the interconnection between them), through which the author proposes to break the cycle of violence in children.

This chapter starts reviewing some theoretical insights about how films speak to audiences to invoke emotion from a psychological perspective. It will be followed by a brief review of children's films concepts to establish a common ground for this study. Afterwards, the film selection methodology will be explained together with the criteria used to select them and the limitations found in this process. Subsequently, three feature films that fulfil the criteria will be analysed in depth, assigning one of them to each of the three zones proposed by Lumsden. In any case, four short films that partially fulfil the criteria were commented, that can be found in Annex E. Finally, it will discuss the searching process for appropriate elements to help develop the guidelines proposed in the next chapter.

Transitional justice and cinema are disciplines that do not frequently dialogue with each other (Nurzia, 2014, p. 9). Because of it, there is scarce literature available that combines them, resulting in an original and creative approach in the search for reparation for the psychological trauma experienced by child victims of conflict and armed violence. Furthermore, the guidelines that this thesis aims to set out in order to strengthen the social fabric and the principles of respect for human rights from a very early age will ultimately reinforce lasting democracy and peace.

Films are considered a mean to achieve individual and collective transformation, contributing to give shape to collective identities, values, models, and actions (Eder, Hanich, & Stadler, 2019; Kubrak, 2020). Some authors have documented the impact that high exposure to films can have on the behaviour of the audience, even facilitating changes of attitudes in young after watching a specific film (Parke, Berkowitz, Leyens, West, & Sebastian, 1997; Kubrak, 2020). Additionally, Kubrak (2020) points out that only watching a single film about a selected topic, does not have a lasting effect in attitude changes. Nevertheless, the author proposes that it can be achieved over time if the person is exposed to sufficient films. Furthermore, films and fictional films can facilitate a collective space to socially construct meaning and (re)meaning if the story is based in social identity and collective experiences (Jeiva, 2020; Bruun, 2009). Emotions within filmography are used as an aesthetic experience that helps create enjoyment and entertainment (Eder, Hanich, & Stadler, 2019). Bruun (2009) argues that empathising with a film' character triggers self-reflexion about past issues, facilitating a safe space for groups to deal with experiences without making too painful the process. Following the authors findings, it seems correct to use films as a suitable mean to provide reparations to children. Then, it needs to be considered that effective reparation cannot be achieved with one unique film, as warned by Kubrak. The most suitable would be to include the continuous making of this type of films in complex and holistic reparation programmes that includes symbolic and collective initiatives.

Social identity theory, explained by Jeiva (2020, pp. 1-7), relates perceptions, social identity, and behaviours. The author describes that cinema can enhance the sense of belonging because it is a social activity. Thus, the film viewing space is a channel for social interaction. In general, audiovisual media address perceptions through collective emotions (Eder, Hanich, & Stadler, 2019). But, at the same time, personal interpretation of films varies from one individual to another. It is due to films mixed daily personal experiences with events occurring within the narrative, making it personally relatable. Furthermore, the connection between fictional films and personal experiences creates new meanings, collectively and independently, from a safe shared space (Jeiva, 2020, pp. 6-10).

Films can also help delivering coping mechanisms to the audience. They can also be inducted through storytelling, colours, and music. This is what Bruun (2009, p. 170) calls an “intellectual approach to emotions in anthropological terms”. The author argues

that fictional films may facilitate coping mechanisms in emotional interplay, illustrating coping mechanisms through devices. The narrative techniques allow the audience to reflect over traumatic events, by creating a safe space that facilitates the self-exploration of conflicting personal narratives and become aware of the own struggles (Bruun, 2009, p. 171). Another path to deliver coping mechanisms within films is by using imagination. Imagination is considered one characteristic of the basic psychological functions, and in films, play upon attention, perception, memory, and emotion (Tan, 2018, p. 2). This idea is aligned with Lumsden's theory to break cycles of violence by enhancing children's imagination.

In general, it has been historically difficult to settle on a definition for each film genre, which has led to disagreement and lack of consensus among authors (Huerta, 2007, pp. 107-109). That is why defining what is and what is not a children's film is undoubtedly a more extensive discussion than the one this thesis is able to cover. Rodríguez and Meldanejo (2009, p. 180) point out that children's films are usually animated films that move away from themes that generate fear or terror and include children's characters. Cano (1993, p. 53) argues that children's films "can and should serve to support child's development," adapting to their ages and giving them a didactic component.

To share a common understanding in this study, a base definition for children's films is formulated on the basis of a number of guiding criteria for the classification by age groups of films established by the Ministry of Culture of Spain.⁵ This study understands that children's films should not contain elements that are detrimental to the psychological development of children, so they should not include scenes that generate anxiety or emotional tension or show cruelty. Films intended for this target audience can also transmit pedagogical and social values that stimulate children's imagination.

Film selection methodology

To select the films discussed below, 57 films were watched and reviewed, including short films and feature films, from various countries, production houses, and genres⁶. The aim was to identify those with a restorative role for children from the point

⁵ Annex C includes the complete criteria suggested by the Spanish Government for classification of films according to group ages.

⁶ Annex D facilitates the complete list of films reviewed for the selection. It includes the films genre, duration, titles, directors, countries, and synopsis. The selected films are highlighted.

of view of the traumatic death of a family member from a human rights perspective. It was found that most of the animated shorts that include children in their stories are directed towards adults. From the films reviewed, it seems that the purpose is to make parents and caregivers aware of how their actions can impact the lives of children, passing the relevance of the story unnoticed by children. It was also noted that most of the short films did not require dialogue to tell extremely complex stories; the images and illustrations were sufficient, removing the language barrier and allowing people of any age or anywhere to connect with the story. Instead, the feature films all have dialogues, so many stories have been translated into several languages.

For the selected films to be considered as a form of symbolic reparation for child victims of armed violence, the following criteria were sought:

- i)** Films promoted in a post-conflict context or reparation processes;
- ii)** The target audience of the film were children;
- iii)** The protagonist was a child character;
- iv)** The theme of the film was linked to wars or armed violence, or that has a major representation of a minority group.

Significantly, this process revealed that no such films do not seem to exist. Special attention was given to animated films, following authors arguments about children's films (Rodríguez & Melgarejo, 2009; Cano, 1993). The closest film was *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1984).⁷ Yet the film does not show how the girl can overcome the many losses the situation put her through, nor does it show any psychological effect. The literature on dealing with death among school students seems to indicate a social culture of overprotecting children when dealing with death (Rodríguez & Goyarrola, 2012; Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006; Kenyon, 2001; Mishara, 1999). Children are seen as innocent and naive people, leading families and institutions to prevent them from participating in conversations regarding death, grief, and violence. Most of the films that deal with violence, wars, or violations of children's rights are directed towards adult audiences. In many cases, the reality is presented very harshly, so children should not be introduced to these issues with them since it could retraumatise and revictimise them. Sometimes, when animated films are about war and children, filmmakers use animation

⁷ The subject of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1984) focused on the environment. A princess discovers the truth about a toxic forest and faces a dictator's plan to defend it. In that sense, it is a more of an action movie for children than a movie that allows the audience to reflect on experiences and emotions.

to more starkly display images of war that would be nearly impossible to bear or digest without fictionalised contexts. One example of this is *Grave of the Fireflies* (Takahata, 1988).⁸

For this reason, the selection criteria were modified so that within the available cinematographic offer, they could be analysed from a human rights perspective that facilitates determining the characteristics that a children's film should follow in the process of symbolic reparation aimed at child victims of armed violence. Then, once the listed films were watched, the revised criteria used for the selection were modified:

- i)** Animated films created for children;
- ii)** The protagonist was a child character who had lost a relative due to a traumatic death;
- iii)** The story offers the child tools that help dealing with grief and loss.

Based on these three criteria, the films are analysed and discussed to delimitate the fundamental contents and ways to be applied in cinematographic story that helps children deal with the terrible traumas and losses caused by war and armed violence, without revictimising them. The objective of these criteria is to apply this learned lessons in the development of the guidelines within the following chapter. Thus, three feature films were identified that met the three essential characteristics for the analysis. Each film also follows at least one of the zones defined by Lumsden⁹:

- i)** *My life as a Courgette* (Barras, 2016) will be reviewed from the perspective of the infringement of the human rights of the children that the characters tackle. It is related with Lumsden's first zone (1Z).
- ii)** *My neighbour Totoro* (Miyazaki, 1988) will be reviewed to identify which internal tools can be given to children to deal with fear and loss, in line with Lumsden's second zone (2Z).
- iii)** *Big Hero 6* (Hall & Williams, 2014) will be reviewed to determine what tools can be given to children to break the cycles of violence and revenge, according to Lumsden's third zone (3Z).

⁸ *Grave of the Fireflies* (Takahata, 1988) clearly shows the unspeakable consequences with which child victims of war struggle within post-war situations, the failure of the State to provide them with shelter, a home, health, and food, the abandonment by distant relatives as well as the violation of any other rights of children leading to their systematic victimisation.

⁹ The analysis of the selected films are noted to include detailed spoilers about them.

Together, the analysis of these three films will create a better understanding of the tools available in developing a children's film that help them to deal with the trauma of armed violence. Another four short films were also identified that do not fulfil the three criteria, but that seemed to offer other insights making it worth to be commented. However, those comments are available in Annex E:

- iv) *The Box* (Cirisoglu Cotur, 2016) that shows the many violations of children living in war contexts relating by Lumsden's first zone.
- v) *Umbrella* (Hilario & Pece, 2020) that presents the violation of rights of refugee children may experience relating by Lumsden's first and third zones.
- vi) *A folded wish* (Chien Huey, 2020) which show a creative way to manage hope to deal with sickness and death relating by Lumsden's second zone.
- vii) *If anything happens I love you* (McCormack & Govier, 2020) that shows the terrible consequences families live and have to get through after the traumatic death of children, which is the only one not address any of the zones but with features a better approach to a symbolic reparation film.

Analysis of criteria-fulfilling films

My life as a Courgette (2016)

My Life as Courgette is an animated stop-motion film co-produced between France and Switzerland. This feature film told the story of a boy named Icare and nicknamed *Courgette* (translated from French into Zucchini). He was born and raised in a hostile home with an absent father and an alcoholic mother. The colour palette when he is at home is muted and desaturated tones mixed with blue tones, reflecting the lack of joy to which the child is exposed at home¹⁰. After accidentally killing his mother, Courgette is taken to an orphanage where it is not always easy to belong, in this strange place, sometimes loving and sometimes hostile. However, with the help of a police friend and his new friends from the orphanage, Courgette learns to trust, find love, and finally find a real family.

The story touches on several complex issues; however, it handles it with great simplicity and honesty, making the film very enjoyable for children and adults. It subtly

¹⁰ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex F, Figure F1.

presents in a child-friendly language, domestic violence, abandonment, social harshness and child bullying, adoption duality and complications. Nevertheless, at the same time, it manages to add humour and joy to an otherwise very tragic story, turning it into a wonderful and full of hope film. Furthermore, the narrative shows the resilience from the abandonment of a group of friends, advocating for empathy, friendship, sharing, and tolerance (European Film Awards, n.d.).

Courgette keeps a “kite” to remember his father and an “empty beer can” to keep his mother close.¹¹ He holds them in different moments within the film to cope with sadness, loneliness, stress, and even excitement and happiness. These two elements follow Lumsden’s theory of transitional objects (called amulets in this study) and appear recurrently in the story, playing a critical role to interact between first zone and second. He uses these amulets as toys to keep them present in important moments. He hugs the kite after his mom’s dies, he plays with the kites in his way to the orphanage, he takes the can to the trip with his friends, among other significant moments for him.

Each child in this story has a ruthless past and certainly some trauma to deal with. Besides Courgette, in the orphanage also live other children: Simon (whose parents were drug addicts), Bea (her mother was deported), Jujube (his mother had some psychological disability), Ahmed (his family was in economic necessity), Alice (who was sexual abused by her father), and Camille (intrafamilial and gender violence). The characters were designed with very big eyes. Possibly this decision helps to convey the emotions and feelings of children more easily, making it visually obvious to recognize their sadness and joys. There is plenty of diversity in the backgrounds, including boys and girls and different skin colours and hair. Their traumas are shown through their participation, interactions, and personal stories. It also shapes their personal perceptions about their experiences and their ability to interact with other characters. Most important, none of them is perfect and each have bad and good days, including mixed ones.

For example, at the beginning of the film, Simon seems to be the ‘villain’ among children, but in reality he just has some problems finding himself after being taken to the orphanage. Simon is mean to Courgette, he takes his seat in at lunch, stole his amulets to play with without permission, makes fun of other children. However, his character development shows him growing and empathising with the experiences and opportunities

¹¹ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex F, Figure F1.

of his friends. Instead, Alice seems to be ashamed of herself after being sexually abused. The most obvious feature of her is that she covers half of her face with her hair¹². In the same scene where Simon takes Courgette's chair away, the table turns into a little discussion between the children. Alice reacts to this stressful event by tapping her fork against the plate, until Simon removes the silverware from her and tosses it. This scene speaks deeply of the complicated interrelation of the children in the film. Camille, on the other hand, represents light and joy despite her previous family situation. The presence of her positively impacts the development of her friends: Alice stops covering her face with her hair, Ahmed stops wetting the bed when sleeping, Simon gradually transforms his behaviour towards a more kind one.

All these children share a past in which their economic, social and cultural rights have been repeatedly infringed by their parents or the State (in Bea's case). To most of them, the State failed to prevent the abuses (like Courgette, Alice, and Camille). However, even when the State did prevent it (like Simon and Jujube) the feeling of abandonment continues being present for them. Article 9 of the CRC ensures that children are not separated from their parents unless judicially necessary, but the feelings of dissatisfaction, anger, trauma, and the need to belong to a family still present for them. They live in this orphanage as evidence of the State's commitment to protecting them against mistreatment (CRC, art. 19 and 20).

The story also has several adult characters central to the message and children's learning: Raymond (representing the police and social services, being an essential part of the State and its institutions, which must ensure the care and protection of these orphaned children); Mrs Papineau, the foster home director; Mr Paul, their teacher; Rosy, their caregiver; the Judge; and Camile's aunt, Ida (the actual villain within the film). They have a significant role in the story.

The director of the film, Claude Barras, explains that "orphanages are classically depicted as places of abuse, and the outside as freedom. In this film, the pattern has been reversed: abuse is suffered in the outside, and the orphanage is a place fostering appeasement and reconstruction" (European Film Awards, n.d.). Mrs Papineau, Mr Paul, and Rosy represents the duty of the State to fulfil the children's necessity of being in a family type setting, as they have been taken apart from their family for their own well-

¹² Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex F, Figure F2.

being. Instead, Aunt Ida is the opposite. Camile's aunt pretends to worry about her niece in front of other adults, but in reality she only seeks to take the girl in to receive a financial benefit. Fortunately, Camille manages to show the Custody Judge how her aunt is when they are in private. The characters representing the State institutions show repeatedly to include children in the decision-making process about their well-being and possible adoptions, respecting their autonomy, wishes, and will. This performance also considers the best interest of the child and their participation in the decision-making process.

Occasionally, some other adults' characters also appear to make a point about some information that could pass unnoticed to the audience. One of these examples is on an outing from the orphanage to discover snow. In the trip, an unknown girl lends Ahmed her snow goggles. After asking where his parents are, the girl's mother does not believe he has no parents and accuses him of being a liar and a thief. This scene symbolises the contempt with which a part of society treats abandoned and orphaned children, making their life even more difficult than it already is. In the film, the outside world is where they are systematically victimised. However, the unknown girl does believe him and gives him her glasses, symbolising the other part of society willing to help them. In the moments of joy, the colour pallet turns to be more saturated and vivid, as happens during the travel or when Courgette and Camille are adopted.¹³

The children's rights in My life as Courgette

According to the CRC Preamble, the family is a fundamental unit for the well-being of a child. However, in particular situations, they may need to be protected from their parents to ensure their well-being. This film deals deeply with this concept, as it also has a deep look at other rights State must protect in children's lives, as shown in the following paragraphs.

- Art. 2, CRC – Non-discrimination: As mentioned before, the film includes diversity in its characters. The orphanage does not discriminate against them based on their gender or race, or any other condition. They are all taken good care of and loved by their caretakers.
- Art. 9, CRC – Parental separation: Each of them (except Bea, in her case see art. 22) were only separated from their family unit for their well-being and after a judicial decision.

¹³ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex F, Figure F2.

- Art. 12, CRC – Opinion of the child: In the film, we see how they are listened to by their caretakers, including during Camille’s judicial procedure, following the Beijing Rules (United Nations, 1985), before determining if she should move back with her aunt. Even more profound than this is that each child’s boundaries are respected by adults around them, which is an assertive modern example of how to raise a child. The child’s will was respected to an equal or greater extent than adults who tried to be part of their lives.

- Art 19, CRC – Protection against mistreatment: The history shows domestic violence experienced by these children in many ways. Moments before Courgette accidentally murdered his mother, he drops a tower of empty beer cans while playing with it. Hearing the noise, his mother begins to go up to the attic with shouts and threats. The fear he lives with is evident in Courgette’s voice and body language, and as he tries to protect himself and close the door, his mother falls and dies. It is also evidenced in Camille’s fear and her efforts for not going back with her aunt; but allowing her not to move back with her aunt, the State is preventing her revictimisation. In the other children’s stories about their reasons for being in the orphanage, we can also imagine the violence they have experienced. Each of these children has good and sad reasons to live in the orphanage, which an out of ordinary family type setting.

- Art. 20, CRC – Protection of children private of family: In this story, as was mentioned before by the director of the film, the orphanage is a good place to live where they are well-cared for and protected by people who worry about them and show love to them. The State fulfilled its duty to take good care and protect them.

- Art. 21, CRC – Adoption: This is probably the most complex topic displayed during the film. It shows the two faces of adoption: When someone really wants to take care of and protect them and make a family together (Raymond) and when someone only wants them to make a profit even if this means re-victimising them (Aunt Ida). The film director realised the importance of showing both possibilities after spending some time in an orphanage to understand better the topic he was dealing with: “I realised the importance of treating the theme of adoption with great care because it is at the heart of the relationship that these children, lacking in affection, maintain with the adult world”, Barras said (European Film Awards, n.d.).

However, it also shows a third option: not being adopted at all, which most of the children in the orphanage experienced. It is also delivered with joy, as they found

a home and a family in the orphanage. They enjoy Rosy's new baby, and she told them the baby would be their little brother. They develop a brotherhood relation between children. So, it is not a bad end for them either.

- Art 22, CRC – Refugee children: Bea's story is not explored in depth, but as her mom was sent back to Africa, it can be presumed Bea and her mom were refugees in this country. The State infringed her right to be with her family when it separated her from her mom. This decision, instead of helping to reunify them, had the opposite outcome. However, the State took care of Bea as it should do with any other child under State protection. In her case, they infringed her rights partially as a child. Even so, Bea's mother returns and visits her, promising the viewer a family reunification (which also follows the fourth paragraph of Article 9, CRC, entitling the mother to know where her child is). Unfortunately, though, when the film ends, reunification has not been materialised, possibly because the current situation of her mother does not allow her to guarantee the standard of living that the girl needs.

The children of this film are aware that the world can be cruel, but they show an ability to overcome it and build their future with the help of their friends and other adults. As the screenplay said, "this film can show the reality, we only allow big kids to see, but that is still present for smaller children whom this film is committed to speaking with" (Indie Sales Company, 2016). For creating human rights films for children that help them deal with traumatic losses as the guidelines this thesis seeks to promote, it should achieve it too. The reality children have been through cannot be left aside. However, it needs to show it in a way that would allow children to explain it to another child and seek to show how life can be better after they went through it, giving children hope and allowing them to dream with a realistic outcome. It can be easily achieved when promoting children's participation in the process, following a children rights-based approach.

My neighbour Totoro (1988)

My neighbour Totoro (In Japanese "*Tonari no Totoro*") is a 1988 Japanese animated film directed by Hayao Miyazaki and produced by Studio Ghibli, specialists in Japanese animation techniques. After 28 years of its making, the magazine *Time Out* (2016) chose it as the third best animated feature film in history. The film shows the adventures of two sisters aged 10 and 4 (Satsuki and Mei, correspondingly), who use their imagination to deal with the fears of life and the mysteries of nature. Because their

mother's illness, they move with their father to a rural area closer to the hospital where their mother is hospitalised. There they have the support of a neighbouring family. The film is made to be seen from the perspective of children (without any age restriction), although the vision of adults is constantly present in the story (Cubr, 2019).

While it is true that this film only partially meets the second criterion that was established for the selection (about the traumatic loss of a relative), the story achieves the same effect without the death taking place. Moreover, the disease separates the girls from their mother and towards the last third of the film, she relapses, and her possible death becomes even more present and latent. Furthermore, the analysis of this film seeks to identify possible internal tools children have to deal with distressful situations, fear, and grieving; all of them were present in this film. *My neighbour Totoro* have a pallet colour that keeps nature present often, making uses of greens and browns. Tan (2018, p. 2) argues that psychological aesthetics perceive that all forms of arts go beyond the imitation of nature. In the film, the environment is not harmful for the characters; instead, it is a nice and secure atmosphere to develop their internal world. The sisters are dressed in orange and yellow tones, although the tones are always pastels, making use of colour psychology to resemble joy. It is a visual resource that helps convey calm within the narrative.¹⁴ This is reinforced by the slow camera movements and open planes.

This film covers a wide range of topics and situations that occur quickly and slowly, without the need for lengthy or extensive dialogues. Short and specific sentences are enough to give realism to the girls' relationship with adults, while images are practically enough to know their inside experiences. Among the topics discussed are: the importance of family and community, their mother's illness and possible death, the fear of the unknown and how to manage it, the responsibility and teamwork, and above all, the role of imagination. Moreover, the protagonists of the story are these two girls, who constantly demonstrate a positive attitude towards changes and the unknown, courage, curiosity, and compassion—all positive characteristics for constructing child references.

The rights of these children are not infringed. On the contrary, they are growing in a healthy environment. The grown-ups who take care of them (their father, mother, Nanny, schoolteacher, neighbours, and their community) constantly show love, protection, and understanding, as the CRC Preamble specifies for their well-being. It is

¹⁴ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex G, Figure G1.

also evident that the environment where they are growing, and their values instil in them are in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality, and solidarity.

The child's characters are primarily the two sisters Satsuki and Mei, although, we see other children interact with them: Satsuki is the oldest of the two sisters; that is why she has assumed more responsibilities in her mother's absence. Even though she helps cooking and taking care of her sister, she has not lost her spaces for recreation and fun, nor miss classes, and she is protected and cared for. Instead, Mei is only four years old and fearless, which leads her to be more disobedient. She interacts and plays with nature in a carefree way. Her imagination is what shapes Totoro in the first place. As her mother is not close to them and her older sister has occasionally assumed that role in her family, Mei constantly seeks to have Satsuki's attention and does not like to be separated from her.

Among adults, the most relevant characters are their father, their mother, and their Nanny. In the story, as is in the real world, there are more adults, but these are the ones who add the most value to the story. They have in common that they constantly stimulate their relationship with the girls, their confidence, imagination, and other ways of dealing with the unknown. It is repeatedly seen that when they talk about the girls' fears and the ghosts that scare them, everyone seeks in their own way to give them comfort and skills to deal internally with the unknown. They turn fears into fun games for them.

Of their parents, some details make the story particularly special. First, it comes to attention in the father's case, the closeness, the warm affection, and the presence with which he is involved in the relationship with his daughters. In Western films, such a positive representation of the father's role is rare to find. On the other hand, the mother: Despite being physically absent, as a family, they find different ways to stay together and united, share daily anecdotes and stimulate their daughters' imagination. For a child who has been estranged from one of their parents for some force majeure reason, it is powerful to see other ways to stay connected.

Finally, there are also the girls' imaginary friends, who cannot be left aside and are noteworthy characters. The most important is Totoro, the King of the Forest with the two smaller totoros, and the Catbus. Here it will also be appropriate to point out the *Susuwatari*, which were translated from Japanese as "dust bunnies", and the corn Mei collects to heal her mother. The imaginary friends all serve the same role within the film, so it would be enough to review a little more about Totoro, as he is their main character.

In addition, for this thesis, it would be necessary to point out the corn, as it served as an amulet as indicated in Lumsden's theory.

Tororo is a giant, fluffy character with a nice and friendly appearance and is rabbit-shaped. In the original Japanese version, Totoro is a loose pronunciation of the word "tororu", which means troll. He comes from Mei's imagination and is later adopted by her sister and promoted by the adults: "Totoro exists as a metaphor to explain some of the mysteries of the world through the eyes of a child" (Cubr, 2019). Totoro appears whenever the girls are in a situation that could be a bit scary and help them cope with the moment, giving them confidence and a sense of protection. One example of these situations is when they are waiting for their dad in the bus stop. It is a dark rainy night, and the wait is long. They hear animal's sounds in the forest that surrounds them. So, they imagine Totoro is accompanying them until their father arrives, transforming the moment in an exciting adventure, where even drops make a fun music for Tororo and them.¹⁵

The corn serves as an amulet for Mei. It is not a character itself, instead an element and a narrative device adopted at the end of the film. While the girls help Nanny collect vegetables from the orchard, she explains that their vegetables have been blessed by the sun, so they are very healthy. The girls eat it with great pleasure, and Mei decides that the corn she collected will be saved for her mother when she comes next weekend, for her to heal quickly. Upon the news that her mother will not come because her illness has complicated, Mei grapples to this corn.¹⁶ The element plays the same role for Mei that the can and the kite did for Courgette. This scene also conveys a power message about healthy food towards children in the audience. Watch children enjoying eating vegetables is a way to promote vegetables among children.

[The internal tools in My neighbour Totoro](#)

In comparison with *My life as Courgette*, this second film is not about children's rights infringements but about the inner tools showed to children through *My neighbour Totoro*. This follows Lumsden's (1997) approach on how it would be possible to break the cycle of violence by establishing the necessity of working in the 2Z towards strengthening the inner world of the child. In that regard, this section goes through some

¹⁵ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex G, Figure G2.

¹⁶ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex G, Figure G3.

of the sub-themes detailed during the film: the relative illness, the imminent threat of death, the subsequent fear of the unknown, and the imagination as a way to cope with it.

In the film, we know that the mother is admitted to a hospital due a disease, that although it is a real-life problem, it is not presented as such to the children, considering the evolving capacities of the children's targeted as the main audience. Sometimes there are complications because the mother cannot take care of them, such as when Mei asks to be taken to her sister, even though she is at school. But the drawbacks have a solution. Visiting the mother in the hospital is an adventure they do with emotion, and when they arrive at the hospital, it is a pleasant place to be, without stress or threats. The hospital could be the most hostile environment within the film; however, it is showed as a clean and secure space. In the hospital, the only approach to nature is an only window by the side of the mother's bed.¹⁷

Although they do not say so in the film, several Internet pages and some academic articles that analyse or criticise the film suggest that the mother is admitted to the hospital because she suffers from tuberculosis (González, 2009; Fujiki, 2015). If so, this could be a semi-biographical trait of the director, since when he and his brother were young, his mother spent many years in the hospital for spinal tuberculosis (IMDb, n.d.). What was verified is that the film was set in the late 1950s, a time Miyazaki described as a "recent past that everyone could be related to" (Watsuki, 2005). Nevertheless, the literature shows that tuberculosis was one of the profound consequences of war and the industrial revolution in Japan, reaching a mortality rate of over 241 in 1944 (Mori & Ishikawa, 2018). Is possible that the decision to keep this information out of the storytelling to facilitate children to enjoy the film and allow them to speak about the underlying themes without distressing them.

In the last third of the film, death is present for the first time. Faced with the relapse of their mother's illness, the girls begin to fear that she will die and not return. This feeling slightly overcomes them because they do not know very well how to deal with that possibility. Satsuki confesses to Nanny that she is afraid that her mother will die, and she breaks down in tears. Mei cries inconsolably until she finally decides to escape to bring the corn to her mother, and she gets lost on the way. Shortly after Mei is lost, the community finds a sandal near the pond, and everyone is afraid - even Satsuki - that Mei

¹⁷ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex G, Figure G3.

has fallen and drowned. This series of scenes show natural emotional responses to fear and distressing situations, also validating crying among audience. However, the girls resolve making a fantastic trip with Totoro to bring the corn to the mother. It may indicate they use their imagination as a problem handling tool, delivering a coping mechanism to the child in the audience.

Throughout the film, the girls also use other tools besides imagination, consistently demonstrating that they have another two infallible skills against the unknown and things that can be a bit scary: screaming and laughing. At the beginning of the film, we see them arrive at the new house, where everything seems exciting and unique. The positive attitude they put in each situation is key. While they collaborate with their father, they enter a dark room full of dust bunnies. Now that they are aware of their presence, before going upstairs to the attic, they yell to warn these characters that they are going up, thus managing the situation so that it does not scare them. That same night, the storm and the wind blow with great force, shaking the house to the structure while they and their father take a bath. For a moment, we see on their father's face that even he is frightened by the noises; then he starts to laugh out loud, and they follow him, chasing away the fear.

The magic of this film does not lie in a complicated and unreal story where there is a threat or a conflict that must be resolved before it ends, but rather the plot is based on experience, situation, and exploration (Ebert, 2001). There are no villains or terrifying monsters. In that, it is much more like life itself. The film is built around everyday situations and moments in life. The girls nurture their imagination, making it an enjoyable story that transcends any border, culture, language barrier, gender, and age. It is another resource that could be used while making films following the guidelines. Even the mother's illness and the possibility of dying from it are part of what the girls understand in their environment. Showing it in the narrative facilitates initiating these types of conversations between children and caretakers who watch the film together. It also teaches parents tools to deal with and overcome children's fears and possible losses and support them within the process.

Big Hero 6 (2014)

Unlike the other films reviewed, *Big Hero 6* is produced by Walt Disney, many times classified as the great representative of children's films. The superhero film is based

on a Marvel comic and was the best-animated feature film at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (best known as the Oscars) in 2015 (Oscars, n.d.). It tells the story of Hiro, a boy who has suffered many losses throughout his life, most recently his older brother, Tadashi. It is an action film that manages to show psychological trauma, emotions, grieving process, and cycles of violence. Amid the emotional isolation that Hiro feels during the bereavement, he befriends a huggable robot and teams up with his brother's friends to stop a villain who caused the fire in which Tadashi died. This film focusses primarily on the 3Z established by Lumsden (1997): the interception between the external and internal world of the child. This zone is the most important for breaking the cycle of violence and is the central theme of *Big Hero 6*.

It is worth to mention that, unlike the other two stories, this film takes place in a fictional setting, in a mixture of western San Francisco (US) and eastern Tokyo (Japan). It can help people from different cultures feel identified by mixing different features and allowing the film's unreal elements to be realistic in the world presented (the mixture of high technology, the presence of robots). Instead of playing with children's imagination to build a reliable story, the filmmakers create a different universe where all this was possible.

The main character of the film is Hiro, which as happened with Totoro, is a bad spelling of the world "hero". He is a brilliant 13-year-old kid who is mad at life for being unkind to him and his brother, Tadashi, as they lost their parents when he was still a baby. Towards the film, the character development allows him to grow and understand the consequences of revenge. Tadashi is very smart but not as brilliant as his little brother. He is a university student who always takes care of Hiro and tries to remind him what their parents would expect from them. His biggest goal is to take care and help other people; that is why he designed a robot to be a medical health assistant and save as many lives as possible, named Baymax. Tadashi dies in a fire when he tries to save his Professor Callaghan, who turns out to be the main villain.

Baymax is almost as important as Hiro to the story, becoming also in a type of protagonist. Baymax is also a type of "transitional object" to Hiro, representing his brother's values to take care of people and save lives. It becomes best friends with Hiro while trying to help him feel better and cope, as Baymax finds out psychological care is as important as physical health. Hiro's character development is also showed through Baymax's clothing. Hiro starts as a vulnerable child, while Baymax seems a big fluffy

balloon. As Hiro's strength grows, the character's outfit becomes more robust, like a fortified cloak that protects him from the outside. Internally Baymax is still a cute character.¹⁸

Tadashi's university friends will also become Hiro's friends. They give Hiro a sense of belonging. They form a group of heroes who honour Tadashi by saving lives. It is a group of diverse friends, who collaborate with a sense of non-discrimination on screen. There are both men and women, from different social strata, and skin colours represented. Regarding the adulting characters, unlike in the previous two films, adults do not have a significant role in the story. Hiro feels that he must hide his mission from his aunt; he even seeks to hide Baymax's presence from her. In this story, as is common in western children's films, adults are not complicit with children, and when they play an important role, they are the villain. However, from a guideline of story construction that seeks to support children to deal with grief after having lived the losses of armed violence, it will be preferable to present adult roles whom children can count on and trust. Children who have experienced systematic violence and war zones need to re-build their relationship with adults instead of deepening mistrust.

Breaking the cycle of violence and revenge in Big Hero 6

Breaking the cycle of violence is deeply connected to the intersection between the child's external environment and the internal tools they have to overcome it. Helping the child mourning and grieving is essential to avoid hatred and further intergenerational transmission of it. The social values and the child's internal values and tools would be crucial in the decision-making process of the children, defining a difference between violent or non-violent paths. Finally, the middle ground is the search for justice or revenge. These main three aspects showed in the film are reviewed in this section, keeping the main focus on breaking the cycle of violence.

After Tadashi's death, Hiro becomes socially and emotionally isolated. While his aunt and Tadashi's friends bond over and share the pain, Hiro does not. He also keeps his brother's cap as an amulet that represents his presence and absence¹⁹. It is showed several times: His brother is seen wearing it before dying, he keeps it in his room, and he also takes it with him to the university. Somehow, it fulfils the can and kite role for Courgette

¹⁸ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex H, Figure H1.

¹⁹ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex H, Figure H2.

or the corn for Mei. Some signs of grief are shown, such as a lack of appetite, social isolation, leaving aside his goals, –and denying his feelings and pain. The grieving process is not shown in-depth, but there is evidence of Hiro’s suffering. In this regard, of the three films, it is the one that best approximates this topic. All this starts changing when Baymax is activated and tries to use some treatments to make Hiro feel better: he hugs him, shows compassion for his loss, calls his friends for support. Baymax’s desire to support Hiro’s best interests during the coping to overcome the loss and grief runs throughout the film.

However, as one of the characters States within the film: “This is a revenge story”. On the one hand, the villain’s motives are revenge against the person he believes responsible for the death of his daughter. On the other hand, it’s about Hiro’s search for justice and revenge after Tadashi’s death. This is possibly the most important aspect that *Big Hero 6* deals with and the main reason for this study’s interest in this film. The cycles of hatred and revenge are complicated to break, as established by numerous authors who have been mentioned in the first chapter of this study (Jeong, 2005; Wessells, 2016; Lumsden, 1997; Spatz, 1998). This story shows other options to break that cycle, which is considered essential to include in the guidelines that will be developed in the next chapter. Hiro’s quest for justice, revenge, and justice is divided into four apparent stages in the film’s dramatic arc:

i) In the beginning, Hiro accepts the death of his brother as an accident. Even though grief is complicated for him, he accepts his loss.

ii) When he begins to suspect that someone started the fire, Hiro sets out to catch this person. Although the expression “deliver him to justice” is never pronounced, it is understood as such.

iii) When Hiro discovers that it was Professor Callaghan who caused the fire, he decides that instead of “catching him,” he wants to “finish him.” His desire for justice is transformed into revenge. He tries to use Baymax for this, but Tadashi’s friends avoid it because it is a boundary they are not willing to cross. No doubt, Hiro feels betrayed by the person he believed could be a mentor to him and who was the mentor of his brother. This moment is critical to our study context because it is the proximity with his brother’s killer that changes his initial plan of justice into revenge, having a deep similarity with the children’s context established in the first chapter.

iv) With the help of Baymax and his friends, Hiro realises that revenge is not the right way, and it is not what his brother would like him to do. Together they decide that they will make things right and stop Professor Callaghan's plans. That is when they manage to arrest him and bring him to justice. This transformation leads Hiro from revenge into the path of justice is the key in this thesis. It shows the audience that justice is the right path to follow, breaking the cycle of violence.

Hiro's duality between good and bad is also showed narratively through Baymax's programming system. The decision of taking care of people is symbolised with a green card (health assistance), while revenge is symbolised with a red card (expert combatant). The decision-making process to decide to add the red card or to remove the green one is part of the storytelling and it follows through the four arcs of the dramatic arc, leading to honour his brother's will and deliver Professor Callaghan to justice.²⁰

Professor Callaghan's revenge is not defined in stages like Hiro's, possibly because the processes before and after do not occur within the film. Professor Callaghan provokes the fire to get revenge on the person he holds responsible for his daughter's death. His hatred does not allow him to see beyond. Still, Tadashi's friends view him with great compassion: If he was such a good person, what changed him so that he is now the villain. This moment also shows that children can recognise that adults make mistakes, too. It is striking that when Hiro wants to "finish" Professor Callaghan, his friends and Baymax ask him if that is what Tadashi would have wanted. Later, that same question is asked to Professor Callaghan by Hiro about his daughter's will, and adds: "*This won't fix anything, believe me*". The film's final minutes also show that if Callaghan had used his intelligence to seek another angle to resolve the loss of his daughter, he might have realised that he could still save her. However, his hatred and quest for revenge did not allow him to see further and led him down the wrong path. His daughter was still alive, and it is Hiro, with the Baymax's help, who rescue her.

Furthermore, this film shows the value of friendships, the feeling of belonging and teamwork, especially in coping processes, and reminding ourselves – as the audience – of the social values that define each of us. When Tadashi's friends decide to take on the superhero life, at first, they act disjointed and without a plan, so it is tough to defeat the

²⁰ Frame grabs of the film are available in Annex H, Figure H3.

enemy. However, when they perform together, synchronised and exploiting the capacities of each one within a group, they achieve their goal.

Moreover, it also shows the value of honouring the other by respecting the teachings they leave us. On this, several examples are present repeatedly in the film. The two most prominent are: “looking from a new angle” to solve problems and “taking care of other people”. Hiro puts this teaching into practice in several opportunities. That is also a teaching for the audience and, above all, for children, by showing them problem-solving skills. Caring for others is the lesson that Hiro has the most challenging time to internalise. Fortunately, in the process of making sense of this action, he has people who constantly remind him: Baymax always tells him about his purpose to care for others, not to hurt them, to help. His friends do, too. The character development to go from seeking revenge to justice leads to Hiro learning that hurting people will only take him away from his brother, but to honour him, and that he should save as many lives as possible.

The search for the appropriate elements for the development of guidelines

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, each feature analysed expose a series of elements, tools, or lessons that can be learned. All these will be essential for the development of guidelines as a first approach to making films in a context of transitional justice and symbolic reparation that help children deal with their psychological traumas from armed violence, in a quest to achieve non-repetition. This analysis was made based on the 57 films reviewed before the selection. The possibility that other films can also contribute to this discussion and elaboration of the guidelines is not ruled out; however, the decision was made based on the films consulted and the vision of the author of this study.

From the discussion developed in the first chapter, it was possible to observe that conflicts and armed violence can generate individual traumas in children and collective traumas in an entire generation or society. Moreover, those unresolved traumas can lead to a resurgence of violence and endless cycles of revenge, where victims and perpetrators swap roles over time. Also, Lumsden’s theory of three main zones to address to break these cycles have been followed to identify the main themes a film made with this purpose should include. For this reason, it is considered that films created for this purpose must first contextualise the experiences of children and the human rights violations of which they have been systematically victims. Secondly, promote children’s internal tools to

make the conflict that precedes them more bearable. Third and most important, it should show them that if violence is responded to with more violence, there is no solution, but that new generations have the opportunity to decide to break the cycle.

It should also come to attention that there was not found any evidence of children participating in the reviewed films. This would mean they do not fulfil a children's rights-based approach. Symbolic reparation made for children should show the reality they have experienced as the medium is holding a conversation among children. Adults might show a biased approach on this matter, and children are more than capable of delivering an adequate narrative that could be reinforced by their participation. The basis on non-discrimination should also be taken into account, both on-screen and off-screen, which include the characters that perform in the film and the filmmaking team producer.

In general terms between the three features, it comes to attention the substantial difference in budgeting their realisation and the profits earned after they were released. *My neighbour Totoro* is the oldest film, which can be a factor in the significant difference in the budget, which is estimated to be €3,140,560 (IMDb, n.d.). Nonetheless, it received almost ten times the expenses in profits. *My life as Courgette*, instead, invested around €6,500,000 (IMDb, n.d.). However, most probably because it was an independent production with a more educational purpose, the profits were not enough to cover the production costs. It comes to attention that *Big Hero 6* has, in exchange, a significant budget. It can be related to the fact that it was produced by a big international house, as Disney Studios. The film costed around €140,052,000 and received a profit of €573,678,189 (IMDb, n.d.). It could be claimed that the differences in budgeting do not show a correlative impact on the performance of the films and there is no evidence of affecting the children's perceptions about the stories told. Therefore, making a film to be a symbolic reparation mechanism for children should be possible with a similar budget *My life as Courgette* had.

The following chapter will first review the interconnection between the literature review provided and the films analysed during this chapter. It will later review the general challenges a children's film might face to become a symbolic reparation film following a children's rights approach. Afterwards, the guidelines proposal will be outlined with a final section on ethical considerations.

**A PROPOSAL OF GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING
CHILDREN’S FILMS IN SYMBOLIC REPARATION PROCESSES:
HEALING TRAUMA AND BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE**

The previous chapters have served to understand the need to begin to comprehend and visualise mechanisms of symbolic reparation directed towards children within transitional justice processes to help with the psychological trauma of human rights violations (especially armed violence) and curb cycles of violence and revenge. Subsequently, three films with different characteristics were analysed to identify what can be applied in the development of a film for children to help them cope with this type of context. Therefore, in this chapter, a first attempt will be made to draw up guidelines for making films for children within a process of symbolic reparations to help children overcome trauma.

That is why it is essential to return to the existing concept of symbolic reparations. Symbolic reparations have great potential to search for justice and recognise victims as bearers of rights (SRRP, 2017, p. 1). Following the definition of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008, p. 9), reparations are a set of measures that provide some type of benefit directly to the victims, beyond the possibility of offering a reparative effect. Symbolic reparations have the ability to target a broad group of victims collectively, as well as non-victims, at the same time. Thus, providing a form of reparation that might be able to target victims, perpetrators, and non-victims are crucial to sow in society the collective memory of past events and allow to transform past narratives; both actions would help to promote non-repetition and social reconciliation between the three groups (Hirschberger, 2018, p. 3; Hanif & Ullah, 2018, p. 5; Naidu, 2004). Yet, reparations face the challenge of ensuring that large groups of individuals with similar experiences feel repaired through the exact mechanism (OHCHR, 2008, p. 22). Hence, each case has to be considered on its own, and the same measure cannot be repeated without suffering alterations in another context.

Nothing can erase the pain of a child who has lived through a war or has lost their parents, siblings, relatives, or friends due to the systematic violation of their rights, but that is not a reason for inaction. Above all, because it is possible to help children deal with the trauma to break the cycles of violence. Failure to devote efforts to children’s

psychological health would be a mistake that could lead to reopening seemingly past wounds and constant re-emergence of conflicts. In this regard, psychological trauma can also be understood as a matter of public health (OHCHR, 2008, p. 24).

In this sense, this chapter aims to draw up a list of considerations to take into account during the application of a reparation mechanism of this nature, in a practical way, with reflections from film production as well as in the framework of post-conflict management and promotion of human rights (in an out-of-court scenario). In the framework of this study, it is considered that helping children who are victims of massive human rights violations as a consequence of armed violence to deal with trauma, grief, anger, and the desire for revenge, is a form of providing a direct benefit to children, their families, and communities. Therefore, help an entire society marked by violence and trauma. Seltzer (1997, p. 24) justifies this collective trauma due to violence under the framework of “wound culture”, which allows trauma to be transformed into an underlying subject to be discussed in public meets, spectacles, cultural activities and promotion, separating the “abnormal normality of trauma.”

One of the biggest challenges this proposal faces regarding the implementation may be primarily concerning the origins of the financing for an animated children’s film as a token reparation mechanism. In that sense, there is an intrinsic complexity established by the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008, p. 22) between those things that money cannot buy (like the life of a loved one or mental health) and the lack of economic resources to finance these programmes. This only becomes even more true when some human rights violations and basic needs might seem to require a more urgent and immediate response, such as housing, nursing, sanitation, physical injuries, and so on.

In general terms, the economic financing of reparations is a critical issue, even more so in countries with low socio-economic development. Sometimes this is coupled with a weak political commitment (OHCHR, 2008, pp. 32-33). But, if reparation is a right of the victims, with children being an especially vulnerable group, then States parties²¹, international agencies, local and international non-governmental organisations, and civil society can join the efforts implemented by the States, the International Criminal Court, the perpetrators, and the victims, to guarantee the right to remedy and repair to children. This should be done in order to protect the best interest of the child and their well-being

²¹ Specially States parties of the CRC.

(CRC, art. 3 and 6). One option may be to create specific partnership to fund psychological trauma response through art, with open calls where filmmakers, production houses, specialists in human rights, and the protection and safeguarding of children can raise film proposals that pursue these principles and guidelines. This could be a sustainable option, where the same profits from the films are reinvested to keep making films as token reparations. There is a risk that not always enough funds will be raised for this, as was shown in chapter two in the case of *My life as Courgette*. But if the distribution is successful, this strategy can provide a sustainable solution to the financing problem. However, this is not precisely an issue to be addressed by this study, but rather a complementing comment to achieve the viability of these guidelines.

Nevertheless, this thesis proposes to expand what is understood by symbolic reparation, maintaining its primary focus on the victims to ensure that it directly benefits them. For the greater good of children, their protection and safeguarding, it is proposed to unlink symbolic reparation from the duty of the State or perpetrators of human rights violations to finance it, at least when regarding children. Protecting children's well-being and development while helping them recover from trauma and experience their grieving process is essential to ensure that atrocious acts are not repeated. The efforts to preserve children's mental health should not be conditionate to lack of financial willing. This would be against the principle of protection of children's well-being and best interest and their right to remedy and reparation (CRC, art. 3, 6 and 39).

Films and other art forms can allow children (and society) to engage in catharsis and heal open psychological wounds. For achieving this, the film should be conceptualised, promoted, and realised jointly between filmmakers, artists, children, victims, perpetrators, civil society, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations and agencies, ensuring taking care of children's psychological health and well-being. In the first chapter, some NGOs that promote initiatives for this purpose in ex-Yugoslavia and Venezuela were introduced. It would be possible to reinforce NGO and civil society projects with the financing and support of international organisations and agencies, to strengthen the social fabric for a better coexistence from an early age. Therefore, these guidelines are intended to address human rights experts focused on children in conflict and post-conflict situations, non-specialist care providers, filmmakers and production houses, as well as those organisations, agencies, institutions and individuals that seek to promote and finance children's film initiatives that help to

symbolically repair the trauma inflicted on children by serious human rights violations, wars, conflicts, armed violence, and loss of family members (especially parents or siblings) due to this type of context.

The arts are precisely the metaphorical space where the internal resources of humanity can be shaped to face social violence, through passion, creativity, and conscience. These practices can achieve more than just strengthening social memory; they can also be persuasive sources to encourage individual and collective reflection, thus promoting reconciliation and transforming social relationships at the service of non-repetition (SRRP, 2017, pp. 1-3). Therefore, there is a tendency to focus on the meaning behind the art that accompanies symbolic reparations. Hence, the design, processes, and contexts that strengthen these possible meanings should not be ignored (SRRP, 2017, p. 4). Making these pieces of art aesthetically attractive and visually enjoyable to children is a challenge that therefore also needs to be considered.

The Symbolic Reparation Research Project (2017, p. 5) recommends that the term “*aesthetics*” needs to be distinguished from the concepts of “*pleasure*” and the usual notions of “*beauty*”. In cinematography and cinema, the term refers to light, colour, and music as elements through visual images to tell stories, which help to generate emotions, recognition, and representation among the audience. Hence, the author explains that representation has an ethical and an aesthetic dimension (Fernández & Lopéz, n.d.; Kitrina & Carless, 2020, p. 6). Aesthetics in films is the “organic and inorganic behaviours displayed in the dynamic of events” (Tan, 2018, p. 3). But also, aesthetics can help connect humanity despite the history and past of violence (Melgarejo, 2020, p. 153). Yet, cinema as symbolic reparation is necessarily using art to give re-meaning to past events. For this reason, these guidelines recommend that more importance is given to the concept and narrative than aesthetics, but without forgetting it. Especially in a children’s piece which must be visually pleasing, enjoyable, and entertaining to concentrate the attention of the children with whom it intends to communicate.

Following this idea, it is also necessary that during the creation process, child participation is ensured within a victims-friendly approach at all stages: the project’s conception, writing the script, producing the film, post-production phase, evaluation of its impact, focus groups, distribution, and other activities. Reparations are necessarily a mechanism with a central focus on the victims. Wabuke (2021) explains this is essential because no matter how good the intentions are while representing groups and

communities that the creator or artist does not fully understand. If the groups intended to be represented are not included within the process, there is a risk of misrepresentation or perpetuating stereotypes. In transitional justice and reparation processes, as in Colombia, the mistake of not involving the victims has been made in the past, as was the case of *Fragmentos*, built-in Bogota in an attempt to honour the victims of sexual violence that did not include a dialogue between the artist and the women it seeks to represent. As a consequence of it, the women hammered the artistic space as a symbolic form of rejection. While developing artistic symbolic reparations places, the sense of belonging of the group to which is intended to address should be ensured to not reinforce the feelings of anger (Reyes, 2020, pp. 113-114).

The possible complexities of including child victims of armed violence during the film production process do not mean that they cannot be included. In fact, it should be promoted from a human rights perspective and a children's rights-based approach. White (2005) assures that involving children in storytelling development helps them redefine their identity and gives them a voice in their experienced trauma and furthers representation, thus improving their response to trauma and avoiding revictimisation. It would be important to also promote participation of non-victims' children, to avoid any kind of discrimination. Inclusion should seek to respect children autonomy accordingly to their evolving capacities. Furthermore, to strengthen the process and following the CRC (art. 3), this type of action should also include the vision of parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for them, among them State institutions, experts, or other agents tasked with the care or protection of children. This consideration will play a fundamental role in avoiding and prevent the revictimisation of the child who consumes the audiovisual product. Healing is a collective process that should include all parts of society faced with violence without leaving any child behind.

Keeping this in mind leads us to the next consideration. Interventions with children, especially those of a psychosocial type, need to guarantee a safe and trusting space that promotes conversation and discussion and facilitates putting emotions into words. Likewise, symbolic reparations (especially when they are through art) are open to interpretation and reinterpretation, dynamically and evolutionarily. Personal experiences and traumas interact with the experiences performed within the film, creating new meanings and making the characters personally relatable (Jeiva, 2020, p. 6). That continuous conversation starts from the first time a film is watched and is reinforced each

time it is watched again. The ultimate goal of the film that these guidelines pursue is that they can be enjoyed by children without necessarily being accompanied by their parents or trained care givers. These shared experiences with other children may enhance a sense of belonging to their community and facilitating social interaction (Jeiva, 2020, pp. 2, 7). It is crucial to be kept in mind because depending on the nature and content of each film, it will be more or less possible for children to watch the film without adult's supervision.

While making a children's film as symbolic reparation mechanism, the most important thing is that the efforts are directed towards non-repetition. In the first chapter, the importance of breaking cycles of violence was explored to prevent them from leading to the resurgence of conflicts. In the second chapter, during the discussion and analysis of the films, possible ways of stopping the cycles of violence and revenge through cinema as a tool was observed in a practical way. This process involves several challenges, which will be outlined below.

Challenges while developing children's films as symbolic reparation mechanisms

In the first chapter, it was explained in the theory of Lumsden (1997, pp. 378-381) about the three zones towards which efforts must be directed if the cycles of violence are to be successfully broken: the outside world (1Z), the internal tools (2Z), and the intersection between the internal and external world (3Z), within which amulets are also considered necessities. Subsequently, following Lumsden's approach, in chapter two, it was identified that for children's films to alleviate trauma, three themes should be addressed: The context that generated the infringement of the rights of the child (1Z), as reflected in *My life as Courgette*; the inner tools of the child (2Z), as reflected in *My neighbour Totoro*; and choosing a different path than seeking revenge (3Z), as reflected in *Big Hero 6*. Instead, the amulets (3Z) repeatedly found in these three films were identified as part of the third zone and as a narrative resource in literature and cinema theories. Lastly, if it is intended to make a children's film within a process of symbolic reparations, and therefore of transitional justice, it will be necessary to incorporate a human rights perspective and a children's rights-based approach.

Challenges in the first zone: External context

The outside world includes the social and cultural environments surrounding a child (Lumsden, 1997, p. 378), which is every detail regarding the context of an person

and a group. For a film targeting this zone, the focus cannot be on changing the outside world of a child; on the contrary, it should instead focus on contextualising the situation through which the child has gone, show how the child has been affected, and offer social tools to heal and stay on the path of non-violence. Films are a medium for telling historical or contemporary stories that advocate against social problems, reiterate cultural and social values, and portrait individual experiences within society (Jeiva, 2020, p. 1). Reconnecting to society is essential to promote peacebuilding (Lambourne & Niyonzima, 2016, p. 300). The film cannot ignore the actual violence that these children have suffered since maintaining their context will help the children recognise themselves, know that they are not the only ones who have lived it, and, therefore, feel represented.

One of the most challenging rights to repair is the right to life.²² Once armed violence or systematic violation of human rights has led to the death of a loved one, no reparation can succeed in returning the person to their situation before the death. Moreover, mismanagement of grief and feelings of hatred and anger can deepen intergenerational cycles of hate. Therefore, it will be valuable for the story to grasp this point to serve as a subtopic of the plot. Following the specific children's context of the in this study, it is crucial that this contextualisation also allows some characters within the story to be easily recognised as the perpetrator. The delimitation of this study established the perpetrator to be a known or close person for the family and the child. Anger can be more profound when the person who murdered a loved one is someone in whom the children had a certain level of trust, so the cycle of violence and hatred can be further deepened. As it is a violent conflict between known people, the reconstruction of society can be more complicated since they will continue to share spaces and the group bias makes it difficult to recognise that both sides attacked the other. However, the most significant challenge would be to do so without drowning the narrative into the “*who-did-what-to-whom*,” which Ajdukovic (2004, p. 126) expresses to be a deep concern that obstructs reconciliation instead of promoting it.

Some examples on the use of the first zone to develop a film were reviewed in the previous chapter. Particularly the feature *My life as Courgette* is the one that manages to

²² For a child especially, the infringement of the right to life of a parent or sibling can be particularly traumatic, affecting multiple rights of the children protected in the CRC. Losing a close relative from a natural cause already represent a significant loss that can generate fear and anxiety in children (Siracusa, et al., 2011; Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006, p. 116), as was explained in the first chapter. When this death is combined with the multiples of loss violence can generate, the effects on the children's lives might be unimaginable (Sood, Razdan, Weller, & Weller, 2006, p. 116).

tackle this zone the best. The surrounding environment of the children is comprehensively presented in realistic childlike language. But even some shorts, as *The Box* and *Umbrella*, also succeed in explaining and introducing the context that surrounds the child and that leads to their victimization in very brief periods of time.

Challenges in the second zone: Inner tools

The inner world of persons include their perceptions and social realities, hopes, fears, and internal motivations built through the past experiences. These affect the decision-making process each child and shape their identity, making it fundamental to help them redefine their conception of themselves already being vulnerable by trauma (Lumsden, 1997, pp. 378-379). Each person has a highly complex inner world, although some abilities are less developed than others –children are no exception. Furthermore, children are at the perfect age for this inner world and the inner tools to be stimulated, promoted, and strengthened.

This is one of the main reasons why a film made to help children recover from trauma would need to explore the inner tools of children faced with a similar past. By doing so, the film can help deal with the consequences of trauma and somehow mitigate it. Lumsden established numerous tools to support and deal with uncertainty from the surrounding social environment from an early age. Many elements can be tackled to achieve it, from the interactions between children and adults, the sense of community the child has and rediscovering the shattered self. Transforming these elements related to personal, spiritual revamp could conditionate peacebuilding processes (Lambourne & Niyonzima, 2016, p. 299). In fact, *My neighbour Totoro* successfully managed to achieve it from different aspects of this zone. It focussed on more than one of these possibilities reflected by the authors, highlighting imagination. But also, *A folded wish* showed origami as a useful tool to manage emotional distress.

Some authors have concluded that improvements in emotional management would improve PTSD symptoms for children and youth; hence emotional regulation should be targeted in interventions (Thornback & Muller, 2015). Furthermore, early emotional regulation could affect their functioning and behaviours (Brown, McCauley, & Navalta, 2013). Children usually hold higher hopes than most adults, although some find it diminished if they have faced trauma related to violence, war, and rights infringements. Fortunately, the author concludes that children's hopes can be enhanced

through favourable psychosocial intervention techniques (McDermott & Hastings, 2000). Fictional films can serve for this purpose, as they may facilitate coping mechanisms in “emotional interplay” and empathy (Bruun, 2009, pp. 170-171). Furthermore, imagination is an emerging tool applied in trauma-specific treatment that would be adapted into this proposal. Authors have recently come with metaphors, fantastic realities, and imagination gadgets for children to improve their response to stress and trauma and expand their understanding of themselves and others (Haen, 2020; Rubinstein, Lahad, Leykin, & Aharonson-Daniel, 2020). Imagination is a basic psychological function that plays a significant role within films to transform perceptions, memories, and emotions (Tan, 2018, p. 2). Imagination could create a safe and emotional integration of memories and hopes for trauma response (Howard, 2019). Promoting imagination also considers the best interest of the child and works within their evolving capacities. Therefore, it is proposed that at least these three main layers should be explored during the storytelling to promote some inner tools: Children’s emotions, their dreams and hopes, and other internal tools they may manage, such as imagination.

Challenges in the third zone: Internal/External world

The third zone proposed by Lumsden (1997, p. 380) is the conjunction area between internal and external environments of a child, which includes the personal and psychological sphere and the social and structural sphere. This interconnection could drive to a process of healing and internal reconciliation through creating a transformative space to fill the gap between self and others (Lambourne & Niyonzima, 2016, p. 300). Working in this zone should increase communal sense, cultural activities, and transitional behaviours that should allow children to further develop new internal conflict resolution and personal growth. This convergence of interacting elements is critical as it directly addresses the cycles of violence and its disruption. Helping children break the cycle of violence is the ultimate goal of this film that points towards non-repetition. Otherwise, children will be drawn to endure preventable cycles of violence (Wessells, 2016, p. 198).

This interaction between the external context and the inner tools can be exemplified through the relation between children and adults, children and their friends or community, the resources to communicate and overcome their positive and negative feelings (sadness, anguish, fear, anger, hatred, among others), and their decision-making ability to choose their responses and path. Some ways of presenting it through films were

found in *Big Hero 6*, where the internal feelings and lack of resources to manage the loss interact with the negatives of their environment (leading to seek revenge), and with the positive values of his friends and family, transforming this seek to justice. *Umbrella* also focuses part of its story on the confluence between the environment, inner wishes, and hopes of the children.

This zone is also where the transition objects are found, which have been called amulets during this thesis. Amulets were defined in the first chapter as those possessions to whom the child gives a symbolic and psychological meaning to remind them of a relative, who they have lost due to the violation of their rights (Lumsden, 1997, p. 380). These play a significant role by forming coherent meanings while interconnecting inner hopes with outer realities. Amulets can also have a narrative motivation. When talking about visual stories, each object that a character repeatedly holds or wears within a scene or film tells a particular tale, and it is present because it has a point. The same happens with objects that seem to be positioned randomly within a scene, but that, for some reason, attract the attention of the audience. Constante (2019) exemplified in his classes that if there was a gun on a table in the beginning scenes, it was because, in the last stage, the trigger would be fired. When this happens, apparently insubstantial and passive objects acquire, for the story, a relevance similar to the characters themselves. Objects can also point to character traits and attributes, as well as clues to a mystery. Thus, these objects are generally used as narrative resources.

In linguistics, this game of ellipsis and substitutions refers to the anaphora (when the element replaces another that has appeared previously) and the cataphor (when the feature replaces another that will appear later), which becomes a mechanism of anticipation (Jaén, 2020, pp. 179-180, 184). In dramaturgy, this type of object can be classified as emblems, metonymy or cataphoras (Diez-Puertas, 2012). During the films reviewed, objects with these characteristics were found, which served as amulets to the child protagonist in each of them (the kite and empty can for Courgette, the corn for Mei, the cap and Baymax for Hiro). To the matter of this proposal, it is suggested to include narrative resources to serve as amulets, to strengthen the 3Z and to remind the audience of the person the children lost due to the infringement of their rights.

Challenges regarding a human right and children's rights-based approach

It is essential to remark that a children's film promoted as symbolic reparation for children must always maintain a human rights perspective in its making and story. The film must, above all, respect and ensure the dignity, respect, and equality of all members of the film production team and those groups it seeks to benefit. In addition to ensuring non-discrimination (based on gender or sex, race, colour, religion, language, political opinion, or any other nature or condition) both within the filmmaking team and in the story's characters and the groups it seeks to benefit. The potential children's film based on these guidelines must promote freedom of thought and avoid any practice that could fall into the indoctrination of children who see it.

As was mentioned in the first chapter, human rights films are distinguished from other genres because the story represents historical accuracy, which should correspond to true facts, avoid manipulations, and be told with honesty (Nurzia, 2014, p. 16; Hamblin, 2016). Besides this main characteristic, a human rights film can be a documentary, or fictional, animation, experimental, among many other genres, if the narrative and story stay faithful to the hard facts surrounding it while connecting to fundamental rights. The length of the film does not define the genre, it being possible to make a short, medium, feature, serial, or any other format the creators consider. However, evidence shows children's concentrate better on short pieces than longer ones. Films in this category should use images to construct representations, building awareness of people's rights infringements or provide ways to respond to it (Lipkin Stein, 2019). Being a symbolic reparation mechanism, the films that these guides seek to promote will need to be framed within the genre of human rights films. Although in the case of a children's film, it may be appropriate to develop an animated fiction film. For this reason, the characteristics described above should not be abandoned.

There is a risk that the making of this film compromises the dignity of the victims. Tascón (2012) elaborates that the principle of giving faces and names to the sufferings of others can lead to putting vulnerable people at the service of the story and filmmakers, deepening colonialist relationship models, instead of the story and filmmakers serving the affected persons. This risk could disrespect the dignity of the participants, sometimes trying to generate a more significant impact, although at other times for less noble reasons. That is why it is a challenge of special care since the dignity, respect, and equality

of all people must be protected. Ethics is a value that cannot be neglected at any time if it is intended to favour vulnerable groups, even less so from a human rights perspective.

Principles of equality and non-discrimination are an emerging concern in the filmmaking industry. Nevertheless, the right to non-discrimination and equality is protected in several international and regional instruments and protocols²³. One proof of this emerging concern is the recent standards published by the Oscars “to encourage equitable representation on and off the screen to better reflect the diversity of the film-going audience” (Oscars, 2020). The Oscars might be considered one of the prominent institutions regarding worldwide cinema. This is one reason why it makes sense that this proposal encourages the representation of vulnerable and minority groups to ensure non-discrimination in the films it seeks to promote, both in the production team and within the story and characters it would be telling.

Freedom of thought is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 18), and specifically for children in the CRC (art. 14). Despite that, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief has accepted in mid-2021 that freedom of thought and its effects on other rights has been overviewed until now. The Special Rapporteur has also acknowledged that some practices may affect the freedom of thought of individuals in vulnerable situations, such as children (OHCHR, 2021). Szent-György argued in 1947 that inculcating children’s ideas that are not recognised as incontestable truths may deplore children’s freedom of thought (UNESCO, 2018). Didea and Popa (2013) established that it is a violation of this right to persuade another through a lesson or class to condition their ideas or beliefs. This should be considered a risk in filmmaking directed at children that aims to communicate a message to them on a large scale. That is why this proposal argues that any attempt to indoctrinate children through the film, its narrative or any related intervention would be inadmissible.

To address the challenges mentioned beforehand, 20 guidelines are proposed as a first basis and approach to making children’s films within symbolic repair programmes. They seek to facilitate and present action mechanisms that address non-repetition,

²³ Some of them are the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others...

peaceful coexistence, mitigation of trauma caused by armed violence and serious human rights violations, and lastly democracy. To achieve it, the *Guidelines on the Use of Art in Symbolic Reparations* published by the Symbolic Reparations Research Project (2017) will be used as a reference for content and structure.

3.2 Guidelines on making of children's cinema in symbolic reparation mechanism for child victims of systematic armed violence

1. *Definition of children's cinema in symbolic reparation*

It shall be understood that *children's cinema as symbolic reparation mechanisms* is any film that has children as the primary target, that allow them to deal with psychological trauma related to systematic human rights infringements with the aim to promote non-repetition, reconciliation, and breaking the cycle of violence, and conceived within transitional justice processes and mechanism.

2. *Beneficiaries*

The primary beneficiary of a film made following this proposal would be children between 4 and 12 years old that have lived a social conflict marked by armed violence and systematic human rights violations. The guidelines elaborate especially regarding death and loss of close relatives due to these contexts seeking to break cycles of violence and promote non-repetition. However, depending on the layers of the film content, it could also target older children, adults, and entire societies. The narrative could derive from measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, benefiting victims, perpetrators, and non-victims alike.

3. *Financing children's cinema in symbolic reparation*

To avoid the intrinsic complexity related to the financing of children's cinema in symbolic reparation, this proposal invites member States, international agencies, local and international non-governmental organisations, and civil society to join efforts and promote special partnerships that help financially guarantee the right to remedy and repair to children. In that case, creating a special parallel funding mechanism is recommended to ensure that there are no hidden agendas behind, and appropriate standards should be followed that particular pay attention to a child-based approach.

4. *Victims-friendly approach and child participation*

It shall be guaranteed the victims-friendly approach of this mechanism, by including children, victims' parents and legal guardians, perpetrators, State institutions,

experts, or other facilitators' vision for the care or protection of children during the project's conception, scriptwriting, finance seeking, film production, post-production phase, impact evaluation, focus groups, distribution phase, and other activities implicated. Special attention shall be given to promoting autonomous child participation within the entire process to include their voices, willingness, and ethical considerations such as informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, power relations, harms and benefit identification, among others. It should be considered what are the best interests of the child and whether it is non-discriminatory. A message that foresees communicating to children effectively can be reinforced from children's perspective and experience in explaining their own experiences.

5. *Non-revictimisation*

Special care should be taken to not fall into revictimising narratives that could harm victims or non-victims. It should be encouraged to seek advice from experts from the conceptualisation of the film until the projection to children, to keep present every consideration to make a film that avoids revictimising children. It should be considered the imminent risk of having exceptions of children who could be led to reviving moments from a traumatic experience, and it should be offered psychological contention to those possible scenarios.

6. *Aesthetic*

Considering it is a children's film, the aesthetic should be an intrinsic asset, attractive, pleasant, and entertaining for children without forgetting the concept and narrative to help give re-meaning to past events. The use of colours and cinematographic techniques within the narrative and message of each film must be taken into account and in the best interests of the child. Even emotions can serve in the aesthetic experience of the film to create spaces for enjoyment and entertainment.

7. *Main goal: Breaking the cycle of violence towards non-repetition*

Moving towards non-repetition of atrocities and human rights violations is the cornerstone of transitional justice and reparations. To achieve this, it is imperative to break and prevent cycles of violence, hatred, and revenge in which generations can be seen consumed. Therefore, this proposal considers it essential to tackle the cycle of violence as the central theme of the film, and showing children other options and paths, as can be justice, forgiveness, resilience, non-violent protests, or different ways to overcome loss and regain recognition. Consequently, whoever intends to deliver children

a film that helps to heal violence-related trauma and systematic human rights violation must keep the importance of breaking violence cycles present from the beginning.

8. *Helping to heal trauma*

Breaking cycles of violence may be impossible if violence-related trauma is not mitigated, healed, or overcome. That is why this proposal recommends that, in parallel to the previous point, efforts be concentrated on providing coping mechanisms that can help heal the trauma of child victims. For this, it may be necessary to seek advice and support from experts, psychologists, and therapists during the film's production. Having the right advice on this matter will also allow preventing any possibility that the film will end up revictimising children rather than helping them.

9. *Contextualisation*

This proposal recommends to contextualise the story of violence the child protagonist's lived, helping the child spectator feel identified and represented. This is understood as contextualising the story in the armed violence that led to the infringement or violation of the child and their relatives' rights. This does not mean to emphasise the causes that led to victimisation, since for smaller groups, it can be cognitively difficult to understand (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019, p. 2; Hoyos López, 2015; Moraza Rivera, 2003); but it does clarify narratively that the victimisation is due to armed violence.

10. *Family member loss*

This type of context can lead to relative's death due to violence and systematic violation of their human rights. Therefore, it is recommended that this loss and suffering is represented in the film. The details on how to introduce it shall depend on each director, screenwriter, and story, so no specific recommendation would be given. In any case, it is fundamental that this fact is not shown vividly in graphic images so that it is not traumatic for the child bystander nor lead to revictimisation.

11. *Mourning process*

The mourning process involves many feelings at any age. Some of those feelings related to bereavement should be introduced in the film to help target emotional regulation from an early age and its impact on response and behaviour towards stress and trauma. This will help normalise the feelings associated with grief and loss, such as sadness, denial, fear, or anger. This aspect of the proposal will also help validate (through representation) those feelings and promote their free expression and self-processes. It will also help break down prejudices and stereotypes, both from the point of view of the child who has lived in a similar context and from the one who has not.

12. *Perpetrator*

Hence, it is recommended that the perpetrator be an identifiable character within the story with whom there is a certain level of trust and intimacy so that the protagonist's desire for revenge towards the villain is directed towards a specific character instead of towards an unidentified group of characters. It is fundamental to remark that in any case, it should not be done within a narrative of *who-did-what-to-whom*, as there is the risk to enhance cycles of violence and revenge.

13. *Hatred and revenge feelings*

It is recommended to address directly, throughout the film's plot, the feelings of hatred and the search for revenge that may arise from the loss of the family member and the violation of the rights of the child. For that, the complex emotions that the child will be experiencing must be taken into account. But more fundamentally, it should be noted that the child has more options, that hatred, violence, and revenge are not the best choices, and that the child can take a different lead in the decision-making process. The child can decide to do things differently for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

14. *Children's hopes*

It is recommended that the character development of the protagonist child in the story allow maintaining dreams and hopes that are viable and that, in some way, can be fruitful. Having a past where they have been systematically re-traumatised does not imply a similar future; on the contrary, children may need to visualise a hopeful (and above all, viable) end that helps them see other possibilities for themselves and their future selves.

15. *Imagination*

This proposal is based on the emerging theory of imagination as a tool to create a safe emotional space for the child victim. Therefore, it is recommended that the film explore resources as imagination, metaphors, or fantastic realities to internally deal with traumatic, stressful, or frightening situations. Which is more suitable would depend on the story and the narrative resources used to exemplify this subtopic.

16. *Amulets*

It is recommended to include amulets or symbolic objects as narrative resources that allow both the child in the story and the audience to keep in mind the relative they lost, helping to generate a connection between the outside world and the

inner world. These amulets would also help the child viewer find another way to keep their loved ones connected and present besides their physical absence.

17. *Dignity, respect, and equality*

Films promoted within this framework shall ensure human rights principles and values in three central cores: During the realisation, within the story itself, and through the beneficiaries. It shall create a safe space of respect where no type of violence is allowed and where the consequences of these transgressions are previously stipulated and available. The story must guarantee that these principles are also fulfilled between the characters and in their interactions. In the circumstances that due to the nature of the story, it is necessary not to do so, these actions must have consequences towards those responsible. Filmmakers and other instances shall ensure that children's beneficiary and their families do not perceive that the film breaches their dignity.

18. *Non-discrimination*

In the same way, films promoted within this framework shall ensure non-discrimination based on gender or sex, race, colour, identity, ethnicity, religion, language, political opinion, or any other nature or condition. This shall be applied in the film production team as well as in the story characters and interactions. It is recommended to actively seek to include historically discriminated groups and minorities in the most organic way possible. As mentioned in the previous point of this proposal, if the nature of the story required discrimination to be present, these actions must have consequences for those responsible.

19. *Freedom of thought*

The children's right to have freedom of thought, conscience and religion also needs to be protected. By any circumstance, the film promoted within these guidelines shall try to inculcate children's ideas that are not recognised as incontestable truths or that try to persuade children to condition their ideas or beliefs or that goes against the truthful history they have gone through. Any practice that could fall into the indoctrination shall be discouraged.

20. *Based on the truth*

A children's film as a symbolic reparation mechanism is in its nature a human rights film. That is why the story must, in principle, be based on facts and truth, although the narrative may include fictional themes, elements, or characters. Furthermore, filmmakers must maintain a commitment to the fairness and impartiality of the information provided to children. If care is not taken in this, those groups that perceive a

bias in the narrative could feel affected; and the film could deepen cycles of hatred and make reconciliation and peace more difficult.

3.3 Ethical considerations

After establishing the 20 proposed guidelines to make children's films within a symbolic reparation process, it seems necessary to emphasise the ethical considerations that filmmakers must consider during the process. Making art sounds simple, but it really comes with a great deal of responsibility, which is even more true when making material that can be consumed by millions of children. Therefore, filmmakers and the production team must take special care to promote children's best interests, their right to participation, their right to development, and act in accordance with diversity and non-discrimination.

In general, communicating about the experiences of the other can put them in even more vulnerable positions, where even recognising oneself in the story can mobilise pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It is an important consideration to have, which leads the filmmaker to seek to respect the dignity of their characters before the positioning of the film itself. In moments of doubt, directors need to ask themselves: If the film were about my family or me, would I like them to see me like this or know 'this' about us? And to be able to answer it honestly, the filmmaker must bear in mind that the film's aim is to break the cycles of violence, help release trauma, and work towards non-repetition of violence.

No evidence was found of child participation in making the films chosen in the second chapter. Culturally there is a tendency to underestimate the ability of children to understand complex processes. Still, many civil society-led initiatives involving children in creating art were mentioned in the first chapter. It is possible that only in *Umbrella* and *My life as Courgette*, where the filmmakers personally knew children like those represented in the characters of their stories, children have reached a certain level of participation within the filmmaking context, even if it was to a limited extent. It is recommended to change this pattern and involve children in filmmaking, recognising their right to participate.

Character's development should be dealt with special care. As mentioned in the guidelines, the child protagonist and the other children around them should be allowed to

have dreams and hopes that do not feel forced. Children within the story should see some of their expectations become true through the narrative arc. It would allow to the children viewing it to feel their own dreams can be achieved, even if it is needed to work to achieve them. This character development could also lead to the children viewer to empathise with the character, maybe even triggering self-reflection about the traumatic experiences memories and allowing them to give re-meaning (Bruun, 2009). In a greater extent, this should contribute to their development of interpersonal understanding among children (Jeiva, 2020).

Particular emphasis should be placed on promoting a workspace and representation on the screen where diversity is included. In the selected films, only *My life as Courgette* and *Big Hero 6* made it on screen, to a greater or lesser extent. This is extremely important and should be actively promoted by the filmmaking team within the story and characters and within the producing team. In this sense, it may be precious to adopt this criterion depending on the type of conflict or violence referred to in the film. For example, suppose it is an ethnic conflict. In that case, it will be valuable to include ethnic diversity in the film and in the production team, highlighting the multi-diverse inclusion of people of the ethnicities involved in the conflict. The same principle should be applied in a gender-based conflict, to mention two examples. Promoting minority participation reduces the chances of stigmatizing or stereotyping them.

Making a single film that covers all the children of the world who have been affected by different conflicts and types of violence might not be feasible or either sufficient. For cinema to impact and transform children's behaviours, values, models, and decision-making, it will require that there be a sufficiently wide range of films for them to be constantly exposed to these stories for them to understand these narratives as part of their day-to-day life (Kubrak, 2020; Eder, Hanich, & Stadler, 2019; Bruun, 2009). It has already been seen in various conflict reconstructions and post-conflict management that what works in one context does not necessarily work the same in others, so the available mechanisms must be adjusted to each culture and initial reasons for the conflict. In this sense, it may be necessary to continuously make several children's film based on the specific repair needs of children according to each circumstance. It might be ideal for making a film promoted under these guidelines that can have a worldwide reach, as the majority of the films reviewed achieved. In this sense, measuring the reach of the films develop and its possible influence in society to avoid cycles of violence directly or

indirectly might be a problem that could affect finding financing to make the film. It does not mean it is impossible to measure. Technology have been developed to measure psychological responses to films and its relationship with behavioural changes (Tan, 2018, p. 15), which should be explored before making the film.

Finally, it is essential to highlight again the complications inherent to the financing of such a film when other infringements of the right seem to require a more immediate or more urgent response, which in many cases require significant financial expenditures. Filmmakers interested in making this film to protect the greater good of children and international agencies can promote the creation of funds dedicated to art as a symbolic mechanism of reparation for children. It is worth questioning whether the absence of films made as a symbolic reparation mechanism for children is related to the absence of funds to finance them. In any case, when seeking external financing or from private sources, special care must be taken not to compromise the principles established in this proposal or promote hidden agendas that may be detrimental to the welfare or rights of children. Therefore, indicators should be set to ensure this and monitor the origin of the funds to ensure that they are legal.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Lumsden's theory to effectively break the cycles of violence resulting from trauma in children by addressing the external environment of the child, their internal tools, and the interception between them, shaped the proposed guidelines in this research for making children's films within symbolic reparations processes for children's victims of armed violence and systematic violations of their human rights. Lumsden's theory was designed to be include in transitional justice programmes and reparations mechanisms within comprehensible and holistic initiatives that focus on several root causes of conflicts to avoid repetition. However, within a master's thesis, it was impossible to design more than one reparation mechanism simultaneously. Because of this, cinema was chosen as a suitable mechanism to tackle a broad audience of children worldwide, to make them feel represented and heard, ultimately breaking cycles of violence related to trauma. That decision led to reviewing 57 films and developing 20 guidelines to be followed while making of films with this objective aimed at filmmakers, production houses, specialists and experts in human rights, and post-conflict management for the future development of reparation programmes focused on child victims of conflict, armed violence, and systematic violation of rights.

One of the main concerns found during the research of this thesis is that within post-conflict reconstructions, there are many primary necessities that a child has seen vulnerated and need to be addressed urgently, such as housing, clean water, nourishment, physical wounds, beyond others. Consequences of war and violence are experienced by a significant number of children around the world, without differentiation within cultures or countries, as was showed in chapter one through children's drawings. However, the literature has shown the importance of addressing conflict resurgences and collective psychological trauma since an early age to avoid preventable cycles of violence and revictimisation among children and society in general. Notwithstanding, psychological relief seems to be missing among reparation programmes directed toward children who have lived in systematic social violent environments, deepening the root causes of the problem. It was not possible to answer why these types of programmes for children are lacking; however, it is believed that the reasons could be linked to the perception that children are very resilient and that their health is fine since there are no physical injuries. Therefore, this thesis proposes programmes to be created to strengthen already existing

initiatives to directly help children deal with the many losses caused by armed violence. But nevertheless, this proposal is only a first approach to succeed regarding this goal.

The authors introduced within this study argue that films are a suitable mean that help constructing individual and collective identities and transformation. Films can enhance imagination, being able to transform perceptions, memory, emotions, values, models, and decision-making process. Films made following the guidelines proposed in this research should focus efforts in delivering coping mechanisms within the film, inducting resilience, and mitigating trauma among children. Another important remark is that films develop to successfully break cycles of violence should follow Lumsden's zones (the infringements of the children's rights by the external environment, the internal tools the children have to overcome the consequences, and the decision-making process that combines internal and external elements to move towards non-violence and avoid cycles of revenge).

The methodology started from film's reviewing. Contrary to expectations, this review showed that apparently, there are not films made as symbolic reparation mechanisms nor to heal trauma related to armed violence directed towards children. In fact, none of the reviewed films simultaneously tackle the three zones proposed by Lumsden to break cycles of violence since childhood. Because of this, it is not possible to verify if Lumsden's theory would be effectively applicable in films. Nevertheless, three features were analysed to review how each of them approaches to some of Lumsden's zones. These analyses helped gather information about the benefits of working Lumsden's theory while developing the screenwriting of the film.

From this combined vision offered by the films to tackle the three themes and zones, it was possible to design 20 guidelines in the proposal. Those general principles keep in mind several challenges regarding the themes aimed to cover the external world of the child, their internal skills, and their interaction between their inner abilities and the environment that surrounds them. Challenges regarding the human rights perspective and the basic principles in the children's rights approach were also taken into consideration during the design of the proposal. In a general overview, the guidelines define what can be consider children's cinema in symbolic reparations, beneficiaries, financing, child participation, non-revictimisation, aesthetics, main themes and sub-themes, human rights-friendly approach on and off screen, non-indoctrination of children, and truth based, among other ethical considerations. The aim was to draw a complementary

proposition to be used within reparation programmes towards children, including some ethical concerns that could be considered by filmmakers, other workers in the cinema industry, human rights and children's rights experts, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction experts, international agencies, among other institutions interested.

Before this proposal becomes recognised guidelines, it still need to be enhanced by children's participation, experts in other human rights disciplines, and professionals in psychology, sociology, social workers, and teachers, among other fields required to reach an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach to design children's cinema as symbolic reparation. Currently, this research was able to combine the knowledge covered in the literature, which unfortunately does not address children's cinema as symbolic reparation, but at transitional justice, children's rights, and filmmaking. It resulted in a pioneer and completely new approach to reparations, combining the author's knowledge of filmmaking and human rights. Therefore, this proposal would be favoured by a joint interdisciplinary work that allows a greater understanding of the cinematographic content that could help mitigate childhood trauma.

During the research, the need to facilitate financing for the future development of children's films that follow these guidelines is also discussed on several occasions. However, this thesis did not pretend to answer this problem but to point it out so that others research could seek solutions in the future. The first step is that prospective funders understand the potential that these children's films have for society. If this is achieved, then it will be possible to get the mechanisms to finance these films. As a result of this discussion, it is mentioned the possible promotion of creating partnerships –through international agencies and State members– that support artistic initiatives to heal trauma in reparation programmes directed towards children, guaranteeing their right to repair. The possibility of creating sustainable funds through reinvesting the film's earnings to keep producing films was also highlighted. It should be ensured that these initiatives uphold the four basic principles of a children's rights approach: non-discrimination, protecting their best interest, protecting their life, survival and development, and the participation of children. This is the first step that must be solved for these guidelines to be applicable in filmmaking projects.

Once this is solved, those responsible for reparation programmes, and specifically for symbolic reparations, should consider another aspect. As Kubrak warned, it would be

needed to have several films available dealing with breaking cycles of violence and healing past traumas related to armed violence to effectively change behaviours within society and children. This means that efforts need to be concentrated in making enough available films regularly over time, so children can have regular access to them. Allowing children to see characters to whom they can feel related because they share similar stories will also enhance representation and non-discrimination on screen. This feeling will also promote empathy that can facilitate self-reflection among children in a controlled fictional environment, which should avoid the process to be painful or revictimise them. As was stated in the previous chapter, making only one film to achieve it would not be sufficient to break the cycles of violence.

The interested filmmaker should initiate the development based on these guidelines together with screenwriters and producers. The agencies promoting these films should establish in conjunction with the film crew to what extent children will be involved during the film's production. These decisions should be made in advance to ensure that the roles are clear and ensure the participation of children in this product designed especially for them. Once the financing, development, and child participation are clear, it will be possible to proceed with the other stages of realisation: pre-production, filming and production, post-production, until the future release and an exhibition. It will lead to the release of the first film made following these guidelines within children's symbolic reparation and following the basic principles of a child-based approach. It would be a long journey from this research and proposed guidelines until films focusing on symbolic reparation means start to be frequently released in cinemas; nonetheless, these efforts may lead to assure children a better future away from cycles of violence and revictimisation.

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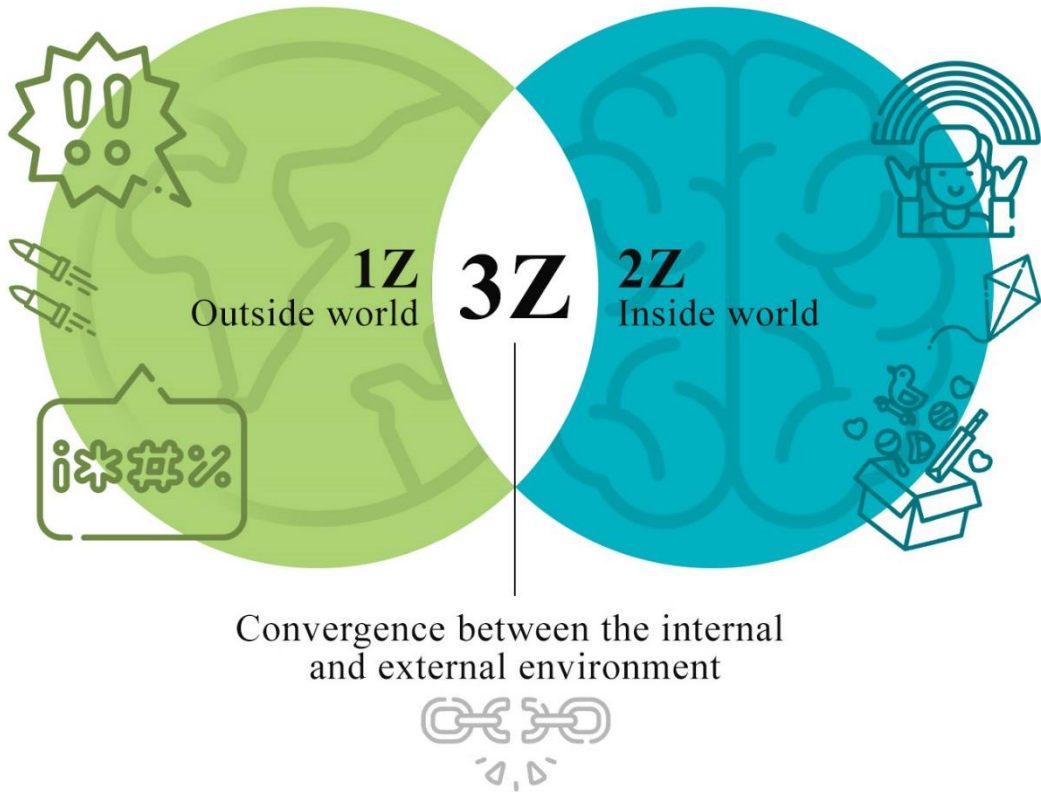
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ANNEX A

INFOGRAPHIC OF LUMSDEN'S THEORY



Lumsden's Theory (1997), "Breaking the Cycles of Violence"

*Figure A1. Infographic presenting the three zones proposed by Lumsden (1997).
Designed by Blanca Smith Luis.*

ANNEX B

COMPENDIUM OF CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS ABOUT ARMED VIOLENCE

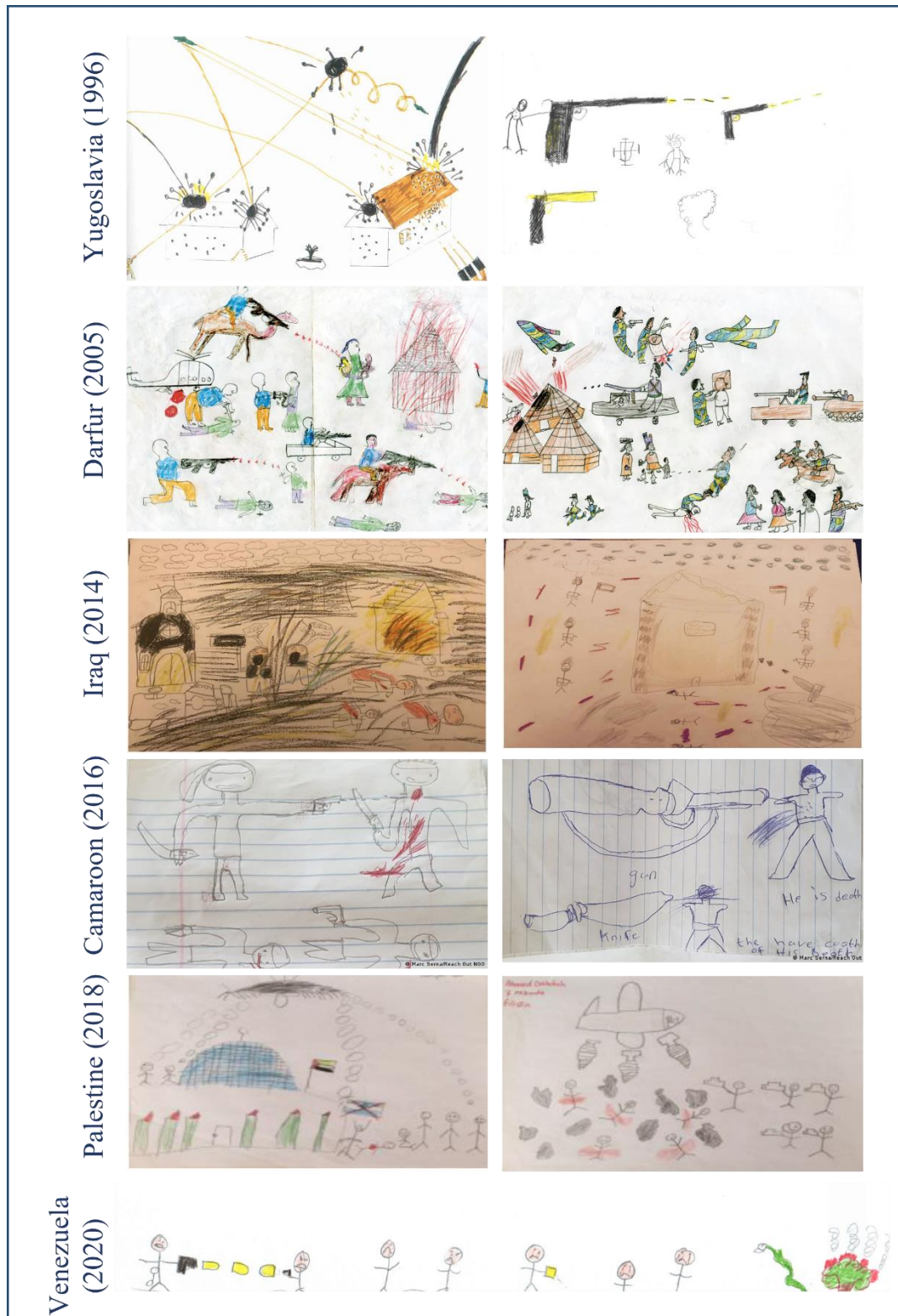


Figure B1. Compendium of children's drawings about armed violence and war.

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ANNEX C

SPANISH CRITERIA FOR AGE CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS



Criterios orientativos para la calificación por grupos de edad de las películas cinematográficas y otras obras audiovisuales

Los criterios que se establecen a continuación no deben interpretarse como reglas de aplicación normativa automática. Su finalidad no es otra que la de servir de principios para orientar a la Comisión de Calificación de Películas Cinematográficas. Y, por consiguiente, también la de permitir la orientación de padres, educadores y otros responsables de menores de edad, así como de los profesionales del sector cinematográfico, prestadores de servicio de radiodifusión o emisión televisiva y demás profesionales a los que pueda afectar la decisión, acerca de qué existe en cada caso detrás de una determinada calificación atribuida a una película.

Apta para todos los públicos

Es una clasificación general, no supone por sí misma que la película sea recomendable para la edad infantil.

- La película no contiene ningún elemento que pueda resultar perjudicial para el desarrollo psicológico en la infancia, con independencia del grado de dificultad que presente su contenido.
- No se incluyen escenas que puedan generar ansiedad, miedo, dolor o tensión emocional.
- No se incluyen escenas que contengan algún tipo de violencia, sea física o verbal.
- Si se incluyen prácticas discriminatorias -con especial atención a la discriminación de género, origen racial o étnico y orientación sexual- se plantean como no modélicas ni ejemplares.
- Si se incluyen referencias o descripciones de conductas antisociales, incívicas, ilegales o perjudiciales para la salud, deberá ser en un contexto que no conduzca a percibir las como cívicas, legales o beneficiosas o inocuas para la salud.
- Si se incluyen escenas que incluyan desnudez o diálogos con connotaciones de



carácter erótico o sexual, no deberán herir, a juicio de la Comisión, la sensibilidad del común de los espectadores, ni por su contenido ni por su duración.

- El lenguaje empleado en esta categoría de películas evitará herir, a juicio de la Comisión, la sensibilidad del común de los espectadores.

No recomendada para menores de siete años

- No puede incluir escenas o contenido narrativo que genere momentos de gran inquietud o tensión en la menor o el menor.
- No se incluyen escenas de crueldad.
- No puede incluir escenas de gran violencia física o verbal.
- Si se incluyen prácticas discriminatorias o de abuso nunca se plantean como modélicas o ejemplares, y tenderán a provocar el rechazo de los espectadores respecto de estas conductas.
- Si se incluyen referencias o descripciones de conductas antisociales, incívicas, ilegales o perjudiciales para la salud, deberá ser en un contexto que no conduzca a percibir las como cívicas, legales o beneficiosas o inocuas para la salud.
- Las escenas y el lenguaje con contenido erótico o sexual no superan el límite de lo que el público de esta edad puede ver o escuchar cotidianamente en un entorno social convencional.
- El lenguaje empleado en esta categoría de películas evitará herir, a juicio de la Comisión, la sensibilidad del común de los espectadores de esta franja de edad.

Especialmente recomendada para la infancia

- Esta clasificación se añadirá a una de las anteriores (“Apta para todos los públicos” o “No recomendada para menores de siete años”) cuando se trate de películas con contenido narrativo y visual destinado a este público objetivo.
- Para ello no sólo es necesario que la película cumpla los requisitos de calificación mencionados, también ha de incluir una narración atractiva y fácilmente comprensible para las niñas y niños.
- Puede tratarse de películas que transmitan valores pedagógicos y sociales



específicamente dirigidos a la infancia –aunque no se descarten otros públicos–, que estimulen positivamente a la imaginación o,

simplemente, películas que constituyan un entretenimiento específicamente realizado para el disfrute del público infantil.

No recomendada para menores de doce años

- La valoración se llevará a cabo sobre el conjunto de la película, tomando en consideración el contexto argumental y visual en el que se enmarcan cada una de las escenas.
- Puede incluir la descripción neutral o no valorativa de conductas incívicas, ilegales, discriminatorias, perjudiciales para la salud, escenas de violencia visual o verbal; en un contexto que permita al público un razonamiento sobre sus causas y sus efectos, y sin que se idealicen o planteen como modelo.
- No puede provocar miedo o tensión anímica más allá de los límites que han de marcar la transición hacia la primera adolescencia.
- No se incluyen escenas visualmente detalladas de crueldad.
- No se incluyen la apología o la banalización del consumo de drogas, o de conductas gravemente antisociales, racistas, discriminatorias o contrarias a la igualdad.
- Puede incluir escenas y diálogos de carácter sexual o erótico, valorando su percepción en función de la madurez que corresponde a esta edad, y en todo caso, siempre que se trate de conductas ejercidas libremente por sus protagonistas y no supongan violencia, abuso o discriminación, o puedan calificarse como pornográficas.

No recomendada para menores de dieciséis años

- La película puede incluir la narración o descripción visual de la práctica totalidad de las conductas que pueden darse entre los adultos en la sociedad.
- Puede suscitar momentos de alta tensión, miedo o ansiedad.
- No incluye violencia extrema.
- No exalta o idealiza conductas criminales, discriminatorias o gravemente antisociales.



- No incluye la descripción o narración detallada de conductas seriamente vinculadas a la violencia o a situaciones de grave abuso.
- No incluye contenido pornográfico.

No recomendada para menores de dieciocho años

Se incluye toda película que no haya superado los baremos de las categorías anteriores, sin llegar a alcanzar los límites de la categoría X.

En todo caso, esta calificación supone el reconocimiento y la advertencia expresa y explícita de que se trata de una película que por su contenido no debería ser accesible a menores de edad, aunque no alcance el grado de prohibición absoluta a menores de carácter imperativo.

Película X

- Recibirán esta calificación aquellas películas de contenido pornográfico explícito, reiterativo o detallado visualmente a lo largo de todo su relato.
- Podrán recibir esta calificación las películas que clara y manifiestamente supongan una apología de la violencia. En particular: la descripción visual detallada, reiterada o completamente acrítica de escenas de violencia extrema y daño físico grave infligido a personas de manera cruel, inhumana o degradante.
- Esta categoría se aplicará de forma muy restrictiva, tomando en consideración el conjunto de la película, así como la trama que enmarca las escenas que puedan afectar a la calificación, y valorando el impacto psicológico o emocional que pueda suponer sobre el público menor de edad.

ANNEX D

LIST OF FILMS REVIEWED FOR THE SELECTION

Table D1. List of films reviewed for the selection of the films

Gender	Duration	Title	Year	Director	Country	Synopsis
An	8min 0s	A Folded Wish	2020	Yeow Chien Huey Nur Halimah Binti Abdul Halim	Japan	A pair of twin sisters attempt to fold a thousand origami cranes in hopes to recover from a fatal disease. It's based on the belief that if you make one thousand paper cranes, your wish will be fulfilled. ¹
An	9min 0s	Canvas	2020	Frank E. Abney III	US	After suffering a loss, a painter finds his inspiration to create again. ²
An	13min 0s	If Anything Happens I Love You	2020	Will McCormack Michael Govier	US	After a tragic school shooting, a couple un griev try to process the emptiness for loosing their dauther. ³
An	8min 0s	Umbrella	2020	Helena Hilario Mario Pece	Brazil	Inspired by true events, while visiting a home for children, a little girl meets Joseph, a boy whose only dream is to have a yellow umbrella. This unexpected encounter awakens his memories of the past. ⁴
An	2min 59s	Bao	2019	Domee Shi	US	An ageing and lonely canadian-chinese mother, suffering from empty nest syndrome, who receives a second chance at motherhood when a steamed bun (bao) comes to life as a boy. ⁵
An	7min 0s	Float	2019	Bobby Alcid Rubio	US	A father discovers that his son floats, which makes him different from other kids. To keep them both safe from the judgment of the world, Dad hides, covers, and grounds him. ⁶
An	7min 0s	Hair Love	2019	Matthew A. Cherry Everett Downing Jr Bruce W. Smith	US	The film centres around the relationship between an African-American father, his daughter, and her hair. This sounds simple enough, but we soon come to find that Zuri's hair has a mind of its own. ⁷
An	15min 0s	Sitara: Let Girls Dream	2019	Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy	Pakistan US	A fourteen-year old girl, Pari, dreams of becoming a pilot. Her story is told through the perspective of her six-year-old sister Mehr, who is unaware of the traditions and barriers that lay in the path of women from her family. ⁸
An	12min 0s	Song Sparrow	2019	Farzaneh Omidvarnia	Denmark Iran	A Group of refugees tries to reach themselves to a safe country in search for a better life. However, the freezing temperature of the truck turns their hopes for a better future into a fierce struggle for survival. ⁹
An	8min 0s	Spring	2019	Andreas Goralczyk	Netherlands	Spring is the story of a shepherd girl and her dog, who face ancient spirits in order to continue the cycle of life. ¹⁰

Table D1. List of films reviewed for the selection of the films (continue)

Gender	Duration	Title	Year	Director	Country	Synopsis
An	5min 18s	Substance	2019	Jamaal Bradley	US	Two brothers battle over the future of the family, but it will be a young girl who changes her fathers substance and the fate of generations. ¹¹
An	14min 35s	The Wrong Rock	2019	Michael Cawood	Australia	Before we can save the world, we must put aside our differences. We're all on the same Rock!. A mushroom embarks on an epic adventure to find its purpose in life. ¹²
An	8min 56s	Wind	2019	Edwin Chang	US	Set in a world of magical realism, WIND sees a grandmother and her grandson trapped deep down an endless chasm, scavenging debris that surrounds them to realize their dream of escaping to a better life. ¹³
An	9min 55s	WiNDUP	2019	Yibing Jiang	Corea	A father's tries to communicate with his daughter who lies unconscious in a hospital bed. His only means is through a tune he plays with the mechanism of a music box, which he plays endlessly in the hopes of a response. ¹⁴
An	6min 0s	Wings	2019	Casey McDonald	-----	In this story of kindness, friendship, and the fear of being left behind, a friendship takes flight as a mouse that wants to fly and an injured bird cross paths. ¹⁵
An	7min 44s	Alma	2018	Damir Mekić Nebojša Petrović	Serbia	Dealing with the subjects of gender-based violence. It imposes the questions of oppressive gender patterns, through a symbolic depiction of specific prohibitions and desired behavior when it comes to women. ¹⁶
An	3min 40s	Dear Alice	2018	Matt Cerini	Slovenia	Anthony, an unconfident artist, must inspire a wide-eyed young girl, Alice, to see the beauty in her sketch before the bus they are in reaches his stop. ¹⁷
An	8min 43s	Purl	2018	Kristen Lester	US	An earnest ball of yarn gets a job at a fast-paced, high energy, male-centric start-up. Things start to unravel as she tries to fit in with this close-knit group. ¹⁸
An	12min 0s	Celica / The Box	2017	Dušan Kastelic	Slovenia	You have probably heard of the phrase "To think outside of the box"? Well, this is a story about such a box. The box is full of miserable creatures. One of those creatures doesn't belong there. He's thinking outside of the box. ¹⁹
An	5min 30s	Negative Space	2017	Ru Kuwahata Max Porter	France	Depicts a father-and-son relationship through the art of packing a suitcase. ²⁰
An	7min 10s	Le Cour	2016	Estelle Costedoat Antoine Engels et al.	France	A young man and his older neighbor . The enthusiasm of the last, with not very resonable results for the first one. And a drawing changing everything. A beautiful film about loneliness. And about the true happiness. ²¹

Table D1. List of films reviewed for the selection of the films (continue)

Gender	Duration	Title	Year	Director	Country	Synopsis
An	10min 19s	Lili	2016	Hani Dombe Tom Kouris	Israel	Lili refuses to let go of her childhood, she fights a sandstorm that threatens to take it away. In the heart of the storm, she rediscovers the joy of childhood but is forced to choose between illusion and reality. ²²
An	2min 49s	Scarlett	2016	Alison Abitbol Mary Nittolo	US	Scarlett depicts the inner struggle of a girl who lost a leg to Ewing Sarcoma, a bone cancer that occurs in mostly children. Amputation takes as much of an emotional toll as a physical one - especially for a child. ²³
An	6min 48s	The Box	2016	Merve Cirisoglu Cotur	Turkish	The happy life of a kid which alters instantly with the sudden war. The war changes not only lives, but also the role of his box; first as a toy house, then as a place to take shelter and finally as a boat that sails towards hope. ²⁴
An	8min 1s	Alike	2015	Daniel Martínez Lara Rafa Cano Méndez	Spain	In a busy life, Copi is a father who tries to teach the right way to his son. But... what is the correct path? ²⁵
An	7min 20s	Follow Your Heart	2015	Rob O'Neill	US	In a world where people's hearts are on the outside and exhibit the qualities of a pet, Mary loses her lovable Skip only to rediscover herself and learn what it truly means to 'follow your heart.' ²⁶
An	7min 0s	Tea Time	2015	Thomas Bourret, Vincent Delmon	France	A grandma decides to replace her old home robot by a new model. ²⁷
An	5min 25s	Destiny	2012	Fabien Weible Manuel Alligné et al.	France	A man who is obsessed with clocks wakes up, going through his perfectly synchronized morning routine before stepping out and getting hit by a bus. He wakes up instantly to find himself back in bed into a loop. ²⁸
An	6min 57s	La Luna	2011	Enrico Casarosa	US	A fable of a young boy coming of age in the most peculiar of circumstances. It's the first time his Papa and Grandpa are taking him to work. Will he be able to find his own way? ²⁹
An	6min 0s	Alma	2009	Rodrigo Blass	US Spain	Alma, a little girl, skips through the snow-covered streets of a small town. Her attention is caught by a strange doll in an antique toy shop window. Fascinated, Alma decides to enter. ³⁰

Table D1. List of films reviewed for the selection of the films (continue)

Gender	Duration	Title	Year	Director	Country	Synopsis
An	1h 14min	Wardi / The Tower	2018	Mats Grorud	France Sweden Norway	A young girl living in a Palestinian refugee camp learns about her family's history through stories told by three previous generations of refugees. ³¹
An	1h 45min	Coco	2017	Lee Unkrich Adrian Molina	US	Despite his family's baffling generations-old ban on music, Miguel dreams of becoming a musician like his idol. Desperate to prove his talent, Miguel sets off on an extraordinary journey to unlock the real story behind his family. ³²
An	1h 34min	The breadwinner	2017	Nora Twomey	Canada Ireland Luxembourg	Parvana, a young girl living under the Taliban regime, cuts her hair and disguises herself as a boy in order to provide for her family after her father is imprisoned. ³³
An	2h 09min	In This Corner of the World	2016	Sunao Katabuchi	Japan	Hiroshima, World War II. An eighteen-year-old girl gets married and now has to prepare food for her family despite the rationing and lack of supplies. As she struggles with the daily loss she still has to maintain the will to live. ³⁴
An	1h 6min	Ma vie de Courgette	2016	Claude Barras	France	After losing his mother, a young boy is sent to a foster home with other orphans his age where he begins to learn the meaning of trust and true love. ³⁵
An	1h 42min	Big Hero 6	2014	Don Hall Chris Williams	US	When an unexpected turn of events plunges them into the middle of a dangerous scheme, a child prodigy, his robot and their friends become high-tech heroes on a mission to save their city. ³⁵
An	1h 30min	Vals con Bashir	2008	Ari Folman	Israel	One night at a bar, an old friend tells director Ari about a recurring nightmare in which he is chased by 26 vicious dogs. Every night, the same number of beasts. ³⁶
An	1h 36min	Persépolis	2007	Vincent Paronnaud Marjane Satrapi	France	The film traces Satrapi's growth from child to rebellious, punk-loving teenager in Iran. In the background are the growing tensions of the political climate in Iran in the 70s and 80s, and the disastrous Iran/Iraq war. ³⁷
An	2h 5min	Spirited Away	2001	Hayao Miyazaki	Japan	During her family's move to the suburbs, a sullen 10-year-old girl wanders into a world ruled by gods, witches, and spirits, and where humans are changed into beasts. ³⁸
An	1h 33min	Porco Rosso	1992	Hayao Miyazaki	Japan	Porco Rosso is a former Ace, who now makes a living flying contract jobs. Porco's rival in the air and in catching the affections of women, provides challenges to the hero, culminating in a hilarious, action packed finale. ³⁹

Table D1. List of films reviewed for the selection of the films (continue)

Gender	Duration	Title	Year	Director	Country	Synopsis
An	1h29:00	Grave of the Fireflies	1988	Isao Takahata	Japan	A teenager charged is in charge of his sister after an American firebombing during World War II separates the two children from their parents. Their tale of survival is as heart breaking as it is true to life. ⁴⁰
An	1h 26min	My Neighbour Totoro	1988	Hayao Miyazaki	Japan	Two young girls move into a house in the country with their father to be closer to their hospitalized mother. Satsuki and Mei discover that the nearby forest is inhabited by magical creatures called Totoros. ⁴¹
An	1h 57min	Nausicaä del Valle del Viento	1984	Hayao Miyazaki	Japan	Warrior and pacifist Princess Nausicaä desperately struggles to prevent two warring nations from destroying themselves and their dying planet. ⁴²
An	1h 10min	Bambi	1942	David Hand James Algar Samuel Armstrong	US	Bambi navigates through life with the help of his friends, a rabbit kit and Flower. Bambi has to learn early that the lives of deer and of many of the other forest animals are not without their inherent dangers. ⁴³
Doc	21min 0s	How far is home	2020	Apo W Bazidi	US	Two Iraqi siblings who lost their parents after fleeing Syria, pursue their education in an all immigrant school in the US. While they struggle to pursue their dreams, immigration policies weigh heavy on their minds. ⁴⁴
Doc	22min 40s	Colateral	2019	Lucrecia Cisneros Rincón	Venezuela	A mother's sons were killed by State security forces in Venezuela. The first of them inside their house and the second one just a few streets away. Is approach to relatives' collateral effects of extrajudicial killings. ⁴⁵
Doc	9min 0s	Breaking the silence on child sexual abuse	2018	Ashul Tiwari	India	Every 15 minutes, a child is sexually abused in India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. Lend your voice and help break the silence. ⁴⁶
Doc	6min 0s	Cross world	2018	Nour Wahid	Lebanon Syria US	Highlighting the experience of refugee women. An intimate conversation between two refugee girls who have never met and shares the same story. ⁴⁷
Doc	5min 0s	Heal Paradise	2018	Prem Anand	India	HEAL PARADISE is a model village that breaks the stereotypes of how the livelihoods of orphans are looked at by the society. With health and education as the focus, this institution is certainly a role model. ⁴⁸
Doc	18 min 0s	The future of Iraq	2018	Thee Yezen Al-Obaide Mats Muri	Noway Iraq	One of six children today live in a war zone. This is a meeting with three of them, where they in simple terms describe their experiences of war and daily life. The film is set in Iraq, but could be set anywhere in the world. ⁴⁹

Table D1. List of films reviewed for the selection of the films (continue)

Gender	Duration	Title	Year	Director	Country	Synopsis
Doc	24 min 0s	FORCED: child labour and exploitation	2014	Pep Bonet	Bangladesh Spain	Child labour and exploitation in Bangladesh is complex. Children form part of the visual landscape: they work because society accepts their fate and survival dictating their limited choices. ⁵⁰
Doc	32min 0s	Sunflower Seeds	2013	Antonis Tolakis	Greece	"I've been here about two years, and it feels like twenty." Among a group of children surviving on the streets of Athens is Sayid, a 12-year old boy, who works all day selling sunflower seeds in the city's suburban parks. ⁵¹
Doc	20min 0s	The Glass Man	2013	Zay Yar Aung We Ra	Myanmar	From the depressed and dependent disabled boy, he becomes the one who gives physical and moral support and strength to other disables, who fights for the rights to disables. ⁵²
Doc	37min 0s	Girl-hearted	2017	Anne Scheschonk	Germany	She is a girl because she has a girl's heart. But her body is that of a boy. One day, the boy reveals his favourite dream to his mum. A wizard will turn his penis into a vagina so he could be a "real" girl. ⁵³
Doc	1h 36min	The silence of others	2018	Robert Bahar Almudena Carracedo	Spain	Reveals the epic struggle of victims of Spain's 40-year dictatorship under General Franco, who continue to seek justice to this day. ⁵⁴
Drama	2h 6min	Capernaüm	2018	Nadine Labak	Lebanon US France Cyprus Qatar United Kingdom	Capernaüm ("Chaos") tells the story of Zain al-Rafeea, a Lebanese boy who sues his parents for the "crime" of giving him life. ⁵⁵
Drama	2h 9min	Extremely loud and incredibly close	2011	Stephen Daldry	US	A young boy is trying to cope with the loss of his father. A year later, he discovers a mysterious key in his father's belongings and embarks on a hunt to find the matching lock, just as he used to when his father was alive. ⁵⁶
Drama	1h 56	La vie est belle	1997	Roberto Benigni	Italy	In an attempt to hold his family together and help his son survive the horrors of a Jewish Concentration Camp, Guido imagines that the Holocaust is a game and that the grand prize for winning is a tank. ⁵⁷

Gender: An: Animation; Do: Documentary; DB: Drama/Belic



Selected Criteria-fulfilling films



Selected Partially criteria-fulfilling short films

- 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HEkdFzHLHs>
- 2 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9711282/>
- 3 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11768948/>
- 4 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11236218/>
- 5 <https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Bao>
- 6 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9536846/>
- 7 <https://sffilm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/>
- 8 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11064862/>
- 9 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10157352/>
- 10 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9249278/>
- 11 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8879482/>
- 12 <http://heromation.com/project/the-wrong-rock/>
- 13 <https://abc7news.com/pixar-wind-new-movie-what-is-pixars-about/5753299/>
- 14 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12875772/>
- 15 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10910040/>
- 16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYhMkFAPUBQ>
- 17 <http://www.mattcerini.com/dear-alice-thesis-film>
- 18 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8980868/>
- 19 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8076638/>
- 20 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7090150/>
- 21 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9716842/>
- 22 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5545658/>
- 23 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8892446/>
- 24 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6406662/>
- 25 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5293824/>
- 26 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5094872/>
- 27 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6641402/>
- 28 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3294348/>
- 29 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1957945/>
- 30 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1490530/>
- 31 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5847768/>
- 32 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2380307/>
- 33 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3901826/>
- 34 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4769824/>
- 35 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2321405/>
- 35 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2245084/>
- 36 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1185616/>
- 37 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0808417/>
- 38 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0245429/>
- 39 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104652/>
- 40 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt00095327/>
- 41 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0096283/>
- 42 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087544/>
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- 48 <https://simaclassroom.com/films/heal-paradise/>
- 49 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8571684/>
- 50 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_Tpm58zQlc
- 51 <https://simaclassroom.com/films/sunflower-seeds/>
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- 53 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGFI_AFkL00
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ANNEX E

COMMENTS ON THE PARTIALLY CRITERIA-FULFILLING SHORT FILMS

Short films partially criteria-fulfilling: General overview

The Box: A story from Syria (2016)

The Box denounces the situation faced by millions of child victims of war; the story of one specific child does not inspire it but the situation experienced by an entire generation. A boy sees his life change with the sudden war and pushes him into a State of struggle. “The war changes the role of his box; first as a carefully built toy house, then as a place to take shelter and finally as a boat that sails for a journey towards hope” (Cirisoglu Cotur, n.d.). Despite being a short film about a child affected by war, it is not directed towards children but adults. Its purpose is to denounce to adults the suffering that a child experiences when he is affected by an armed conflict.

The film takes a closer look at the Syrian war and its consequences on a child’s life. War deprives children of their right to a family, to a home, to food and drinking water, to adequate shelter. It ends up infringing all the rights enshrined under international law and international humanitarian law. Many times, it forces them to abandon any primary affection. Unfortunately, the film remains in complaint narrative; it does not show any possible solution other than the hope of a better and unknown future at sea, which often does not arrive and only leads to the revictimisation of the child. In the end, it presents the figures of the conflict in Syria and the rights of affected children. Of the films chosen, this may be the cruellest because it shows straightforwardly and vividly every detail of the vulnerability to which this child is exposed. The short film shows how the environment affects the children and does not include any amulet the child can hold to maintain his hopes.

From this story, it seems significant to comment on the moment in which the child imagines his parents while walking from the refugee shelter to the sea with the battered box under his arms. In a story with the potential that this study is looking for, the memory of his parents could have accompanied him during the walk lighten the box’s weight and emotions. The memory of loved ones could have been used as protection against fear, danger, and the unknown. However, in *The Box*, the element was not used for that purpose. On the contrary, it serves to remind adults that the child is alone and misses his parents, who disappear when he tries to touch them.

Umbrella (2020)

True events inspire *Umbrella*. It shows some rights infringements children may face upon arrival in a new place under a refugee State. It also shows the impatience and dislikes that an unsympathetic girl feels towards the children of an orphanage. But above all, it shows how empathy and compassion can make a difference for the better. Unlike *The Box*, other children can see this film since the details of the victimisation are not shown, and it is a layer of reading that possibly only adults have.

Even though the boy protagonist and his father moved to this place looking for a better future full of opportunities, the State fails to protect this refugee child against what the CRC (art. 22) establishes. The child and his father have no roof to sleep under and no food to eat, which leads his father to leave him in the orphanage to try to protect him. This part of the film represents Lumsden's first zone. The film's plot is the boy's wish for a yellow umbrella that matches his yellow scarf because it reminds him of his father, so he steals it from a girl and her mother, who come to donate toys to the orphanage. Both these elements represent his amulets in *Umbrella*.

It is a moving story tell in almost 8 minutes. It is an achievement how the girl's unkind attitude is transformed as she gets closer to these other children. She realises that they have a lot in common. Everyone likes to play, and with the protagonist child, she shares the affection for the yellow umbrella, even if this feeling comes from two different places. Also, for the abandoned boy, *Umbrella* gives him hope by showing towards the end that his past does not define his future and that he can be happy and love again, even if a loved one is missed. In the end, it is shown that the now-adult boy owns an umbrella shop, possibly meaning a way to honour his father and stay connected to his memory. This part represents the intersection between the environment and the inner tools children's have, following Lumsden's third zone.

A folded wish (2020)

A Japanese legend inspired this student short film. It is the story of twins, who are also best friends, who cling to the hope of making a thousand origami to defeat a disease. It is a lovely film that children and adults can watch. However, from the information given in the story, it does not appear that any rights have been violated, which is why it is included in this review only for its ability to offer hope when death is looming.

Although when studying the film in greater depth, it is found that the filmmakers explain on their website that it is “*set in the 1940s during the post World War I in Japan, our story laments incurable tuberculosis. Many patients could only remain at home until they succumbed to the illness. This underlies our film*” (Chien Huey, 2020). Unfortunately, this is not appreciated within the story, so it is a detail that the child (or even adults) who watch it might not know. Then it can only be understood about the threat of a disease not related to a war conflict. Nevertheless, the literature shows that tuberculosis was one of the profound consequences of war and the industrial revolution in Japan, reaching a mortality rate of over 241 in 1944 (Mori & Ishikawa, 2018).

Another important feature that the film had was the use of origami as a gamble by the sisters to stop the disease. Obviously, origami cannot heal it but can be an activity that somehow serves as a soothing. The story could have exploited the activity as a stress-reducer and help cope with loss transforming it into an inner tool. Regrettably, that was not the case since the film did not seek to convey this study’s message. When her sister is led out of the room, the girl folds origami until it breaks, and her sister dies. For a child, this scene could generate a subconscious negative relationship between origami and death, associating it with pain and loss and transforming this pleasant activity into an unpleasant one.

If Anything Happens I Love You (2020)

This Academy Award-winner short film depicts the story of parents’ suffering and grieving after their daughter was killed in a shooting at an American school. Some critics classify it as the best-animated film that has been made to date, among other things, because of the reality of the story and the way the viewer empathises with the characters (Propes, n.d.). Of the criteria assigned to the selection, this is perhaps the film that least meets them. It is an animated short, but it is completely geared towards adults. Despite this, the story shows the suffering of parents after their daughter’s violent and unexpected death. The audience may deeply empathise with their pain and grief, and in the end, they tacitly show that pain is more bearable when shared.

Nevertheless, the real reason why this film was included in the selection is because of the 57 films reviewed for this study; this is perhaps the one that comes closest to serving a symbolic restorative purpose. The couple of parents represent hundreds of parents in the United States (US) who suffer immensely from losing their children in school

shootings. Even though the State has nothing to do with the production nor financed the film. It was motivated by the creators' willingness and closeness to the experience.

It does not follow an actual story, but it can be said that the experiences of American society inspire it. In fact, the short film was influenced by a shooting in Florida, in 2018 (Soen, 2020). That day 14 students and three teachers were killed, and 17 others were injured (Albright, 2018). One of the survivors wrote a message to her parents saying, "if I do not make it I love you and I appreciate everything you did for me" (Carrazana, 2018), which inspired the title. Between 2009 and 2019 there have been 180 school shootings in the US, leaving 365 victims killed (CNN, 2019). A 2018 reportage by *The Washington Post* found that since 1999 more than 187,000 students have been in their school while a shooting occurred (Woodrow & Rich, 2018). For the NGO International Amnesty (2018), the US government has allowed gun violence to become a human rights crisis by prioritising gun ownership over basic human rights like security and dignity in daily life.

The short film is almost entirely in black and white, so the appearance of the colours communicates and is usually related to their daughter and the happy memories they lived together. The body language of the father and the mother emphasize the sadness they are immersed in (it makes evident in the first scene while having lunch together, in silence, without communicating between them). Grieving alone and the pain has generated a significant distance between them, but the memories with their child start bringing them together and coping together. The film also shows their desire to stop their daughter while walking to the school, but it is not possible as she needs to attend school to fulfil her right to education. It is not surprising that the parents are afraid for their children to go to school with the number of shootings occurring: Data shows adults rank school violence and gun violence as their top concerns for the health of children in the US (Amnesty International, 2018, p. 73). The message the scene underlines is that schools should be a safe place for children.

McCormack, one of the directors, said in an interview that the purpose of the work was to show the pain experienced by parents who lose their children in these situations and that no one should have to live. "That is a huge testament to all of us and also to survivors - and also the ones who were lost," he said in the same interview. But also, when the film was shown in theatres, the shared experience has opened the conversation: the need for gun control to preserve the right to life. It has also served as a means from

collective experience to initiate conversations about grief and loss, which can often have a healing effect (Murphy, 2020).

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ANNEX F

MY LIFE AS A COURGETTE FRAME GRABS



Figure F1. Frame grabs of My life as a Courgette presenting Courgette when he used to live with his mother and the amulets he keeps to retrieve his parent's memories (kite and empty can).



Figure F2. Frame grabs of *My life as a Courgette* presenting Alice's character develop and the change of colours towards happiness.

ANNEX G

MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO FRAME GRABS



Figure G1. Frame grabs of *My neighbour Totoro* presenting the colour palette within the film. It shows the nature surrounding them and the development of their imagination (2Z).



Figure G2. Frame grabs of *My neighbour Totoro* while Satsuki and Mei wait for their father at the bus station. Totoro is with them as a coping mechanism to face fear and the unknow (2Z).



Figure G3. Frame grabs of *My neighbour Totoro* in the hospital visiting their mother, enjoying the vegetables and Mei with the corn as an amulet to cope with the fear of losing her mother.

ANNEX H

BIG HERO 6 FRAME GRABS



Figure H1. Frame grabs of Big Hero 6 showing Hiro's transformation and character development through Baymax's clothing. The first frame grab is before his brother's dies, second when he starts seeking for justice, and third when he starts seeking for revenge.



Figure H2. Frame grabs of Big Hero 6 showing the cap Hiro keeps as an amulet to remember his brother after he dies.



Figure H3. Frame grabs of Big Hero 6 showing Hiro's duality between justice and revenge, to finally break the cycle of violence.