UC San Diego
UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title
Transnational Homes: Representations of Border Rhetorics in Mexican Cinema at Moments of Democratic Transition

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/45t7w369

Author
Sanchez, Fernando

Publication Date
2020

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Transnational Homes: Representations of Border Rhetorics in Mexican Cinema at Moments of Democratic Transition

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Fernando Andrés Sánchez

Committee in charge:

Professor Milos Kokotovic, co-chair
Professor Luis Martin-Cabrera, co-chair
Professor Alain Cohen
Professor Brian Goldfarb
Professor Jacobo Myerston

2020

The dissertation of Fernando Andrés Sánchez is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California San Diego
2020

DEDICATION

Para Rebeca

Para mi hermana, para mi mamá, y papá

Para Kiana y Armin

Para Aurelia y Augusto

Para la familia Sauza-Eufracio, para Homero Eufracio

Para tía Mirna, tía Cachi, tía Lupe, tía Norma, tía Dora, tía Celia. Para José Luis Cortez

Para Cassandra, Alexandra, Brenda, Marco, Juan, Beto y toda la bola de primxs

To my friends, Anthony, Robert, Vincent, Bernardo, Melanie, Rubi, Stanton

Thank you to Misha Kokotovic, Jacobo Myerston, Luis Martin-Cabrera, Alain Cohen, Brian Goldfarb, Max Parra, Kenneth Mendoza, Amelie Glaser, Sergio Delgado, Jo Labanyi

For Kiwi.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SIGNATURE PAGE iii

DEDICATION iv

VITA vi

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION vii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE: PRIVATE PASSIONS, PUBLIC PURPOSE: DEFINING THE NATION AND DOMESTIC SPACE(S) IN POST-REVOLUTION MEXICAN CINEMA 18

CHAPTER TWO: THE BURDEN OF NOSTALGIA: UNWINDING NATIONALISM IN *EL ÁNGEL EXTERMINADOR* (1962) AND TIEMPO DE MORIR (1966) 49

CHAPTER THREE: IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE HOME-SPACE IN *AMORES PERROS* (2000) AND *POST TENEBRAS LUX* (2012) 81

CHAPTER FOUR: *¿PARA QUE NOS VAMOS, SI AL RATO VAMOS A REGRESAR?*: SENTIMENTAL IMAGININGS AND RE-PURPOSING THE MELODRAMATIC IMAGINATION IN *GÜEROS* (2014) AND *ROMA* (2018) 120

WORKS CITED 159

BIBLIOGRAPHY 163

VITA

EDUCATION

2011	Bachelor of Arts, California State University San Marcos
2012	Master of Arts, California State University San Marcos
2017	Master of Philosophy, University of California San Diego
2020	Doctor of Philosophy, University of California San Diego

TEACHING

2016 - 2018	Teaching Assistant, Sixth College, University of California, San Diego

AWARDS

2019	Dissertation Fellowship, University of California, San Diego
2018	Visiting Fellow, New York University, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
2014	San Diego Doctoral Fellowship, University of California, San Diego
2014	Competitive Edge Fellowship, University of California, San Diego
2014	Visiting Fellow, Harvard University, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
2013	President's Award, California State University, San Marcos
2013	Graduate Dean's Award, California State University, San Marcos
2012	Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholarship, UC and CSU system

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Transnational Homes: Representations of Border Rhetorics in Mexican Cinema at Moments of Democratic Transition

by

Fernando Andrés Sánchez

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Milos Kokotovic, Chair
Professor Luis Martin-Cabrera, Co-Chair

This dissertation explores how Mexican efforts to construct a national identity shape representation of identity at home, and how, in turn, domestic cinema is forged in the context of foreign relations and nation-building. I argue that the idea of nation as home in cinema is inextricable from political, economic, and cultural movements that construct and unsettle borders between domestic and foreign spaces. I study six cases where cinema registers rhetorical enactments of bordering in moments of democratic transition. These efforts are visualized through the psychological effects and limits represented through the characters' traumas and interactions with domestic spaces.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is organized by moments of democratic transition. Democratic transition in Mexico structures many historical events, from post-revolution nation-building, to the privatization efforts in the 70s, to the signing of NAFTA in 1994. Although the definition of transition varies from scholar to scholar, depending on the points considered to establish it, these moments of democratic transitions are centered around the emergence and evolution of an electoral system that replaces "the absolute monopoly of the PRI in government positions" (Sanchez-Prado). More poignantly, Former chair of Mexico's electoral authority and designer of Mexico's current voting system, José Woldenberg's *Historia minima de la transición democrática* establishes this criteria for transition on legal electoral reforms and their outcomes in the "production of both independent voting institutions and the gradual achievements of opposition parties in conquering offices, from state governorships and congressional seats to the presidency" (4) For Woldenberg, democratic transition is marked by electoral elections across social institutions, and the assumption that democracy exists in Mexico, and that the ballot box is a point of empowerment for Mexican citizens.

John Ackerman challenges Wolderberg's position in *El mito de la transición democrática*. If for Wolderberg, the ballot box is a point in which we can measure democratic transition, Ackerman argues that political transition never happened in Mexico because the ballot box did not empower citizens, but an economic oligarchy and political interest that maintained a status quo, which benefits only itself. This economic oligarchy, Ackerman argues, is composed of Mexican and foreign elite who hold financial and political stake in the PRI and other political parties, which he claims have been "priizados" (PRI-itized). The author claims that these

relationships were formed during the Mexican Revolution, but took on definitive form during the Miguel Aleman (1946) presidency and his triumph over *cardenismo*. Aleman's incorporation of authoritarianist tendencies were put in service for a select political and financial elite, and in some cases for Alemán himself. In summary, these strategies continued into the 20th century by different administrations. And it is through this historical line of thinking that Ackerman lays claim to the myth of democracy in Mexico.

Ackerman is not alone in this line of thinking. Arturo Anguiano has a similar claim in what he calls "endless dawn" instead of democratic transition. Anguiano suggest that political and social order in the 20th century did not spawn democracy, but a series of "broken changes", where social actors found no solution to a global crisis (16). The films in this dissertation are able to registers both the official discourse of democratic transition and the moments of mythical, or "endless dawns" of transition. These moments are outlined as follows: (1)Post-Revolution, as a moment of nation-building; (2) the rise of neoliberalism, as a moment of discontent with the nation-building process; (3) and neoliberalism realized, a nation fully immersed in the contradictions of its ideological and economic situation. Below I summarize these historical moments:

The armed conflict of the Mexican Revolution lasts from 1910 to 1920, with some precursor events, like the mine strike in Cananea, taking place as early as 1906 during the Porfirio Díaz administration (1884-1911). The bloody armed conflict laid the foundations for the social, political and economic transition. Susan Dever suggests that the consequences of the revolution can be "positioned along a continuum from the progressive to the reactionary. If the 1930s saw some radical ideals enacted, through unevenly, until nearly the end of that decade,

with the inception of monopoly capitalism in 1940, Mexico entered an ultra-conservative era characterized in the 1950s by an increasingly virulent fear of communism" (6)

Post-Revolution nation-building efforts were centered around the ideas and efforts of writer, philosopher, and politician, José Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos directed public efforts for mass audiences as Mexico's first secretary of Public Education (1920-1924). Before his time as Secretary, Vasconcelos held an influential position at both the *Ateneo de la Juventud* and presidency at the *Ateneo de Mexico*; founded the *Universidad Popular Mexicana* (for post-war laborers and any other adults who desired an education), where Mexico's intelligentsia gathered and become a force for nationalistic "rehabilitation of thought about the Race", and it is here, where Vasconcelos imagined the nation and strategized ways of promoting his vision. His strategy and vision incorporated Mexican cultural artifacts, borrowing from muralism and cinema.

The creative intelligentsia and the government intertwined in the same way it did during the Porfiriato era. The differences with this post-revolution relationship was that the intelligentsia and government were concerned with the salvation of the uneducated and impoverished. These efforts did not contradict the fact that these middle-class, white thinkers self-identified as the "civilized class," and were now in the process of building the nation. Amongst these lettered-men, Vasconcelos acted on the belief that the masses (impoverished and otherwise) must be civilized through culture, or nationalized and brought from the barbarous to the civilized through State-sponsored efforts. Vasconcelos, then, set out a series of efforts to "nationalize" the greater part of the population, or at least those within his political and cultural reach. Those efforts included but are not limited to: Enlisting artist from the flourishing muralist scene in order to communicate nationalist efforts into an ethnic and aesthetic to the least

educated population; for the literate, the SEP published editions of five hundred classics, priced for mass consumption; and enlisted Chilean poet, and "Teacher of the Americas" Gabriela Mistral to write and lecture on education to the nation's women while connecting continental philosophy to unite Mexican nationalism to a wider social sphere.

Vasconcelo's nation building efforts relied on symbolic rhetoric and iconography. And by 1930s, the vehicle in which to disperse that rhetoric and iconography was on the rise: Church-and-state approved cinema. This new technology, aligned with global modernity, and also seen as a way to interact with the global economy, made its foundations as high culture through its scripts based on canonical books and scripts written by the artistic intelligentsia. Susan Dever writes on the subject in *Celluloid Nationalism and the Other Melodramas*, "Myths of the nation and its citizens flowed in alternating currents between people and historical conditions, producing a cinema of didactic codes that borrowed from the vernacular of the muralist and the reinvigorated rhetoric of a *vasconcelista* nationalism" (23). Cinema, particularly through the genre of melodrama, become the vehicle to distribute Vasconcelo's nationalism to the greater public, domestically and abroad.

Jaime Pensado, in *Rebel Mexico*, argues that the protests of '68 were rooted in the '56 protests at the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), a working-class institution, where the National Technical Students Front (FNET) was formed. The protests of '56 stemmed from workers' discontent with low wages during national modernization efforts, unelected and corrupt officials of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores Ferrocarrileros de la República Mexicana* (STFRM), who corroborate with the PRI to freeze wages. This series of events lead to a number of strikes in 1958 and 1959, which lead to a nationwide movements, one which took place at IPN by the FNET. Eventually, the national army violently shut down protests in 1959, and it is these events

that lead to the formation of the FNET and the army's occupation of the university, events that would repeat during the 1968 protests at UNAM.

By the 1960s, Mexico was ruled by what Paul Gillianham refers to as *dictablanda*, "a place beyond dichotomies of democracy or dictatorship. The system worked through deployment of a complex and uneven web of incentives and disincentives: bribery violence, inclusion and coercion, elections and beatings, subsidies and censorship"(10). By the 1960s, Mexico had been working on its modernization efforts since the beginning of the century. When the opportunity to host the 1968 Olympics came around, Mexico pushed these efforts into a global stage, showcasing its art, architecture, food, etc. The events in the 40s of 50s—between workers, students, military and nation—were tense during the Olympic games of 1968.

Student and labor movements exploded during the summer of 1968, a continuation of the events of the 40s and 50s, as Pensado states in his book. In August of that year, the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* (CNH) formed, convened, and a number of peaceful marches followed on the premise of demanding the disbandment of riot police, freeing of political prisoners, and the repeal of "social dissolution" laws. As an answer to CNH demands and protests, the Mexican army occupied the *Ciudad Universitaria* in September. In the following month, on October 2nd, about ten thousand students gathered in *Tlatelolco*. The students found themselves surrounded by military and armed vehicles. Journalist accounts state that the shooting started around six in the evening. Some famous accounts of the massacre, like Elena Poniatowska, described the massacre as chaos and confusion. Many students, local workers, and families were killed. The amount of death are, to this day, unverified.

In a de-classified CIA document the massacre of '68 defined Mexico's inability to host the Olympics, and the government's inability to respond. The CIA document states, "Violence

this week reached a level that raises doubt about the Mexican Government's capability to keep the Olympic events and the many foreign visiting insulated from its domestic crisis" The document also points to the students' attempt to force cancellation of the event, "which they recognize as of the utmost importance to the government." The massacre marked the end and the beginnings of a relationship between nation and citizens, and between Mexico and the United States. The moment of tension between nation and civil society would only grow in scope through another massacre and liberal reformation of its laws.

Cinematic responses to these sociopolitical issues resulted in a change of production, tone, and reach of state representation. If Golden Age cinema is known for its generic conventions and formulas, Mexican cinema of the 60s and 70s established itself as an avant-garde, experimental, and politically committed form of filmmaking. The *Nuevo Cine Mexicano* set itself in contention to the popular films of Cantinflas and Tin Tan, who repeated jokes and references to government corruption, but without formulating a direct criticism. The stories in Nuevo Cine Mexicano reflected the growing public disappointment with state institutions, particular stories by Araia, Cazales, and Ripstein. This new cinema, and way of making cinema, visualized a nation in tension, but also a growing concern across the continent that denounced U.S. and European imperialism. Daniel Chavez, in *The Eagle and the Serpent on the Screen: The State as a Spectacle in Mexican Cinema*, argues that the decade represented with a "renovated impulse to film production due to three main factors: (1) the renewed and intensified participation of the state in the film sector; (2) the influence of formal film education; (3) and the emergence of an experimental and ambiguous generation of young directors. (4). Reaction to the events of 68 culminated in a new form of cinema, one more independent of state-control than its predecessor and one in-tune with global political affairs.

These new filmmakers are concerned with questions of national disenfranchisement and deconstruction of ideologies. Before this historical moment Mexican cinema depended on institutional support, what Octavio Paz calls the era of state protectionism, *el ogre filantrópico*, while its economic dependence corresponds to foreign investments. The filmmakers and intellectuals that made up *the Grupo Nuevo Cine* were aware of this dependence and looked to find new ways of making film and advancing its political commitments. In a manifesto, the *Groupo Nuevo Cine* were concerned with the monopoly of the film industry by the Mexican government. The group proposed the formation of alternative forms of production and discussion of film, such as "specialty magazines and academic journals, a film archive and preservation institute, and a training facility in UNAM, and protection for cinema clubs and festivals" (3). In *Developing History/Historicizing Development in Mexican Nuevo Cine Manifestoes around "La Crisis"*, Scott L. Baugh argues that "Mexico's only hope lies in independent artists, such as Adolfo Garnica and Giovanni Korporaal, who in the tradition of Luis Buñuel work on the margins tackling serious national interest in innovative approaches and counteract the dependency that modernization and industrial development impose" (29). Baughs' comments touch on the topic of foreign cinematic influence by the way of Buñuel, and sets the stage for the deteriorating relationship between cinema and the nation.

The period used to understand the moment of neoliberal realization in Mexico is 1994 – 2006. This time period coincides with the presidential appointments of Zedillo and Fox, and elemental moments in film policy. This period marks the political transition after 71 years from the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) to the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN), the signing of NAFTA, and the release of Iñarritu's *Amores perros.* The cinema and cinematic policy during this moment of democratic transition is elemental in understanding the

contradictions of the cultural shift. Juan Carlos Vargas defines this shift as "post-industrial cinema". Vargas states that "the industry, understood as a dynamic structure that has an economic and artistic infrastructure in order to produce films in a continuous and sustained form, does not exist anymore" (16). But, Vargas suggests that cinematic production persists despite the lack of production infrastructure available to past generations of filmmakers. The contradiction inherent in this periodization is that Mexican cinema receives the widest global recognition at a moment where its existences was left to private entities.

Distribution and exhibition received the biggest shift in Mexico's film industry. According to MacLaird, distribution and exhibition, which were "once state run and now in the hands of multinational corporations…" these changes to the exhibition infrastructure have shifted the film-going audience in "Mexico to target a higher socioeconomic stratum" (2) MacLaird argues that, because of this shift in audience, the generations' filmmakers addressed the new audience with different narratives and aesthetic content. These new aesthetics and narratives, addressed by Sanchez-Prado in *Screening Neoliberalism*, lays the foundations for a new Mexican cinema, notably lead by Cuaron, del Toro, and Iñarritu.

The signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) gave way to changes in audiovisual policy and impacted the social sphere. Promoted as a way to bring Mexico into the "first world", the trade agreement was criticized as a pathway for the U.S. to privatize major aspects of the social sphere. These concerns were confirmed when Salinas de Gortari's policies included selling off major components of the film-industry infrastructure and the selling of communal lands established by the post-Revolutionary constitution of 1920s. It is also during this time that the Salinas administration implemented of the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* (CONACULTA), which administered the *Fondo Nacional de Cultura y las*

Artes (FONCA). The biggest resistance to Salinas' policies and bureaucratic protection of the arts came from the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* (EZLN), which made their resistance public during the eve of the NAFTA signing. The period is also marked by a number of high-profile assassinations: the assassination of archbishop of Guadalajara, Cardinal Posada in 1993; the murder of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio in Tijuana; the assassination of secretary general José Francisco Ruiz Massieu in Mexico City, to name a few. In 1995, after Salinas' departure and self-exile, President Zedillo launches military action against the EZLN, which heightened the already tense relationships with indigenous communities. It is through this sociopolitical climate—electoral fraud, promised prosperity, deception, assassination, and economic instability—that I define this historical moment.

Two scholarly works are foundational to this dissertation: Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* and Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America.* Anderson's definition of nationalism shaped my understanding of nation-building and the role of media in that process. Through Anderson, who pays close attention to the development of the nation in Latin America, I was able to think of the ways that development of the nation was concurrent with the development of modernity, the role of the U.S., and the theme in nations at the midst of their inception. Sommers, on the other hand, takes a closer look at the way historical romances are elemental in the nation-building process, especially in Latin America. In her essay, *Foundational Fictions,* Sommers argues for the connection between history, politics and fiction in the process of nation building and considers how social ideals inscribed in novels are grounded in the natural society of the family. Sommers' argument allowed me to frame Mexico's cinematic culture, and analyze how film, physical and ideological depiction the domestic space, and the rise of the

nation can help us better understand the role of the nation at different moments in history, from post-Revolution to the neoliberal turn in the case of this study.

The domestic space, in turn, becomes the center of my analysis, and the way I relate each film to its historical context. My framework to think about the home begins with the elementary notion of the domestic space offered by Pallasma and Bachelard as phenomenological approach to the home. Pallasma analyzes the social and psychological aspects of the home: "Dwelling, or the house, is the container, the shell for home. The substance of home is secreted, as it were, upon the framework of the dwelling by the dweller. Home is an expression of the dweller's personality and his [or her] unique patterns of life." (132). Pallasma is mostly focused on the idea of home as a site for experience, that the home is constructed by the dweller's social and cultural world. This idea is a continuation of Bachelard's *Poetics of Space,* where he explores the *oneiric* home, "the house image would appear to have become the topography of our initiate being', and continues, "that all really inhabited spaces bears the sense of the notion of home" (102). Although these ideas are useful in thinking about the home, they miss the social and cultural contexts. But aside from these ideas of the home what is important in both of these perspectives is the home as a complex condition, which integrates memories and images, desires and fears, the past and the present. These definitions allows us to conceptualize the home as something shaped by individual interaction, environment, as the home becomes a product of the dwellers relationship to the world outside of it. Anthony Steinbock states, "the home is not something we 'possess,' but a phenomenological structure of co-existence. If we do not wish to speak of 'possession,' then the home cannot be conceived along the line of ownerships; rather the home would be that communal sphere to which we belong"(218). The communal sphere is a continuation of the social world which we belong to and vice versa. I read the home as a social

space, and for the purpose of this project, I read the domestic space as the space for national identity

In *Chapter One: Nostalgia* of Rybczynski's *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, the author analyzes an advertisement of a man looking comfortable and the selling of comfort. The advertisement is of Ralph Lauren, the famous U.S. fashion designer. Rybczynski states,

> The first thing that strikes us about Lauren's clothes is how American they look. They are based on recognizable homegrown images; the western ranch, the prairie farm, the Newport mansion, the Ivy League college. The feeling of Deja is intentional: Lauren is an orchestrator of images. Although his clothes are not faithful replicas of period dress, their appearance does reflect popular ideas about various romantic periods of history. We have seen them all before in paintings, in photographs, on television, and, especially in films.

Rybczynski understands these images as an amalgamation of U.S. culture, one sold through thousands of department stores across the globe. And to the interest of this work, Rybczynski gives credit to Lauren for understanding film, and even draws parallels between some of his early designs, where The New York Times reported as having "stepped out of a Leslie Howard movie" or "Douglas Fairbanks."

Rybczynski uses Ralph Lauren's design as a starting point to think through the designers home collection, which provides everything necessary to decorate a home. I bring this up as an example of how an entity, one based on understanding the public's taste for clothing, interprets popular images of the home. Lauren's home collection evokes symbols of turn-of-the-century wealth, and continues its running themes of "old money", which falls between 1890 and 1930, as the author mentions. Rybczynski states that "this acute awareness of tradition is a modern phenomenon that reflects a desire for custom and routine in a world characterized by constant change and innovation. Reverence for the past has become so strong that when traditions do not

exist, they are frequently invented" (9). Nostalgia plays a central role in this dissertation, the act of looking to the past to produce a present, that is ultimately informed by a mythical past.

Amy Kaplan takes on the issues of nostalgia, domesticity, and nationalism in her book *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture.* Kaplan points the reader to an April 1847 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* where an article, titled *Life on the Rio Grande*, starts "They are pic-nic-ing in the real gypsy style, enjoying the life of freedom [which] dwellers in the pent-up city would find so delightful—for a few days" (23). The author is referring to an illustration of a white family in a small clearing and surrounded by a towering forest. The mother is at the center. The husband at the mother's side and holding a rifle. The children are at the mother's feet, sharing a freshly killed deer. Kaplan states, "this family tableau evokes a larger domestic sphere to show that Texas, 'once a Mexican province' is now a member of the great family of free states that form the American union" (23).

The article, and issue in which it appeared, was published in the middle of a year-long war between the U.S. and Mexico, only moments away from General Taylor's victories in the Rio Grande. The article does not mention the war that provoked the annexation of Texas in 1845, nor the fact that the Rio Grande was a power struggle between two nations, nor does it acknowledge that Texas was a slave state. The absence of this history, Kaplan argues, is that the generic picture of pioneer domesticity could appears anywhere in the United States because of its rhetorical relation to manifest destiny. Kaplan poses the question of how ideology of separate spheres produced an American empire; how the concept of domesticity made the nation into a home at a time when its geopolitical borders were expanding rapidly through violent confrontations with Mexicans and Native Americans. She argues that domesticity is a mobile and often unstable discourse that can expand or contract the boundaries of the home and nation, and

that their interdependency relies on radicalized concepts of the foreign. I utilize Kaplan's approach as a starting point to my own work, where I explore the idea of domesticity in Mexican cinema, which, I argue help us better understand the relationship between nationalism and domesticity. I pose to tackle these question through the cinematic character's interaction with each other, with nostalgia, and with the physical space of the domestic. Together, these examples demonstrate how domesticity functions as a physical site and an embodiment of the process of nation-building and national identity.

Lastly, in my analysis, I take trauma to refer to a character's emotional response to an event that breaks with previous ideas of self and society. Trauma, in these films, refers to the profound experience of losing a home, or being without a home. I argue that the representation of domestic space reveals the contradictions of nationalist interests and expansionism. I propose to tackle this question through analysis of the character's interactions with each other, with nostalgia, and with the physical architecture of domestic space. Together, these films demonstrate how domesticity functions as a physical site and as an embodiment of the process of nationalism, as Benedict Anderson defines it, and how it reveals the contradictions of nationhood.

This dissertation is organized into four chapters informed by moments of economic and cultural transition in Mexico. Chapter one takes place during melodrama's golden age (1930-1958), when a nationalistic regime of post-revolution Mexico attempted to forge consensus and create bonds through memories of unity past and present through cinema. Chapter two takes place during a moment of crisis and resurgence (1959-1980), where cinema explores and critiques the idea of an idealized national identity developed during the golden age of Mexican cinema and directors turn to cinematic experimentation to engage with established genres.

Chapter three and four are contextualized during Mexico's neoliberal turn (1988 – Present), where a shift to neoliberal politics led to significant changes in film production, distribution, and exhibition. The films in question are linked together by moments of transition and in the way these films engage with the domestic space as a place of national politics and borders.

Chapter one argues that *La mujer del puerto* (1933), and *Nosotros los pobres* (1947) stand as cautionary tales about foreign threats through the narrative's engagement of public and private spheres. The films define a sense of private through that character's interactions with the domestic space, drawing clear defined lines between outside and inside, between *ellos* and *nosotros.* Although both films are vastly different, in narrative and market success, they remain emblematic in the way golden age films instructed and cautioned audiences through disruptions in the domestic space. The characters in the film define the private space through their relationships with people and physical interactions with the home. It is when that relationship between private and public are disrupted that characters suffer a sense of trauma and a moment of transition between stability and instability occurs within the film. *La mujer del puerto* acts as the allegorical tale of the dangers of the outside world. Rosario, the protagonist, experiences a series of unfortunate events after defying notions of private and public, which eventually leads to her suicide. In *Nosotros los pobres* the family of three are held together by their meager finances and family secrets. Once the family is unable to sustain itself financially and family secrets are made public, the narrative acts as a cautionary tale about the consequences of breaking the relationship between public and private, or that which stands beyond the nation.

In chapter two, I illustrate how Buñuel's *El ángel exterminador* and Ripstein's *Tiempo de morir* act as negotiations of the idea of home and critiques against official efforts of national identity. The characters in these films define, break, and attempt to re-establish ideas of the

home, and the idea between public and private is constantly at stake. In *El ángel exterminador*, where a group of wealthy dinner guests are trapped inside a mansion, I look at the way the film defines entrapment, and how characters attempt to break, and transcend the physical home. Although the characters end up escaping the mansion, they inevitably end up enclosed within another structure—the church. *El ángel exterminador* is a story about the entrapment of ideologies, the re-definition and vulnerabilities of the home as a private endeavor, and physical and philosophical entrapment as traumatic experiences. Drawing parallels to Buñuel, Ripstein's *Tiempo de morir* deals with the story of Juan Sagayo (Jorge Martinez de Hoyos) homecoming after an 18-year murder sentence. Sagayo's story runs parallel to Julian and Pedro, sons of the man Sagayo murdered, who are seeking revenge for their father. In *Tiempo de morir*, I analyze the way Sagayo's returns to a mythic home and the unsuccessful reconstruction of nostalgia. I also explore the way Julian and Pedro attempt to reconstruct their own home-place from an idealized nostalgia of their father.

The third chapter shows how Iñarritu's *Amores perros* and Reygadas' *Post tenebras lux* registers moments of transition during Mexico's neoliberal turn. I argue that domesticity is a mobile and unstable discourse that expands and contracts the boundaries of home and nation, and that their interdependency relies on conceptions of foreignness, and in the case of these two films, class. In *Amores perros*, the three interconnected stories of six people serve to decenter an idea of home. I explore the ways in which these three stories depict and interact with various domestic situation, and through the characters physical relationship with the architectural aspect of the home. In *Post tenebras lux*, my analysis shows how class is defined through the domestic space, how specific domestic spaces are produced through those given relationships, and the consequences of decentering class divisions. I contextualize both films in terms of their

respective historical moments and markets as a way to understand how domestic space acts as a staging for neoliberal politics and cultures.

The fourth and final chapter analyzes the way characters in Ruizpalacios' *Güeros* (2014) and Cuaron's *Roma* (2018) interact with the physical and ideological form of the domestic space to uncover each film's respective social-historical context and reveal contemporary ideas of an imagined community. Through the use of and reference to Mexican Golden Age aesthetics, the films in question are longing for the loss of a home, while trying to build an imagined community that extends beyond political borders. This imagined community is not the traditional nation alluded by Benedict Anderson, but one made up consumer-citizens around the world, and one that aligns with corporate interest and neoliberal policies, as theorized by Nestor Garcia Canclini and Sara Banet-Weiser. I consider Netflix's corporate decision to invest in Mexican production more than any other country, and the tendency to produce TV and film closely aligned to Golden Age aesthetics, as a form of building its own imagined community. In *Güeros*, a group of young people journey through Mexico City's neighborhoods in search of a mythic rock hero. In the end, the young people in *Güeros* come face-to-face with the man behind the myth, and are deeply disappointed and affected by the impossibility to interact with the object of desire. While in *Roma,* Cuaron utilizes the character of Cleo to chase a nostalgic idea of childhood, resulting in an admission of guilt about the task of narrating such a story and uncovering the limits of nostalgia. I contextualize the narrative of Cleo against economic and cultural policies that favor upper-middle class characters, who interpret her labor as indispensable, but treat her body, and its reproduction as dispensable in the hands of State violence. Both films resort to black and white cinematography and set student protests ('71 and '99) as a backdrop of social unrest against neoliberal policies. This chapter explores the way

each film interacts with nostalgia, returns to Golden Age aesthetics through its narrative and production, and further problematizes the definition of national cinemas.

The spatial relationship of domesticity exemplifies the divisions between private and public sphere: the home bounded and rigidly ordered interior space as oppose to the boundless and undifferentiated space of an established frontier. In the case of the *La mujer del puerto* and *Nosotros los pobres*, separate private and public spheres configure the home as a stable haven to counterbalance foreign territories and domestic efforts to establish ideological boundaries. *El ángel exterminador* and *Tiempo de morir* engage with those same ideological definitions only to test its boundaries and limits. In *Amores perros* and *Post tenebras lux* the question of private and public is decentered and exposed as boundless and undifferentiated. The films in this dissertation register the way moments of economic and cultural transition depict a nation in transition and how the domestic spaces serve as a philosophical and physical space to problematize ideas of home and nation.

CHAPTER ONE: PRIVATE PASSIONS, PUBLIC PURPOSE: DEFINING THE NATION AND DOMESTIC SPACE(S) IN POST-REVOLUTION MEXICAN CINEMA

This chapter argues that *La mujer del puerto* (1933), and *Nosotros los pobres* (1947) stand as cautionary tales about foreign threats through the narrative's engagement of public and private spheres. The films define a sense of private through that character's interactions with the domestic space, drawing clearly defined lines between outside and inside, between "ellos" and "nosotros". Although both films are different in narrative and market success, each film remains emblematic in the way golden age films instruct and caution audiences through disruptions in the domestic space. The characters in the film define the private space through their relationships with people and physical interactions with the home. The characters in each film suffer a sense of trauma when the definition of private and public is in question, causing a moment of transition between stability and instability. *La mujer del puert*o acts as the allegorical tale of the dangers of the outside world. Rosario, the protagonist, experiences a series of unfortunate events after defying notions of private and public, which leads to her suicide. In *Nosotros los pobres* the family of three get by with their meager finances and family secrets. When the family cannot sustain themselves financially, and they make their family secrets public, the narrative acts as a cautionary tale about the consequences of breaking the relationship between public and private.

Nosotros los pobres tells the story of Pepe El Toro (Pedro Infante), who lives with his daughter Chachita (Evita Muñoz), and his bedridden mother, La Paralitica (Maria Gentil Arcos). The family of three barely make ends meet, all while Pepe tries to form a romantic relationship with Celia (Blanca Pavón). The family can see the possibility of a stable domestic situation when Pepe receives a lucrative job offer. When authorities blame Pepe for a murder he did not commit, the family no longer sees a harmonious and financially stable family life. Chachita and La

Paralitica find themselves unable to pay rent and must find a new place to live. After living in temporary housing, Chachita and La Paralitica find themselves at a hospital because of the grandmother's declining health. Once at the hospital, the family reunites with Pepe, who escapes prison, and with Chachita's real mother, a prostitute and Pepe's sister, La Tisica (Carmen Montejo). Pepe, Celia, and Chachita reunite and restore harmony in their family life. While *Nosotros los pobres* cautions against disrupting the relationship between private and public, of the relationship between home and nation, *La mujer del puerto* disrupts the relationship to expose the consequences of what happens when the borders between private and public are broken.

La mujer del puerto shows the seedy underground of a city in the process of urbanization. Rosario (Andrea Palma) is a young woman who finds herself in an unfortunate financial and social situation. Her father (Fabio Acevedo) is sick and the family has no financial means for treatment. At the beginning of the film, Rosario finds herself with the promise of marriage and a domestic life. That promise cracks when she barges into her lover's private home to find that he is having an affair with someone else. Because of her sorrows, Rosario turns to a life of prostitution. She, like other women in the film, wander the port looking for their next client. After Rosario and a sailor named Alberto (Domingo Soler) spend a night together in the port of Veracruz, they discover that they are siblings. Struck with guilt and grief, Rosario escapes to the port. By the time Alberto gets to her, Rosario has already committed suicide. *La mujer del puerto* is an allegorical tale about the dangers of exploring the outside world. The tale cautions that if one explores beyond the boundaries of the nation—symbolized by the port and the seamen—one will confront terrible tragedy, like accidentally partaking in incest. Rosario's situational motive to become a prostitute is furthering a cautionary tale of sorts, but also stands as a vehicle in

which Rosario further explores the boundaries between private and public. To understand these films, and their ability to mirror home and nation, I look to melodrama as a defining genre during Mexico's post revolution nation-building efforts, but also to the genre's popularity and ability to emphasize the family drama, where the home is at the center of the narrative and at odds with the world beyond it.

Melodrama marked the Golden Age period of Mexican cinema. Representing about 40 percent of the total Golden Age production, the melodrama made up about 72 percent of the film produced in 1944. The genre included sub-genres, like el melodrama del pueblo, el melodrama conjugal, or the family melodrama. These films, regardless of where they stood on the spectrum of its categorization, shared similar characteristics, as outlined by Brooks' definition of the genre. Those characteristics include: "a perceived desire for strong emotionalism"; "moral polarization and schematization"; "persecution of the good"; "inflated and exaggerated expression", "usually putting heroic protagonist against scurrilous villains and narratives with twist and turns"(20). According to Silvia Oroz, the Golden Age period in Mexico, and in much of Latin America, also display four unique characteristics: 1) Stories that symbolize national allegories 2) The construction of a national cinematic image, which references the nearby universe of the spectator 3) the dramatic functionality of music. 4) the insistent utilization of symbols such as storms, countryside, flowers. With the pairing of melos (music) with drama, Golden Age directors sought to forge a national cinematic image and offered highly allegorical renditions of Mexico as a nation.

Through their allegorical renditions of an idealized nation, Golden Age melodramas were immensely popular with audience wishing to escape, Lahr-Vivaz states, "albeit briefly from the rigors of their everyday lives, perhaps finding a temporary respite from the exigencies of life in

the metropolis, the still-lingering effects of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), or the stress of war in Europe" (5). The cinema itself served as a space of escape to enjoy the "salas majestuosas. Que parecían catedrales laicas, decoradas de una manera fuero de lo ordinario, con objetos de culturas ajenos o exóticos." (Tuñon 2010, 97) Although these melodramas proved financially and culturally popular, the cinema's reach extended well beyond the confines of the country's borders. Mexican films gained such popularity in Latin America that they often competed with films made in Hollywood. These melodramas became popular with Spanish-speaking film audiences in the United States, too.

National films taught national spectators how to negotiate a rapidly growing urban center and the dangers of outside influences. These national melodramas encourage connections between spectators to form a community. Monsivaís writes,

> In the neighborhood cinemas one acquires basic skills that help to orient one in the city that is expanding: the sense of intimacy in the multitude and its complement: the pleasure of joining the community happiness, of being with others, undifferentiated and singular. During the period of 1920 - 1960 cinema multiply and are the center of the "neighborhood identity", while each weekend individuals and families polish their illusions, and couples perfect their hookups or engagements with the almost bureaucratic procedure of hands that go up, stop, speed up, become indignant in the face of inopportune struggles, become ecstatic before instant rendition.

While spectators escape reality, they also learned and formed bonds with their peers through the allegorical nature of the films. Monsivaís describes the way the cinema became a community engagement, where community members came together to configure the rapid urbanization. But, also a way to build a community for those that live in the urban center and those migrating to the city for work or life. The need to create community, or a nation, was a necessity at a moment where the country was in transition between revolution and post-revolution.

The post-revolution Mexican regime looks to nostalgia and cinema to form a national consensus. Disseminating culture through ideological state apparatus, a means for a hegemonic power to perpetuate itself without recourse to overt violence, the Mexican government turned to funding cinematic projects, especially melodramas, to strengthen a nationalist ideology. For Susan Dever, "melodramas are able to both organize and support power and contest power imbalances. The genre's accessibility facilitates the decoding and encoding of its lessons; its intelligibility invites the deconstruction of its practices." (30) Conceptually, the melodrama is by definition an excess of emotions, desires, and frustrations. And it generates a surplus of content and emotion from which stems the potential of a film's ideological transgressions. This excess, or surplus, of emotion is important in thinking about the genre's ability to communicate urgent matters, of home and society, of nation and beyond, and life and death.

Lahr-Vivaz, in Mexican Melodrama, points to this "surplus" of emotions bleeding into other aspects of cinema. According to Lahr-Vivaz, the melodrama generates a surplus, of content and emotion. This "plus" spills over into a star system where the actor's bodies become a system for polysemic signification, and into an outpouring of emotions that spectators enthusiastically embrace as they laugh, cry, suffer and learn. Lahr-Vivaz writes, "the surplus also leads to muddying of the borders of the nation—Mexico—that Golden Age directors often sought to portray. In offering spectators across Latin America and the United States a glimpse of 'Nuestra America', Golden Age melodramas exceeded the realm of the national and called into questions its boundaries." (15) While state efforts to build the nation defined national borders, Golden Age melodrama registers those efforts and puts into question their limits through depictions of the domestic space.

Representations of the domestic space in these films parallel national efforts of nation building, of creating an inside and outside, and the dangers of the outside world (that beyond the nation). The representation of nationalism in these two Golden Age films is best understood through a character's interactions with other characters, but also with the domestic space itself. The home takes a central role in *Nosotros los pobres* and *La mujer del puerto*. The possibility of the absence of a home, or the dangers of being without a home, are at stake during both narratives. In *La mujer del puerto*, I interpret the inability to pay for Rosario's father's medical expenses as a possibility of that absence of home. If Rosario and her father cannot pay for the medical expenses, the father would die, and Rosario ends up alone and unable to pay for rent, inevitably losing her home. In *Nosotros los pobres*, making rent is a prominent theme through the film, if not the focus and downfall of the family. In the film, Pepe and Chachita work collectively to make rent, and represented always on the brink of financial disaster. Both films carry a lingering danger of the absence of being without a home or losing a home itself. These relationships to the home define a hard border between the private and public, where the private is the home, and the home is the nation. And in a global context, the nation comes to symbolize the home, while everything beyond it symbolizes the public.

I define the private and public spheres through these types of character interactions and actions, but also through the role of secrecy in the film. In *Nosotros los pobres*, the secret at the center of the narrative is that Chachita's real mother is Yolanda, who is also Pepe's sister. Chachita's trauma occurs when she finds out that the tombstone she prays to is not her mother's grave. In *La mujer del puerto*, the secret is present in two moments of narrative transition. The first secret comes when Rosario finds that her lover has taken up another lover in secret. The second traumatic moment happens when Rosario finds that her new lover is her long-lost

brother. For the character's in *Nosotros los pobres*, the secret acts as a disruption of a social order, a disruption which exemplifies the consequences of breaking open the private, or the secret. In contrast, *La mujer de puerto* uses the open secret as a result with much greater repercussions, suicide.

The truth lingers through both narratives as an element that sustains stability and peace amongst the film's characters. And when that secret (the private) is revealed (public) violent repercussions occur to the characters involved. These acts surrounding public and private spheres act as cautionary tales about looking inward, and champion the introspection needed during a time of national transition, but also during the building of a national identity. *Nosotros los pobres* tells the story of Pepe El Toro, who lives with his daughter Chachita and his bedridden mother, La Paralitica. The family of three barely make ends meet. The possibility of escaping poverty comes when Pepe receives a job offer from a lawyer. The family sees the possibility of escape from their poverty-stricken situation. Pepe agrees to the lawyer's job offer and finds himself in an even worse situation than before. As it is common in Golden Age films, and in melodrama, the film takes a simple premise and constantly pushes its boundaries to the point of complete misery for the characters involved. To add to the family's troubles, and once Pepe secures money, the neighbor steals the family's rent money. Pepe looks for a loan to offset the missing money. He secures a loan through a neighbor, but someone mysteriously murders that neighbor right before the transaction is complete. The authorities arrive at the scene of the crime and find Pepe to blame. Pepe goes to jail for a crime he did not commit. The family's situation worsens while Pepe is in prison. The mother and sister, who we find out is a prostitute and Chachita's real mother, fall deathly ill. Eventually, Pepe arrives to the hospital to find the family re-united, and as Chachita finds out about her real mother. The film takes twists and turns too lengthy and

elaborate for a summary of this sort. It serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of breaking the private and public relationship, of how the domestic space is a space that must remain intact from outside forces, whatever they may be. The uncovering of the family secret in *Nosotros los pobres* exemplifies the dangers of the private made public. The first unveiling of a secret takes places after Chachita realizes that the tomb she's been mourning is not her mother's grave. In the scene, Chachita confronts Pepe about the issue while Pepe and Celia are sharing a romantic moment. Pepe shuts down Chachita's request for answers. Pepe's denial is something to take into consideration. Pepe's secret holds tremendous repercussions for the character' in the story. The negation, or concealment of the truth, acts as matters of life and death. Here, the matters are of death: who and where is Chachita's mom, and what happened to her? Did Pepe kill her? At this point in the film, Pepe having killed the mother seems outrageous and out of character, but, to the audience, and to Chachita and Celia, there are no clear answers. For Chachita, this distorts her idea of home and belonging, if that was not her mother she was mourning to, then what was she mourning? It's a turn in the narrative that turns Chachita's life into chaos, into being without a home, of unbelongingness. Even when Celia and Pepe talk, and she continues to ask where the mother is, and if, he is responsible for her death; he doesn't answer. Instead, he consoles her and asks her to trust him. Here, and in other parts of the film, Pepe acts as a keeper of order, a keeper of secrets. And through Pepe we can see a constant back and forth between order and disorder. Pepe is keeping order though the secret that Chachita is Yolanda's daughter. He protects Chachita's domestic order; the lines are bold between the truth and fiction.

In that same scene, the secret problematizes the relationship between characters, especially the romantic relationship between Pepe and Celia. While Chachita is dealing with the trauma of not knowing who, or where, is her mother, she is also dealing with Celia and Pepe's

new relationship. When Chachita discovers their relationship, in the same scene she confronts Pepe about the tombstone, Chachita yells and screams at the couple, but especially at Celia, claiming that they do not understand her pain and suffering. Pepe asks Celia to leave the house. This gesture, which happens again later in the film, is symbolic to re-enforce boundaries, and shows how the physical domestic space acts as a catalyst for the strict border of outside and inside. Although Celia is present and involved in the situation, as it involves her and Chachita, she's asked to leave and leaves without questioning. Celia respects the border of the domestic, of the private and the public defined by Pepe and Celia. This conversation, for Celia, is between Pepe and Chachita, domestic matters. Later, we see Celia attempt to enter that domestic space when she begs Chachita for permission to marry her father. Chachita's trauma is about dealing with a mistaken identity, or tombstones, of her mother, and her father's new romantic relationship with Celia, who also is Chachita's good friend. Pepe internalizes Chachita's pain. While Chachita is visibly distressed, yelling at Pepe about his carelessness of bringing another woman into the home, Pepe lashes out by hitting the already distressed Chachita.

Through the sequence in the scene, we can see Pepe's transformation between order, of holding it together, and rupture, losing it and hitting Chachita. As Chachita demands an answer, Pepe acts out violently towards Chachita and himself. His anxiety stems from the inability to hold his home together and Chachita's psyche, the secret about Chachita's mother. After he hits Chachita, he steps back, looks at himself, and begins hitting the wall. This scene encapsulates the dynamics between the self and the home. The violence against Chachita and the physical wall of the home is a violence against oneself, a lashing out of the self, which we see repeatedly in the film, the inability to control one's home, or destiny, two things seems a naturally occurring in the film. Pepe violently confronts Chachita and, while realizing what he's doing, turns the violence

onto himself. Chachita intervenes with Pepe's self-harm and restores order. The scene ends with Chachita fixing Pepe's wounds.

At the end of the scene, the camera holds the shot for a few seconds and pans to a nearby window, looking outward. This outward look re-enforces borders between the outside and the inside, between private and public. As we see in later scenes, Pepe lies to a friend about his self-inflicted wounds. He says it was an accident, though we know it is not. In a parallel scene, Chachita makes a similar rhetorical move, lying about her wound. She says, "I hit it with the hammer", and someone says, "The same hammer that your dad got hurt with?" This rhetorical move is telling, again, of that idea between private and public, what happens in the domestic space has no place outside of it. Because of this, the camera pan to the window in the last scene works to re-emphasize hard boundaries. The camera pan also shows the ease with which everything (the narrative, the family unit) can fall apart. The film is constantly on the brink of chaos, but just as we're about to see this chaos, someone steps in to restore order. Here, the wrong tombstone caused Pepe and Chachita's home to slide close to chaos. Pepe tried to keep that order as much as possible, even when Chachita did not help and was the reason for the chaos. As we see, Pepe breaks while Chachita breaks down. I see the characters as floating in-between binaries set by the narrative. Neither order nor chaos, but right in between, in the liminal space of order and chaos. This element only happens for seconds through the film. There's never when everything is in a state of uncontrollable chaos. And right as Pepe breaks, Chachita regains her sense of order, and consoles Pepe through his anxiety of being. He restores order. Pepe acts out against the physical space that defines their relationship—the home. And that space is further complicated by introducing Yolanda, Chachita's real mother and Pepe's sister.

Yolanda's introduction further complicates the relationship between Celia, Chachita, and Pepe. Introducing Yolanda also creates a dialogue about the nation and that which is beyond the nation. She makes her first appearance while Pepe is walking down the street. In this key scene, Pepe is walking down the street and runs into an intoxicated Yolanda. He pulls her aside and tells her she shouldn't be walking around town. She intoxicated, talks to Pepe about leaving, and came only to say goodbye, "I don't want to bother you anymore." Pepe asks, "You're leaving Mexico?." Yolanda cries, and her emotions bother Pepe. She asks forgiveness and describes that she tried to drown herself last night with wine and to go mad by listening to loud music. She says, "It kills me how you treat me, how much you hate me, I can't bare it." Pepe, again, asks, "I thought you were leaving Mexico?" She replies, "I'm leaving life all together. Nobody cares. Just say goodbye to me." Yolanda's departure concerns Pepe, while Yolanda hints at suicide rather than leaving the country.

The conversation between Yolanda and Pepe give us a sense the relationship between citizens and nations within the film: 1) The space where the film takes place, the greater Mexico 2) Outside of Mexico, as the character of Pepe claims its geographical and narrative marker. 3) Death as a place. When Pepe asks, "Are you leaving Mexico?" and Yolanda replies "I'm leaving life,", there are, again, those binaries the film is constantly making. And in this relationship, there is Mexico, the space in the film, where characters interact, and there is outside of Mexico, which encompasses everything but Mexico, and then there is death. She's saying, I would rather die than leave Mexico. She never alludes to the possibility that Pepe is constantly asking her—are you leaving Mexico? She says, "I am leaving life all together", and staying in Mexico. And, again, similarly, Pepe does the same move again in the film, when he's asked about taking the Bracero card. He denies it. He denies it on the grounds of staying with his family, his home, his

nation. I see this as reinforcing those ideas of nationalism, of those hard borders that the film is speaking about and produced under, of country or death. While this conversation about the space in and outside Mexico is being had, Chachita and Celia are near to Pepe and Yolanda listening in.

The conversation between Celia and Chachita further emphasizes the notion of hard borders between the private and the public in domestic terms. In some distance from Pepe and Yolanda's conversation, Chachita and Celia have their own domestic discourse happening. Celia is pleading with Chachita for permission to marry Pepe and to be part of her domestic make up. The two characters are negotiating their own places in a domestic space. There's a clear power imbalance. Chachita as the keeper of the domestic order, but Celia as one who wants to be part of it, and with good intentions and collective mindset. But Chachita feels betrayed. Celia is asking Chachita for a big favor, to reconfigure her idea of home to welcome an outsider, something Chachita is at constant odds with. Chachita, feeling that her domestic space is under attack, threatens Celia with violence. Thinking back to the scene before this, of Mexico, outside Mexico, and death, Chachita's actions parallel a defense of nationalism, of fighting for the domestic. For Chachita, she is fighting for the memory of her dead mother which we can interpret at a defense of the motherland. Pepe and Yolanda interrupt the scene. The women in the scene are distraught, each in different ways. Celia just witnessed her lover kissing another women, and that same women threatens Chachitas domestic well-being. The scene seems familiar because we had something similar happen earlier. In the exchange between Chachita and Pepe, where Celia left the domestic space. In this scene, Chachita leaves willingly and quickly, leaving Celia and Pepe alone. And, again, just like an earlier moment in the film, Celia tries to get answers from Pepe. Pepe warns Celia that the truth would "would ruin us."

Pepe insinuates that knowledge of Yolanda would ruin the collective whole of "nosotros". He uses the word "nosotros", when telling Celia the reasons she can't know about his lover. What's happening in this scene, and what Pepe is so afraid if, is that Yolanda's exposed secret reconfigures "nosotros", as a collective family. Pepe's reluctance to tell the secret is in part because of the possibility of creating chaos within his family, the "nosotros". Pepe puts those feelings to his side and tells Celia that Yolanda is his sister, and that Yolanda caused the grandmother's paralysis. The scene ends with Pepe growing angry at Celia. In the scene, Pepe grows angry that she made him tell the secret, as if it's her fault that this issue exists. But, the real anxiety of the scene is that a private detail became public, and Pepe and Cecilia must reconfigure their idea of "nosotros."

The "nosotros" in *Nosotros los pobres* is further threatened by those outside of its domestic boundaries. In another key scene in the film, Pepe leaves the home and Chachita stays with the grandmother. The camera moves from the interior to the exterior to show a scheming Don Pilar, an evil neighbor observing the family's every move, especially when Chachita is carrying money. The camera moves back inside. Chachita shows the money. The camera shows the Don Pilar now inside the home, a threat. He's watching where Chachita hides the money. Chachita puts it behind a painting. The grandmother notices Don Pilar, but she can only move her eyes. She looks at Chachita hiding the money, then notices Don Pilar lurking. The grandmother's facial expression changes. Chachita does not notice. The girl continues with her chores and leaves the house. The grandma grows anxious, unable to communicate with Chachita about the intruder. Chachita eventually leaves. Finally, Don Pilar makes his move and walks further into the home. Pinocchio, a local boy, walks in to interrupt Don Pilar's plans. The boy innocently walks in and greets the grandmother and continues with his paper route. He exits the

home. Don Pilar steps out again to make sure the coast is clear. The camera comes back to the grandmother. He comes out from the shadows, confronts the grandmother and looks her in the eyes. The Don Pilar slowly walks to where Chachita put the money. Moves the frame and grabs the money. He's walking away with the money and says, "Con este dinero se hace tanto." The film further observer. The film further emphasizes Chachita's role in the film's definition of "nosotros." Like Pepe, Chachita shares the duties required to keep the home, to pay rent, and the emotional and physical collective labor required. Early in the film, we see the way Chachita provides for the family, bringing in money whenever she can. Although this isn't the only time we see Chachita pay for rent—the last time she didn't have enough—this is a reminder of her role in the narrative as someone able to keep stability in the domestic space. In contrast, and as Chachita leaves, the grandmother acts as observer of the chaos that's about to ensue. And it is through the grandmother we can locate Chachita's role in the domestic space.

Once Chachita leaves, we receive the narrative through the eyes of the paraplegic grandmother who can't move or communicate, but can observe. The grandmother operates in an ambiguous space, between being and not being, between presence and absence. In this scene, we see how she is sitting and watching Chachita put the money away and how Don Pilar is nearby, scheming. After Chachita leaves, Don Pilar moves in. The grandmother cannot do anything but to take in all the injustice happening before her eyes. And, if we think further about the secrets that hold the narrative together, this is the only secret we see with our eyes. We find out about other secrets through character interactions. The grandmother's role, though silent for most of the film, turns into an important element as she witnesses the crime, holding a secret. And that secret, that Don Pilar stole the money, holds tremendous repercussions and sets off a

series of unfortunate events. At the end of this scene, an intoxicated Don Pilar violently attacks the grandmother, sending her to the hospital where the rest of the film's characters reunite. Although film rushes through the parts of the narrative, these last few scenes allow us to understand how the narrative reconfigures the definition of "nosotros." In the final scenes, Chachita learns about her real mother—Yolanda. We knew of this secret that lingered through the film. The secret becomes public, unfortunately, as Yolanda is dying. Pepe reconnects with his mother as she, too, is dying from Don Pilar's violent reaction earlier in the film. The two deaths (of mother figures) allows for Celia, Chachita, and Pepe to re-unite, but only briefly, as law enforcement take Pepe away to prison—again, and yet another detachment from home. The separation is only brief. At the end of the film, we see the production of a new family unit, Celia, Pepe, Chachita, and a new child. Chachita finally has a tombstone to mourn and a mother to call her own, though not her biological one. Death, for Chachita, restores order, order in who she's mourning, her biological mother. The film ends. The "nosotros", in Nosotros los pobres, unites and restores the domestic situation. In contrast to Nosotros los pobres, La mujer del puerto identifies the limits of the nation and visualizes the dangers of that which lies beyond the nation.

Often considered a cabaretera melodrama, a melodrama that takes place in the cabaret, La mujer del puerto (1933) shows the seedy underground of a city in the process of urbanization. Arcady Boytler's La mujer del puerto shows the pleasures and pitfalls of a new era. Rosario (Andrea Palma) is a young woman who finds herself in a particular situation. Her father (Fabio Acevedo) is sick, and the family struggles financially. At the beginning of the film, Rosario finds herself with the promise of marriage and a domestic life, a promise that is short lived. Rosario finds out that the man she is about to marry is seeing someone else. Rosario's father attempts and cannot avenge his daughter by attacking the former fiancé. Rosario's former lover kills the father

during the confrontation, leaving Rosario by herself and turning into a life of prostitution. She, like other women in the film, wander the port looking for their next client. After Rosario and a sailor named Alberto (Domingo Soler) spend a night together in the port of Veracruz, they discover that they are siblings. Struck with guilt and grief, Rosario escapes to the port. By the time Alberto gets to her, Rosario commits suicide.

La mujer del puerto is an allegorical tale of the dangers of the outside world, or that which is beyond the port. Rosario's situational motive to become a prostitute is furthering a cautionary tale, but also stands a vehicle in which Rosario explores the boundaries between private and public. As Sergio de la Mora points out, "prostitutes are emblematic social agents embodying Mexican modernity's anxieties, desires, and contradictions. Moving between public and private spaces and contravening societal norms" (64). The character in La mujer del puerto insinuates the pleasures of modern life, and as such, represent a challenge to the structure of polite society. The film challenges the boundaries of public and private through its characters, but also asks its audience to straddle the lines between private and public by breaking the boundaries and living, or committing suicide, because of the repercussions.

The film sets up the narrative through three key scenes: the love affair between Rosario and Victorio; the father's illness and Rosario's inability to pay for her father's healthcare; and the discovery of Victorio's other lover. The film begins with silent shots of Rosario and Victorio. The shots of the couple dissolve into more shots of the couple, playing and flirting with each other in a field. Rosario and Victorio share a kiss. The camera dissolves into a shot of the couple lying down. The first moments of sound in the film come as Rosario tells Victorio her fears about her father's health and disapproval of their relationship. Victorio says, "I'll talk to him. You'll see. I'm hopeful of a better job, and then..." He implies marriage. In the next scene,

the film visualizes Rosario's domestic situation. Rosario lives with her sick father and can barely make rent. We see a doctor checking Don Alberto. The doctor tells Rosario about the severity of his sickness. Rosario reaches for her savings box to pay the doctor. She takes crumbled money and hands him less than the agreed upon amount. Unable to make the doctor's fee, Rosario asks the neighborhood for help. Unfortunately, no one can help her. Rosario's last hope is Victorio, her current lover and future husband.

In a critical moment in the film, we see Rosario walk up to Victorio's home, who we find out lives upstairs up from Rosario. In the scene, Rosario goes up the stairs, stops and hesitates, but keeps walking up the stairs. In the meantime, a group of gossipy neighbors gather at the bottom of the stairs, gossiping about Rosario's intentions. Rosario builds up the courage to knock on the door. There's no answer. Rosario opens the door to Victorio's apartment, breaking with the private and public divide. Rosario opens the door to find her lover has taken on another lover, devastating Rosario. She closes the door. Victorio comes out to alleviate the situation. He says, "I told you not to come up!" She yells at him. He tells her to keep quiet, as to not let private matters go public. Rosario is distraught. She says nothing and runs away. As Rosario runs out of the shot and the scene, we see that Don Alberto hears the conversation. He gets up in a fit of rage, grabs a hammer and walks out. He stumbles up the stairs. Don Alberto knocks the door with the hammer. And as Victorio opens the door, to Don Alberto holding a hammer, the men scuffle for a few seconds. Victorio is too young and strong for the sick old man. Victorio pushes Don Antonio down the stairs, killing him with the push.

Through these first few scenes, we can gather enough information to know that Rosario's domestic space is in crisis. Her father is dying and unable to pay for healthcare. She and her father cannot pay rent. Although there is a promise of a domestic space, by her fiancé, that

promise dissolves when she finds that her boyfriend has taken up another lover. This is a representation of the frailty of Rosario's domestic situation. Victorio's proposal at the beginning of the film is a promise for Rosario, of a transition from living with her sick father to being in a stable romantic and financial relationship with Victorio. The brittle father represents how close Rosario is to being without a home. The feeling of anxiety is further emphasized by the film. While her father is dying, Rosario is out looking for money or medicine. And although she finds it, she's still struggling. Here, Rosario and her father represent a domestic space, one on the brink of collapse and barely making it work. The film takes cues from other Golden Age melodramas, where one missing component of the family unit creates chaos for the entire unit. Here, the element is the father, he's ill and in need of help. Rosario's future is bleak.

Rosario breaks the spheres between public and private spheres as she opens the door to Victorio's apartment, and this act serves as a cautionary act. In this scene, Rosario's act visualizes the repercussions of breaking open the private. As we see in films like *Nosotros los pobres*, the theme of private spaces gone public emerges as a sense of trauma. The scene leading up to the break between public and private is trauma foreshadowed. Before Rosario opens the door, we can see her reluctance, how she thinks twice about what she is about to do. She knocks but hears no response. She opens the door without permission from the other side. This breaking sets up a series of tragic events for Rosario and some characters in this film. The disruption sets up a series of events for Rosario and the film. Several things occur that change the narrative of the film: The promises made earlier in the film are in jeopardy, as Victorio is with another woman, fulfilling the role of the domestic space. Victorio violates the domestic future of Rosario, but is also trying to find a domestic place himself—unethically, but trying. Victorio complains about what Rosario does and grows angry. The promise of a stable domesticity fades.

Rosario runs down the stairs. Another eventful moment is when Rosario's father, Don Antonio, tries to take revenge on Victorio.

While Rosario deals with the repercussion of disrupting the sphere between private and public, Don Antonio dies because of it. Don Antonio tries to hurt Victorio for what he's done to Rosario and what Victorio has done to him. I see this as an act of taking private matters into the public space. Don Antonio takes the private information and makes it public by taking matters into his own hands, even if he can barely walk. Don Antonio proceeds with that broken relationship between private and public, and seeks to avenge his daughter, with what little strength and health he has. Don Antonio walks up and hits the hammer on the door. The men wrestle. The stronger, healthier, man pushes the weak, unhealthy down the stairs. Don Antonio dies. The narrative takes a turn. Rosario is without a father and without a domestic space.

After Don Antonio's death, Rosario can barely cover the cost of the coffin. Instead, community charity pays for Don Antonio's funeral services. In a key scene in the film, the camera shows people on the street celebrating. People are happy, yelling in celebration and throwing confetti on the streets. There are people in costumes and masks. In the middle of this scene, the camera cuts to a medium shot of a street and a carriage carrying Don Antonio's body, and Rosario mourning alongside it. The camera switches back to the festivities, drawing a parallel between a supposed private affair—mourning of a father—and a public matter—the neighborhood festivities. The parade clashes with Rosario's mourning. As Rosario is walking through the street. Rosario has a psychic breakdown during the clashing of her father's funeral and the street parade. Although she yells at the parade to stop, her requests go unheard in the crowd. Suddenly, a priest yells and pushes through the crowd, pleading with the celebrators to stop. . It takes a few seconds for everyone to realize. The camera turns to an exhausted

Rosario. What was a crowd of happy people celebrating turns into a quiet mob lamenting their behavior. Everyone in the crowd take their masks off and quietly let the carriage through. Rosario is visibly shaking, walks ahead, and the villagers walk behind her, also mourning the death. The funeral proceeds until the cemetery. Rosario buries her father, eventually.

La mujer del puerto treats the relationship between private and public as sacred. In the funeral, the shot is of Rosario walking down a street, with carriages and her father's body. The shot is quiet, only the sound of the horse and her footsteps and a priest coming along. Rosario and the priest are the only attendants to the funeral, further emphasizing it as a private event. As they're walking down, the camera cuts to a parade. The shot shows people laughing, enjoying themselves. In the middle of that celebration, the camera cuts again back to Rosario and the funeral proceedings. This cutback creates a dichotomy between the scene; One scene is celebratory while the other is melancholy. These two events are opposite between something very public, a public party and parade, and something private, the funeral of Don Antonio. The clash between private and public causes Rosario's trauma, much like the last scenes between Rosario and Victorio. As the events clash, and people are yelling, celebrating and playing music, Rosario mourns and pleads with the large crowd. Rosario goes into a state of panic, she tries to express her grief to a crowd that ignores her. This scene offers insight into the traumatic consequences of breaking between public and private that act as cautionary tales. The scene also builds on the psychic damage caused by the disruption of borders, as we see at the end of the film. Rosario's public and private spheres are in constant odds. And they clash into one another in a way that her home place is a mix of private and public, of outside and inside, without a place to call home. This scene also concludes the first part of the film. The second part, takes a new

scenario, one where we see how everything has spiraled out of control from disrupting the relationship between private and public.

Like other scholars, I see *La mujer del puerto* in two parts: the first half of the film is the narrative about Rosario losing her father; and the second half is the repercussion of the loss. After Don Antonio's funeral, the film cuts to a shot of a cargo ship, of a flag, then to the inside of a boat with its captain and sailors aboard. The scene cuts to sailors on top of the ship where sailors are preparing to arrive at the port. One sailor asks the other, "We arrive to your homeland tomorrow, buddy, do you not feel anything", and the other sailor who we later find out is Antonio, says, "Of course, it's been 16 years since I've been there. One always feels something when re-united with the homeland (la patria), even for sailors like us who don't have a homeland. Our home is the sea". The other sailor says, "I'd like to go to Buenos Aires to see my parents, but today I have no hope." Antonio says, "That's how life is, and we have to let it flow. Don't be sad" The sailors are arriving to the port of Veracruz, as one sailor announces to everyone. There's a general excitement to the arrival, especially to the Mexican natives. The scene cuts back to the ship's crew, running with excitement out of the boat. When, suddenly, the captain yells to the arriving sailors, "Careful, I don't want scandals at the port or deals with the cops". The sailors agree and venture into the port town. The last sailor to get off is nameless, but important in the scene. He greets another sailor, from another boat. The men exchange a few words in English. The sailors have a good time in town, visiting bars, cabarets, etc. And one sailor, in particular, falls in love.

This second half of the film reiterates the themes in the first half but in different relationships and exchanges. The port is how the outside world comes in and an important symbol in the film's narrative. As the audience will soon find out, both ship and port represent

the danger of the outside world and the consequences of interacting with outside cultures and languages. In this context, the port brings things into the land, or the country, or the home in a way. Or even better to consider the land, the port, and the ship. The ship uses the port to receive a shipment of people or things. The port portrays a tunnel in which the dangers of the outside come into contact with land. On the surface level, the ship in the film carries an international crew of men. We hear different accents and languages. They speak of where they're from. The men on the boat speak of the ship as home and the ocean as a home. And for Rosario to interact with that idea of home is dangerous, as we will soon find out. Antonio is amongst the sailors on the ship. We overhear Antonio talking about a return home. In conversation, Antonio tells another sailor, "One always feels something when returning to the homeland." From this scene, we gather that Antonio is someone who has left the homeland only to return later and also acting as a cautionary tale. These scenes show us the repercussions of nation and otherness clashing. The men and the ship itself represent the clash between the outside and inside.

After the scene onboard the ship, we see Rosario dressed in black. It is a re-birth from her time in Veracruz, away from her hometown. We learn, from her song, that she is now a prostitute and sells "good times" to sailors arriving to port. Several sailors propose to Rosario, who rejects their proposals. After many proposals, Rosario finds a sailor she likes, as most men are too aggressive or intoxicated. They both seduce one another and head up to a room. Once in the room, the couple kiss. The scene cuts back to a dissolve of the bar, showing images of alcohol, women and men yelling and having fun, and a shot of a man showing his muscle, and a shot of a woman's breast. Then it cuts to a shot of the port in all its calmness and beauty. Cut to the room with Rosario. We can assume they had sex. Antonio gets up to have a drink. He relaxes on a nearby couch, as Rosario comes into the shot, fixing her hair and approaching him for

conversation. She lights a cigarette and asks: "Who are you?", in which he replies, "Just another one", referring to his profession's relationship to the port, just another sailor arriving to the port for a short time. She replies, "I wish you were the last one." The couple talk about their origins. Rosario tells him she is from Cordova, and in excitement he replies, “From Cordova?!” He says, "I'm from the sea”, but she keeps asking. He dodges the question, telling her he's been everything and is from everywhere.

The conversation becomes a symbolic interaction where Rosario and Antonio face the repercussion for breaking with the relationship between inside and outside. For Rosario, who already suffered through the repercussions of breaking that relationship in earlier scenes, her trauma here will stem from the shock of incest. As she’ll soon find out, Antonio is her long-lost brother. Rosario asks, "Do you know sailors from these parts?" Antonio replies, yes. Rosario asks, "Do you know a sailor by the name Alberto Venegas?". Antonio repeats the name in shock that Rosario brought it up. He asks, "Do you know this person?", Rosario replies, "not me, but a friend", "someone like me". Antonio questions Rosario, carefully, and asks if this "friend" of hers is from here, what does she want, and where he can meet this "friend". Rosario hesitates, and avoids the question, and asks "But, if you saw her, what would you tell her?" Rosario keeps insisting. Antonio grows frustrated and gets suspicious. The couple get up from their chairs. Rosario walks away. Antonio grabs her and asks from questions. Rosario pleads for confidentiality, to promise that he won't tell anyone what she's going to tell him. "I want him to know that his parents have died. Shocked, Alberto asks, "How do you know?", Rosario asks for further confirmation that he'll keep a promise to keep it secret. Rosario says, “Because I am his sister.” Alberto yells, "Rosario!" and Rosario yells, "Alberto!". They're brother and sister. Rosario tells Alberto that "destiny took my life. I thought you were dead.” Alberto says, "How

could I have recognized you?" Rosario replies, "I see so many men. They all look the same to me", she breaks down. Alberto cries too. The camera closes in on Rosario. She breaks down, again. Her movement is slow and delayed from the shock of trauma, of finding her lost brother, but also of having had sex with him, of everything that lead up to this moment. Rosario leaves the room. The film cuts to Rosario wandering through the streets, and Alberto in pursuit of his sister-lover. Rosario arrives to the port. She looks out to the water, crying. Alberto arrives to find Rosario's black dress laying on the rocks, next to the port and the ocean. She committed suicide. The film ends.

The end of the film explores the consequences of disrupting the private and public, of the break of the domestic space, and the trauma that arises from the break. There are several points of trauma in each character: Rosario, who carries the trauma of an unfaithful fiance and dead father, must now carry the trauma of incestuous relationship. Rosario takes on a new identity in a new town, in what seems almost like a new film and storyline. She becomes a prostitute, wandering aimlessly in search of clientele and love. Her new role represents private romantic matters in a public space. Thinking back to the opening of Victorio's door, of the funeral and parade, these events form Rosario's new identity. This new identity is also a cautionary tale in the dangers of those spheres clashing, of breaking the public and private. We can conclude that her new identity is the consequences of past events that led up to this moment. Alberto finds out that his father passed and that he has sexual relations with his sister. Several things are of interest here: 1) Rosario symbolizes the interaction between land and sea, between the home and the outside world. She figuratively interacts with the outside world to find love, only to realize that she was in an incestuous relationship with her brother. For Rosario, the domestic space is promised, established, and disrupted. And, again, this is another breaking of the private and

public, the second one in the film. The first time she left without a home, since it led to the death of her father. Here, the consequences of the ship arriving, of the breaking of lines between public and private, of sea and land, traumatize Rosario, and in a lesser way, Antonio. The revelation for Rosario is too much to bear, a revelation which eventually leads to suicide.

Nosotros los Pobres and *La mujer del puerto* are cautionary tales of the Golden Age. Both films visualize the consequences of breaking away with the home and problematizing the hard border between private and public. In Nosotros los pobres, meager finances and secrets hold the family unit together. Pepe and Chachita struggle to keep their home when outside forces, be it Don Pilar stealing money or unnamed social forces, enter the domestic space. Character interactions trivialize the domestic space. The way cinematic language communicates the hard borders between inside and outside reflects a post-revolutionary, nation-building tendency to enclose, to define, and to respect those hard borders, be it psychological or ideological.

La mujer del puerto offers a similar cautionary tale but with different repercussions. This film deals with a family in a moment of crisis and transitions from order to disorder. The film begins with the romance between Rosario and Victorio. What seemed like a certain domestic future for Rosario, through Victorio's proposal, becomes a nightmare. Unable to cover her father's health expenses, Rosario asks Victorio for money. She knocks on his door. He doesn't answer. She takes it up on herself to break with Victorio's privacy. The breaking of the public and private opens up a series of unfortunate events—death of the father, ambiguous domestic future for Rosario, and Rosario becoming a prostitute. The second part of the film builds off of these ideas through the ship and Antonio, Rosario's long-lost brother. If the ship represents a fluid home, a domestic space is in constant motion, Antonio represents the world beyond the port, the foreigner or intruder against the domestic citizen. The relationship between Rosario and

Antonio then functions as a dynamic space where the foreign meets the domestic. And in this relationship, dangerous by the film's standards, the consequences are deadly.

Both films caution about the dangers of the foreign threat through the relationship between private and public. The films capture the relationship through their respective cinematic languages and through the secret(s). The secret acts as a space between order and disorder, something both films share unequivocally. *Nosotros los pobres* holds the secret about Chachita's real mother, her real family, while *La mujer del puerto* holds the secret of a love affair and the relationship between Rosario and Antonio. The secret becomes part of the border-making process of the films in question. And to the greater extent the relationship between the private (inside) and public (outside) and its consequences reflect the nation-building process in post-revolution Mexico registered by its cinematic culture.

Doris Sommers' observations in Foundational Fictions parallel the situation between film, melodrama, and nationalism. In Foundational Fictions, Sommers looks at the implications of heterosexual romance in nationalist literature in Latin America. She points out that the national novels of Latin America are all love stories, and that this "erotic rhetoric" are nation-building exercise imbedded with definitions of gendered private and public spaces. Sommer defines:

> By romance here I mean a cross between our contemporary use of the word as a love story and a ninetieth-century use that distinguished the genre as a more boldly allegorical than the novel. The class examples in Latin America are almost inevitably stories of star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interest, and the like. Their passion for conjugal and sexual union spills over to a sentimental readership in a move that hopes to win partisan minds along with hearts.

Sommers shows the inextricability of politics from narrative fiction in the history of nation-building, building off of scholarly work of Leslie Fiedler and Benedict Anderson, who pointed to the relationship between print culture and nation-building.

Sommers' main concern is how these allegorical romances encapsulate heterosexual romances, where romantic relationships serve as the reproduction component of nationalism, and how these romances strive toward "social convenient marriages [...] despite the variety, the ideal states they project are rather hierarchical". Sommers argues that the relationship between romance and nationalism relies on a language of erotics, of marriage, re-production, and hardened gendered public and private spaces. And she points out, after the creation of the new nation, the domestic romance is an exhortation to be fruitful and multiply, an exhortation that brings along the desire for socially productive love, and for the state, where this romance is possible. In narratives when love is possible, and the state can nurture that romance, happiness reads as a wish fulfillment projection of national consolidation and growth, "a goal rendered visible" by cinema (6).

In Sommer's analysis between romance and nation, the author refers to Juan Bautista Alberdi, argentine political theorist and politician, as an example of how nation-building language mirrored heterosexual romantic relationships and reproduction. Alberdi pronounced that in America, "to govern is to populate", that "Husband the land and father your countries. They have already yielded and now they must be loved and worked"—a family metaphor. It is worth to note that Alberdi formed programs for increasing the population, not only though the immigration policies for which he is remembered but also through marriages between industrious Anglo-Saxons and Argentina's "army" of beautiful women, eminently equipped for the eugenics campaign to "improve" local and "inefficient Spanish stock" (23). These affairs of the heart and

state legitimized that love had to be mutual, even if the father was to set the tone and the mother to reciprocate. The aim in Alberdi's case, and in nation-building efforts, is to engender the nation. The need to populate forms the gendered nation, the gendered spheres of public and privates, where virility is a self-evident male attribute that forms the public space through the female's domesticity, an otherwise private role.

Sommers' insights about the nineteenth century repeat in nation-building efforts in a post-revolution, modernizing Mexico's cinema, especially for the two films in question. If happy endings point to the productive unions between young heroes and heroines, the two films in question draw opposing conclusions through analogous intentions. In Nosotros los pobres, the love affair between Pepe and Celia contextualizes circumstances beyond their control, like poverty. Their love affair is possible through the state's ability to correct judicial errors, like the wrongful apprehension of Pepe.

Sometimes, Chachita prevents Pepe and Celia's romantic relationship, which represents incest and its danger, an important element in both narratives which I will return to shortly. Chachita's obstruction is a refusal to accept Celia as a "mother-figure" or "domestic-mother." Similar to Chachita's attempt, the state authorities also obstruct the relationship between Pepe and Celia. The social context in which Pepe and Celia finds a way for the couple to be together, representative of what Sommers references to as the "state in which love is possible." It is the state, for the characters in *Nosotros los pobres*, to flourish into a happy ending, where Chachita finds her true mother, Pepe and Celia unite romantically, produce a child. And while *Nosotros los Pobres* represents the happy ending, and the possibility of romance within the new nation, La mujer del puerto travels to the end of the new nation to look beyond it, and to touch its dangers that lay beyond it, figuratively and physically.

La mujer del puerto takes a different approach to the same cautionary tale. The narrative's moves between geographical spaces as an allegory for center and margin. The narrative allows characters to leave the domesticated nation's center and travel to its margin, in this case the port. Through the first part of the film, the tumultuous relationship between Rosario and Victorio emphasis the importance of fidelity to the relationship between man and woman. Rosario and Victorio represent the union between a man and a woman, the promise of domesticity and reproduction, and the consequences of violating nation-building efforts. This violation results in Rosario's life spiraling out of control and moving to Veracruz to become a prostitute. When Rosario turns to prostitution as a viable solution to her life problems. She represents a private figure (female) that transcends into the public sphere (male) to sell the act of non-reproductive sex, an opposition to the nation-building motives of reproducing fruitfully. Rosario is what Marta Fortes describes as "una promiscuidad de espacios y cuerpos" [a promiscuity of spaces and bodies]. Fortes argues that the film, "hizo surgir posturas contrarias que disputaban los limites de lo nacional como la articula la nueva ideologia nacionalista" (made opposing positions emerge that contested the limits of the "national" as articulated by the new nationalist ideology). Rosario's new life as a prostitute gives way to coming in contact with men from all over the world, and where one of those men, she learns, is her brother. Rosario's proximity to the limits of the nation, of being a non-reproductive sexual being, results in an incestuous relationship with her brother and leads to Rosario's suicide. Both films wrestle with incest. In Nosotros los pobres, incest is at bay through the relationship between Pepe, la Tisica, and Chachita, though never fully explored in proximity. In La mujer del puerto, the incestuous relationship is, if not, the guiding narrative force that leads to Rosario's suicide.

The purpose of incest in both films represents physical, social, and biological elements of a nation in the making. In the physical sense, films represented a sense of movement forward, of modernity, or what Karen Beckman refers to a "critical paradigm that repeatedly aligns the automobile with the moving camera, the moving filmstrip, and the illusion of movement created in the act of projection" (4). I see this movement as a representative of the nation-building efforts, of progressing "forward", of not going back or repeating. Repetition becomes allegorical for anti-progressive efforts, progressive defined by nationalist ideologies. Therefore, film and its narratives created an illusion of moving towards to a more modern future for the nation. Taking this idea of forward movement with the theme of incest, we can understand incestuous relationships as counter intuitive to nation-building efforts. Incest complicates efforts to unify the various fractions of a rapidly changing, and seemingly "forward-moving" nation. Incestuous relationships are unproductive to a nation's efforts to populate and form a public. Andrea Noble, in Mexican Melodrama, notes that "by rehearsing a narrative of incestuous desire, and punishing the consummation of that desire, La mujer del puerto denounces a category from which it wishes to distance itself—the savage, pre-modern" (40). We can come to understand how incestuous relationship between the two characters is a repercussion of the modernizing, rapidly urbanizing spaces, and in this case that edge represents the edge of morality and modernity. Therefore, the consequences of incest are so beyond the modern nation, that the moral authority and justice does not come from the state, or a formalized justice system, but from within oneself.

Where the films of the golden age promised a future, the films to come cancel that future and prosperity through the use of repetition a cinematic language. Repetition becomes the enemy of modernity's definition of progress, or as a noted earlier, of "moving forward." Most notably, writers, artists, and filmmakers explored the concept of repetition to critique a nationalist

ideology and form of filmmaking. In the next chapter, I begin with the assumption that if cinema has the capacity of constructing history, it can undo its own project. This cinema of unraveling takes a stand against nation-building efforts through Latin America, with notable writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Carlos Fuentes. The films in question become reactions to a country and continent that failed to self-identify in a shifting global economy. In the following chapter, I argue that Buñuel's *El ángel exterminador* and Ripstein's Tiempo de morir, the latter written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Carlos Fuentes, act as critiques against the themes championed in *Nosotros los pobres* and *La mujer del puerto*. Buñuel and Ripstein's films question the relationship between public and private through a character's interactions with the physical and philosophical domestic space. The characters in the next chapter produce, break, and attempt to re-establish ideas of the home, and the idea between public and private is constantly at stake. By understanding these aspects of Mexican's national cinema, we can a gain a deeper insight into how cinema registers and plays a role in the process of economic and cultural transition, and how repetition and nostalgia act as allegories to explore issues within a Latin America's complex history with modernization.

CHAPTER TWO: THE BURDEN OF NOSTALGIA: UNWINDING NATIONALISM IN *EL ÁNGEL EXTERMINADOR* (1962) AND TIEMPO DE MORIR (1966)

In this chapter I illustrate how Buñuel's *El ángel exterminador* and Ripstein's *Tiempo de morir* act as re-negotiations of home and critiques against nation-building efforts of the Golden Age of Mexican cinema. The characters in these films define, break, and attempt to re-establish ideas of the home, and the idea between public and private is constantly at stake. In *El ángel exterminador*, where a group of wealthy dinner guests are trapped inside a mansion, I look at the way the film defines entrapment, and how characters attempt to break, and transcends the physical home. Although the characters end up escaping the mansion, they inevitably end up enclosed within another structure—the church. *El ángel exterminador* is a story about the entrapment of ideologies, the re-definition and vulnerabilities of the home as a private endeavor, and physical and philosophical entrapment as traumatic experiences. Drawing parallels to Buñuel, Ripstein's *Tiempo de morir* deals with the story of Juan Sagayo (Jorge Martinez de Hoyos) homecoming after an 18-year murder sentence. Sagayo's story runs parallel to Julian and Pedro, sons of the man Sagayo murdered, who are seeking revenge for their father. In Tiempo de morir, I analyze the way Sagayo's attempts a return to a mythic home and the unsuccessful reconstruction of a nostalgia. I also explore the way Julian and Pedro attempt to reconstruct their own home-place from an idealized nostalgia of their father. I show how Buñuel and Ripstein were not only in conversation with Mexico's cinematic history but also with industrialization and urbanization in a country opening to foreign trade and investment.

El ángel exterminador visualizes a group of wealthy dinner guests trapped in a mansion. As its narrative unfolds, the guests learn that the servants are leaving without reason. The absence of servants leaves the wealthy dinner guests to fend for themselves as they find the

mansion impenetrable from the inside. The anxiety of entrapment leads dinner guests to madness, sickness, and repetitive logic, which results in violence and trauma. The film casts Enrique Rambal as Edmundo Nóbile, Lucy Gallardo as Lucia Nóbile; Silvia Pinal as Leticia. Silva Pinal's then-husband Gustavo Alatriste produced the film, who also produced Viridiana (1961) and *Simon del desierto* (1965). The original title of the film was set to be *The Shipwrecked on Providence Street*, alluding to the mansion as an island that one cannot leave, as some scholars have pointed to, is a continuation of Buñuel's Robinson Crusoe. In an interview about *El ángel exterminador*, Arturo Ripstein says, "Mexico has always been a country that has done films of what Mexico would have liked to have been." He expresses how old Mexican films, referring to the Golden Age, pre-Buñuel, visualized an ideal society, where state or church were vehicles for social justice and redemption. Ripstein continues with this line of thought in his own films.

Tiempo de morir is Arturo Ripstein's first feature film. Directed by Ripstein and written by Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the film narrates the story of Juan Sagayo's homecoming after an 18-year murder sentence. Juan's attempt to return to his old life comes with several trepidations. He quickly learns that his return is unwelcome by his old town, especially by the Trueba brothers, sons of the man he killed 18 years ago. The film acts as a metaphor for the dangers of engaging with nostalgia, of the repetitive nature in chasing a fading idea of home, and the death of a man chasing a mythological home.

Although directed by Ripstein, *Tiempo de morir* is written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Carlos Fuentes, whose works *Cien años de soledad* (1967) *and La muerte de artemio cruz* (1962) stand as exemplary novels about the consequences of modernization in Latin America, and played a significant role in the re-direction of Latin American narratives in 60s and 70s. The

writing team (Marquez and Fuentes) wrestle with the same consequences in *Tiempo de morir* as they do in their respective bodies of work. The tendencies to un-write foundational fictions linger throughout *Tiempo de morir* and by Buñuel in *El ángel exterminador*. As Doris Sommers notes, in *Foundational Fictions*, "The great Boom novels rewrite, or un-write, foundational fictions as the failure of romance, the misguided political erotics that could never really bind national fathers to mothers, much less the *gente decente* to emerging middle and popular sectors" (10) and no writers disintegrate more than the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Carlos Fuentes, The linear narratives of the Golden Age, which offered redemption has a conclusive place through the state or religion, are reconstructed through the lenses of repetition and nostalgia for a mythic past. With *El ángel exterminador*, repetition becomes the focus of a group of people stuck in an endless cycle of class and nationalism. In *Tiempo de morir*, the characters' individual notions of nostalgia become the downfall and death to all of those involved. The traumatic elements that lead to the downfall of Marquez's Buendías and Fuentes's Artemio Cruz mirror Ripstein's Juan Sagayo and the Buñuel's dinner guests.

Anxiety also plays a dominant role in both films. In *El ángel exterminador* the anxiety gives way to the question of trauma, of being stuck and not knowing how to get out and, for some characters, the inability to return home. In *Tiempo de morir*, Sagayo suffers from the anxiety from the impossibility of reconstructing his nostalgia. Similarly, the brothers, who suffer from the loss of a father are in a constant state of anxiety about failing to kill Sagayo. Even at the end of *Tiempo de morir*, for Julian, the brother that finally shoots Sagayo dead, trauma is cyclical, as he stands where Sagayo started his journey, and now must live with the burden of murder—as Sagayo once did. For Heidegger, anxiety is the uncanniness of being without a home: "In anxiety one feels 'uncanny'. Here the peculiar indefiniteness of that which is Dasein

finds itself alongside in anxiety, comes proximally to expression: the 'nothing and nowhere'. But here 'uncanniness' also means 'not-being-at home'. (Heidegger) Similarly, Marc Ripley, in *A Search for Belonging: The Mexican Cinema of Luis Buñuel* proposes the term home-space as a continuation of the place-world, "moving from representations of the geographical body-self as it enacts and is emplaced in its surrounding to the more intimate question of belonging" (131). Dwelling and belonging are at stake in both films. In Buñuel, the home is a place of discomfort and anxiety, where the upper-class guests are slowly decomposing alongside the physical structures of the home. This process, as seen in several scenes, is a constant of anxiety. I tie the decomposition of the self to the decomposition of the home-space, and ultimately to the aesthetics and politics of nationalism. In both films, losing the home is a point of trauma.

The films in question register a shift in Mexican history and film production. The end of the Golden Age is characterized by shifts in cinematic production, continental revolution, an increase in income inequality, and an economic crisis which called the state's competence into question. The genre of the melodrama came under criticism as audiences increasingly associated the aesthetic and rhetoric of the Golden Age with state power. During the 50s and 60s, Mexican cinema undergoes a crisis in production where "directors increasingly released serials and sexicomedias, seeking quick profits rather than the critical and popular acclaim of years past" (Lahr-Vivaz 21). The films produced during this time did not reach such a large audience as Golden Age cinema did, nor did they make claims about its ability to represent nation-building efforts. Instead, the films in question were a reflection of a film industry in crisis and an opposition to Golden Age's nation-building efforts. Coupled with the end of World War II, cinematic interdependence between the U.S. and Mexico pushed neighboring countries away from each other, resulting in a production crisis in Mexico and a focused U.S. expansion into

Latin America countries, where Mexico seemed to serve as a border between the US and a Latin America market.

One reason for the decline in Mexican film production during this time is because of the lack of investment in distribution and reliance on Hollywood to distribute Mexican films. Lahr-Vivaz points to this decline, "Mexico's unwillingness to pursue a film policy that directly challenged U.S. interests along with a more aggressive policy by the United States in favor of U.S. films subsequence contributed to the decline of the Mexican industry". The decline in Mexican film production began in 1947, where the nation produced 57 feature films, a decline from 71 films the year before. Amongst the factors in this decline is the resurgence of Hollywood films production, "which now had as a goal the complete recovery of its Latin America market…the almost immediate withdrawal of the financial and technological support that produced from the United States had extended to the Mexican film industry during the war years, and finally, no less important, the decline in investment rates, which resulted in financial investment per film" (Lahar-Vivaz 23), With the end of WWI, Hollywood focused on expanding further into the Latin American market, bypassing a once strong Mexican film industry. The decline in U.S. support was only a component in the grand scheme of the crisis. Further south, the Cuban revolution in 1959 gave way to a new form of overtly political cinema in Latin America, a cinema committed to social realism in opposition to the melodramas of a nation in formation.

To further understand the context of Buñuel's and Ripstein's work, we can look at the way the hemisphere responded to these melodramas. In example, Cuban filmmakers reacted against melodrama in the form of a politically committed cinema, which made its way into the continent's cinematic tendencies. Julio Garcia Espinosa, in his essay of the same name, termed

this Latin American cinema as imperfect cinema, a cinema that established itself in contradiction to Hollywood and that sought to better reflect lived reality. These melodramas, common throughout the continent, gave way to a new way of film-making, one committed socially and politically to the lived realities of its audience. In an article published in Cine Cubano, Enrique Colina and Daniel Diaz Torres wrote, "The popularity of melodrama is not only the product of a deformed cinematography or literary taste. Its acceptance is in response to the petty bourgeois values deeply rooted in the people and systematically publicized by the erosion of an ideological superstructure. Taste is, finally, the reflection of the assimilation of this superstructure which as an educated man in the ethical principles immanent in the system" (4). Through the continent, melodrama translates to an impossible utopia, a mask for the nation to see itself in relation to itself. The acceptance of melodrama becomes an acceptance of an "ideological superstructure" in the continent, which Buñuel and Ripstein opposed politically and aesthetically.

Buñuel and Ripstein situate themselves between the epic, an ideological conservative genre of the Golden Age, into a new cinema, a political, experimental cinema of auteurs. During Miguel Alemán's administration, Mexican culture and politics took a turn to a model of development based on industrialization and urbanization, which resulted in a country opening to foreign trade and investment. These transformations, according to Ignacio Sanchez Prado, "impacted culture decisively and the tension between capitalist development and the social and cultural spheres of the country produced some of Mexico's major cultural works (224), like *El ángel exterminador* and *Tiempo de morir*. These two films not only reflected the tensions between modernity and cosmopolitanism in Mexico, but also the "integration of bodies and subjectivities into the global flows of transnational capital." (244) To better understand the

"global flow of transnational capital", we can look to genre as a critical component within the Mexican film industry: the comedia ranchera, the revolution/historical epic, the family melodrama, the cabaret era musical, and the social comedy. As Acevedo-Muñoz notes, "these genres are classified in terms of their social functions and atmosphere even more than their structural peculiarities. For example, the ranchera is customarily a romantic story set in a rural, bucolic setting. It invents a world full of innocent peasants; gentle, landowning patriarchs; hyper-masculine, honorable charros; and virginal, beautiful women—thus idealizing country life before the era of modernization" (6)

Three genres are of interest in contrasting Buñuel and Ripstein: 1) the revolutionary epic, which dramatizes a specific segment of the Mexican revolution, articulating a synecdoche of the nation through the male hero 2) the family melodrama, which wrestles with traditional moral values of Catholicism and patriarchy. It often restates the authority of the church, family, and the state. 3) The cabaret era films, a genre set in bars, cabarets, bordellos, or dance halls, and that tackle the difficulties of sticking to morals in a moment of urban growth and modernization. Yet they are comparable to these genres because of Buñuel's ability to grab from established genres and re-invent or criticize through established aesthetics. In a way, we can see Buñuel and Ripstein as revisionists of traditional Mexican genres, especially in films such as *Los olvidados*, *Él*, and *Subida al Cielo*, for Buñuel; and *Castillo de la pureza* and *El santo oficio* for Ripstein.

In *El ángel exterminador*, Edmundo and Lucia Nóbile host a group of wealthy dinner guests at their home. The couple notices that servants are leaving their posts as guests arrive. The unexplained departure of the servants leaves the hosts and guests perplexed. As the narrative unfolds, the wealthy dinner guests find themselves trapped without explanation within the Nóbile's home. This entrapment without explanation creates a sense of anxiety for the home's

inhabitants, as they collectively try to leave the home by trying to break through walls, doors, windows. After finding that their efforts to escape are futile, a single guest, played by Silvia Pinal, realizes that they only way to escape is by returning to the original places they found themselves before the 'event.' I am particularly interested in the way these characters interact with the physical home. I look at the way it traps them, how they attempt to break, and transcends the physical home. Although the characters end up escaping the mansion, they inevitably end up enclosed within another structure—the church. *El ángel exterminador* is a story about the entrapment of ideologies, the re-definition and vulnerabilities of the home as a private space, and physical and philosophical entrapment as traumatic experiences.

The film's opening scene foreshadows the engagement with physical and philosophical borders. The first shot of the film is of a church. The shot takes up the entire screen. The second shot is of a street sign that reads, "Calle de la Providencia". In this second shot, we can see the gates of a mansion in the background. A panning shot reveals several things: the outside of the mansion, two long borders and an entrance in the middle, two pedestrians walking on the street, and cars passing by the pedestrians. The film cuts to a close-up of the entrance. We see two heavy steel doors. The shot holds us for a few seconds. The doors open. A man steps out from behind the doors, and he quickly closes the door behind him. We later find out the man's name is Lucas, a member of the household staff. As Lucas is leaving the mansion and closing the door behind him, the majordomo steps into the shot from behind the doors. The majordomo asks, "Where are you going?" Lucas answers, "For a quick walk." The majordomo replies, "We have 20 guests arriving. How could you go now?" Lucas claims his absence is only temporary, and he will be back as soon as possible. The majordomo grabs Lucas by the arm and says, "Go. But you'll never set foot in this house again." Lucas is unaffected by the majordomo's ultimatum.

Lucas proceeds to leave the shot and the mansion altogether. The majordomo closes the door. The scene ends.

Analyzing this sequence of shots offers insight into how the film defines the domestic space and a context to which to treat the film. The first shot of the church represents an ideology, Catholicism, a theme Buñuel constantly explores. This first shot also represents a structure, a physical building. The physicality of the church encompasses the entire screen, symbolizing a sense of totality. This totality is both a physical and philosophical structure, seemingly impenetrable from the inside or outside. Impenetrability, the impossibility of going in or out, becomes a constant theme through the characters' behaviors and ideologies. Further reinforcing the themes to come, the shot follows another shot of the mansion where the action takes place. We see a street sign that reads, "Calle de Providencia." The OED defines Providence as "foresight; anticipation of and preparation for the future; prudent management, government, or guidance" and "in full providence of God (also nature, etc.), divine providence, the foreknowing and protective care of God (or Nature); divine direction, control, or guidance." The definition is Providence, or Providencia, is helpful in thinking about the previous shot. The totality of impenetrable structures is a constant theme through the film

These first few shots re-enforce isolation as a concept. The shots enforce isolation through the impenetrable church doors, the reference to providence, and the blurred images of the mansion in the background. The film defines borders through these types of shots and relationships. In terms of sequence, the film begins with the church doors, narrows its scope to a street, and furthers the scoop of focus into the mansion where most of the actions take place. And in thinking of that sequence in reverse, the film's actions take place within the mansion, the guests escape into the outside world (into the street), and end up at a church, where they are,

again, isolated with no escape. This sequential relationship (Church, street, mansion; and mansion, street, Church) becomes important for the characters in the film. The relationship points to the level of structures within structures, both physical and philosophical. Although the film sets these structures early on, and at the end, the narrative is in constant dialogue with its own definitions of borders, be they ideological or physical. It is of note to think of the two types of doors presented early in the film. The first door takes up the entire screen, a totality that resembles a wall. The second door is in flux. We can see beyond the doors. The ability to see beyond it creates a sense of negotiation, which the first shot denies. This creates possibility, of a hope carried by several characters in the film but negated by their physical surroundings.

Lucas's interaction with the majordomo speaks to the dichotomy established by the two shots of the door. In this scene, two elements are of interest: 1) Lucas' ability to cross borders (the border of the house), a privilege denied to the dinner guests. 2) The majordomos' angry reaction to Lucas's departure. Lucas's ability to cross borders is not unique. I grant it to the other cooks and servants. As we see from the end of the film, the cooks and servants that leave can return to the mansion unlike the dinner guests. In contrast, the majordomo's reaction is telling of how he, and the rest of the dinner guests, rely on the labor of the cooks and servants. This is an anxiety that grows as the film progresses. It is present in the moments when either the majordomo or Edmundo realize that house staff is leaving. The anxiety produced by these departures creates a transition in the narrative. The wealthy dinner guests have nobody to make their lives possible. This decentering begins with Lucas's departure and continues as the rest of the staff leave.

The staff's departure continues in the kitchen scene, as the majordomo finds that his staff is leaving or plotting to leave. This kitchen scene further emphasis the majordomo's anxiety,

which complements Edmundo's confusion in the next scene. The shot where Edmundo notices Lucas's absence serves as a visual representation of isolation. The shot shows Edmundo greeting his guests at the door. Edmundo mingles with the crowd. We lose Edmundo for a second. This loss results in a disassociation between the self and the crowd. Edmundo becomes part of the crowd only to detach himself briefly. Edmundo moves away from the ground and closer to the camera. The camera pans up and isolates the character against the backdrop of the mansion and guests. He asks himself out loud, "That's odd. Lucas isn't here." The low-angle shot moves away from the crowd to show Edmundo, confused and worried about Lucas, with the home's interior architecture, chandelier and staircase. Here, Edmundo's confusion and worry reinforce the breakdown of a domestic structure. And because Lucas is not here to welcome the guests, take their coats, escort them to where they belong, then it becomes Edmundo's job to do so, an inversion of labor structures and a point of trauma for Edmundo.

These themes are further explored in the scene where dinner guests are at the dining table, particularly the conversation between Blanca and Alvaro. Blanca says, "So the youngest colonel in the army claims to be neither honorable nor heroic." Àlvaro says "Blanca, I can't stand the roar of cannons." Blanca replies, "What about the fatherland?" Àlvaro says "The fatherland is a string of rivers that flow into the sea." Blanca replies, "…which is death". Àlvaro replies "Yes. Death for the fatherland". The scene jumps to Edmundo's toast. He praises the other host, Silvia, for the dinner to be had. Silvia then runs down the dinner menu. Silve announces the reversal of dinner's traditional servings. Guests will eat starting from the final meal down to the first. Guests will start with a Maltese dish, "usually served on the island as an hors d'oeuvre". A guest interrupts Silvia: "I had it in Capri." The camera shifts to a waiter walking with a tray. He stumbles and breaks everything on the tray. The guests erupt in laughter,

some guests compliment Silvia for the joke. Silvia feels embarrassed and excuses herself to the kitchen. The camera takes us into the kitchen. Silvia asks for an explanation of the recent accident. There's a small bear in the room, which Silvia demands to "not to be let out." The majordomo informs Silvia about urgent matters that require her attention, the departure of staff. Pablo interrupts the conversation. Silvia catches the pair mid-exit, questioning the meaning of their departure. Pablo explains that his sister is sick, and they require his presence in case matters worsen. Silvia turns to the unnamed man, and he explains that he's only going for moral support. Silvia says, "Leave now and you're fired", reminding us of the threat made by the majordomo in an earlier scene. The two cooks take their chances and leave.

The conversation between Blanca and Alvaro draws up the topic of nationalism. Alvaro's comment, "The fatherland is a string of rivers that flow into the sea", is important as it draws a parallel between the fluidity of a river and the ideological structures of nationalism. The film poses the theme of impenetrable structures, as we see in the first few shots, and the conversation of fluidity, as Alvaro brings up. Blanca's initial comment, "So, the youngest colonel in the army claims to be neither honorable nor heroic", establishes a binary of two extremes: Being a colonel in the army, a high-ranking position in defense of the nation; and the idea of the unheroic and dishonorable. Alvaro opposes the idea and observes the fate of symbolic nationalist rivers and their inevitable fade into a sea. It is also a comment about the structures of nationalism, of the borders that form the nation. Alvaro's comment serves to think of the film's premise, trapped dinner guests, with the impossibility of fluidity and the prison of physical or philosophical entrapment. Blanca, in response to Álvaro's comment about the string of rivers flowing into the sea, says "…which is death." Alvaro, in a circular rhetorical way, replies, "Yes. Death for the fatherland."

Silvia's comments about the dinner menu reinforce the idea of disorder. She begins by asking for forgiveness in changing the order of the menu. Instead of starting with an appetizer, in the traditional sense, Silvia chooses a dish reserved for the main course. Silvia's reversal serves as an indicator of what is coming and what has already occurred, the reversal of roles, traditions, and labor. Silvia's gesture serves as the film's ability to ordain disorder to order. The disorder causes a set of consequences for the characters in the film. Although we've seen this happen with Edmundo earlier in the film, we see how disorder causes anxiety for Silvia. Silvia's choice of dishes is telling. The international scope of the servings and the conversation at the table expand the film's discourse. It serves as a reflection of these character's ability to transcend through national borders, a right they will soon discover has been mysteriously denied to them. The waiter's accident reflects the disorganization, and perhaps the clumsiness, of the menu. The guests laugh as the waiter falls. Some guests attribute the accident to a practical joke by their hosts. The accident causes a visible uneasiness in Silvia. She sees all the guests laugh but withholds any response. She excuses herself and goes into the kitchen. This scene shows one host' psychological breakdown. From when she intentionally creates a disorder in her dinner menu, to the unintentional accident with the waiter, Silvia acts out this anxiety through her treatment of Pablo and the unnamed man.

Pablo's daughter's illness serves as a metaphor in which to explore the body in relation to the physical entrapment of the home, and the situation the guests will find themselves in. Pablo plans to leave and care for his sick daughter. In this scene, I am interested in the unknown daughter's illness. We never see Pablo's daughter, and they do not confirm her illness or her existence. Despite these circumstances, we can take her sickness as a metaphor for the breaking down of the body, a theme we will see throughout the narrative. We can read sickness as

breaking down, of the inability for the body to reproduce itself, to stay alive. This sickness draws parallel to several other themes in the film. In architectural and visual terms, the opening shot is an impenetrable visual structure, restricting the viewer from seeing beyond it, and restricting whatever is beyond it from seeing outside of it. The closeup of a steel gate offers us a toned-down version of that same totality, where we experience movement and a shot that does not take up the full screen. We can see beyond it, even though it is the darkness of night. Lucas's escape exposes that steel structure. We can peek beyond the gates. These three events point to a breaking down of structures, of total order to eventual disorder.

The firing of Pablo and the unnamed waiter are reminiscent of Lucas's departure. The pair offers an excuse, like Lucas does earlier in the film. But, ultimately, Silvia, like the majordomo before her, is not having any of it, and instead offers an ultimatum. Sickness, and the visual representation throughout the film acts as a symbolic representation of biological chaos that mirrors the socio-cultural chaos happening within the architectural confines of the home. This chaos, or repetition as I show later, is at the center of the film's narrative, but also a fleeting center stuck in a circular logic that makes little sense for the guests. Repetition becomes a prominent theme within the household and a symbolic trope to denote architectural structures, but circular logic that continues reproduce itself and arrive to the same conclusion. The film begins with a sense of order. Through the characters interactions and acts, the film quickly finds itself in disorder with no clear sense of how regain order. After these scenes, the house goes into a circular logic, a circular logic that leaves the inability to leave the home unexplained, a logic that says the guests in *El ángel exterminador* cannot leave the house because they cannot leave the house.

The anxiety of entrapment causes a state of social panic. The guests are tired, weary of the mental pressures of entrapment. In a moment where Edmundo wanders in the living room, Leticia has a revelation. She shouts, "Edmundo, don't move." She realizes something but cannot articulate her feelings. Leticia walks around the room. She asks everyone how long they've been there and how much time has passed. Nobody knows. Leticia asks everyone to think of how many times each person has changed positions during this "horrible eternity." Leticia mentions that someone has been moving the furniture. And she notices, in a great epiphany, that although the people and furniture are not in their original place and that the piece eventually end up in their original locations. They are exactly where they were that night when everything changed. And in one of the greatest moments of Mexican cinema, Leticia, Silvia Pinal, breaks with the horrible repetitiveness of eternity. The other guests realize that it is, in fact, not an illusion, but a reality—they were all in the same place as that night. Even Blanca, who was playing the piano is sitting in the same position. A guest murmurs, "Yeah, but what difference does this make." Blanca plays the same song she was playing on the piano, but just the ending, as we hear and as Leticia demands. The camera points to the haggard guests. Leticia looks back and forth to the guests and to Blanca. Nothing. Leticia demands that they applaud, to re-enact an earlier event (though earlier is a close indicator when it happened). The group makes the effort, slowly and painfully. The group rejoices by hugging and kissing one another. Leticia leads the charge to the exterior. The group follows their leader, Leticia. They greet everyone waiting outside. The screen fades to black.

At this point in the film, we've seen the guests deal with several sicknesses, dialogues, quells, and even love affairs, and the breakdown of social tradition. This is a turning point in the narrative, as the guests have tried everything within their power to leave the "horrible eternity",

finally it is Leticia that can piece together the elements to break the happening. What is of note in this scene, and something I write about in the analysis for the previous sequence is the element of repetition. We see the element of repetition early in the film, particularly with the scene between Lucas and the majordomo, and, again, with Pablo and Silvia, as Pablo and the unnamed man are trying to leave. In a moment of quiet desperation, it is Leticia, whose intuition begins with a feeling, a feeling that materializes into the surrounding space. The affect, here, is important to note, and its impact on the space and time. It is the effect of the character of Leticia, who notices that things are just as they were when this all started. The affect transforms into action, which inevitable transforms into the shifting of spaces, the movement of space and time. Because of this, we can retract that the only way they can move out of this "horrible eternity", as Leticia calls it. In this sequence, we can see how affect manipulates time and space. It begins with a feeling, a realization, one which we're never entirely clear of. Leticia's unnamed feeling materializes in the form of time, as it breaks with "horrible eternity", and space, by re-arranging disorder back into order. This sequence acts as a form of movement between time and space, and Leticia acts as the key to that equation. Within the irrational space of the house, the circular logic that plagues the guests, but also the architecture that won't allow them to leave, Leticia gives birth to the rational logic necessary to do away with it. It becomes a freedom, a movement from irrationality into a rational mental space for the guests.

The final scene in the film takes place at a church. The camera pans through the church, showing the catholic priests in mid-mass. The camera reaches the guests, showing Edmundo, Silvia, and the rest of the formally entrapped. The camera switches to the priest, blessing themselves and the church-goers. The camera show the three priests leaving the church. The main priest stops. The camera zooms in on his face. He seems confused, out of place. He looks

around. He turns around to his helpers. And says, “why don’t we wait until the churchgoers have left” The other priests question authority, “After? Why?” The head priests ask “Well…” and looks around. The churchgoers are bewildered and confused. The priests look back and realize the guests’ inability to leave. The guests also realize this inability. The camera shows the church. It pans out away from the action. There’s a fade to black. We see the ringing of bells. The camera makes an emphasis on the bells, holds the visuals, shifting between bells. The camera points to the church again. It slowly moves away to show a crowd of people running away. There’s a group of soldiers that enter on the right side of the screen. The soldiers shoot at the crowd as they push people into a herd. The camera shows a group of sheep in a herd heading back into a church. We hear screams several times. The credits roll. The film ends.

This final sequence allows us to see how repetition and differences play a key role in the narrative. Like we saw with Leticia’s realization, that movement happens with repetition. We confront the narrative’s ability to reproduce itself or with the happening’s ability to reproduce itself in several forms. A surface level reading of this, and the film entirely, could be a place on the circular logic of class and religion, of how ideology reproduces itself, to validate itself through itself, the same way guests validate the inability to leave, “we can’t leave because we can’t leave”. But here, unlike in the other moments in the film where repetition occurs in a prolonged and varied way, we see repetition up front, particularly through tradition and habit.

The film begins with the shot of the church—of the totality of architecture in the shot—and ends with a scene at church. A surface level reading of these elements would conclude that the film is a criticism of class and religious ideology. I am more interested in the element of repetition in the film and final scenes. As the sequence shows, the priests are mid-mass, performing the catholic traditions of mass, of blessing themselves and their attendees. As the

priests attempt to leave, the camera zooms in on the main priests, showing his confusion and anxiety. We notice that the guests, along with other churchgoers, are stuck, again. The story repeats itself. As the camera moves away from the church, to the outside world, through the camera's ability to show us beyond that still-time the churchgoers are under, we can hear the church bells ring repeatedly, alluding again to the importance of repetition in the film. The camera moves outside of the church, where we see a group of soldiers entering the shot. The soldiers are shooting at people. The soldiers shoot, kick, and push the crowd as if herding everyone into order. The soldiers act as a catalyst to bring a sense of order into a disordered mass. Repetition is in order, but there is also a difference in repetition. The soldiers are attempting to bring an order of the disorder, but are creating a chaos they themselves constantly trying to control. This chaos reproduces itself as order within disorder. I read this wrestling with order and chaos as an allegory for the wrestling of nostalgia. It is in this final scene, where we can see the strongest themes in the film visualized, but also reproduced from earlier narratives. We can see the binary opposition between order and chaos, the mind and body, and the nationalist forces at work in Buñuel's work exemplified through class relations within the film. The film takes class relations as a point of departure to explore modernity's discontents and uses repetition explore the dangers of nationalist ideologies.

Tiempo de morir (1966)

Tiempo de morir is part of a tradition of westerns set in Mexican spaces, otherwise known as chile-westerns. Screenplay written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Carlos Fuentes, Tiempo de morir is the story of Juan Sagayo's homecoming after spending 18 years in prison for murder. On his return, Sagayo attempts to re-establish himself in his former life, trying to find his old horse, trying to re-build his old home, and seeing a lot of old friends and foes. Sagayo

soon finds that his attempt to re-enter the nostalgia of his home comes with some foes. Amongst those foes are Julian and Pedro, sons of the man Sagayo murdered. The two brothers are at constant odds with each other over what we should do with Sagayo, their father's murderer. I argue that Tiempo de morir is a story about the return to a mythic home, the attempt to reconstruct nostalgias, the trauma caused by the loss of a home, and the vulnerabilities of definitions of public and private

The film opens with a wide shot of a mountainous landscape. The shot is from the inside, given that we see an open-door point toward the mountains. A man steps into the shot. He walks away from the camera holding a hat and a bag. The door pointing towards the mountain closes with no physical force. The camera lingers on the closed door, only to move slightly upward, to a barred window to see the man who just walked out. The opening credits roll. The man on screen walks. He walks through mountains, railroad tracks, and a staked cross. The man walks into an empty town, eventually. The camera points towards the man as he walks in our general direction. The first and only person he talks to is a man caring for a horse. The man asks, "Is Don Diego here?", in which the other man replies, "He's in there looking at some horses" The man walks into a ranch looking for Don Diego. He approaches a thin man, who seems to be the owner of the horse ranch and asks "I'd like to see Don Diego". The thin man replies, "Yes, go ahead", giving us a hint to his name. The man we've been following replies, "I'd like to see Don Diego Martin Ibanez, the owner", in which the thin man replies "Don Diego Martin Ibañez, my father died many years ago. What can I do for you?" Our main man announces his name, "I am Juan Sáyago". Don Diego, Jr., asks to speak privately. The two venture off screen.

The film's opening shot sets up the complexity of the story. The vast open landscape is the setting of the film's elaborate connection between time and space, but also the way these

characters interact with the domestic space, or the idea of an open home. And since the opening shot is from the inside out it creates a dichotomy between inside and outside, of complete freedom and inevitable destiny. Juan walks away as the doors close. The doors behind him mark an emphasis on borders, of exteriority and interiority, and puts Juan's freedom into question. The camera pans up, away from the closed doors, questioning Juan's freedom. The panning places us behind a small barred window, as if looking out from a prison. It not only creates a voyeuristic effect for the viewer but also moves Juan into the dimensions of the window. We see Juan walk in between the barred windows, away from us, but confined by the camera to the prison window. This image conjures up, again, the validity of Juan's freedom and forms the idea that Juan is still imprisoned as he walks away, despite being out of physical prison.

In the next scene, Juan informs Don Diego about a promise his father made, "Don't worry, once you've paid your dues with the law, come see me. Your job will be waiting." Don Diego interrogates Juan, asking when the last time he was in town. Juan tells Diego, and us, that he spent the last 18 years in jail for his crime, "No matter how dear a life may be, it can't cost most that what I've paid." Diego, without context to us, informs Juan that "Raúl Trueba's son thinks the death of their father must be paid back twice." Diego's words confused Juan. Diego tells Juan that it's better for him to leave, while Juan asks for his horse back. Juan says, "When they took me away, I left it here with the others". Diego replies puzzled, "Not that I doubt you, but how did you expect to find it after 18 years?" Juan brings up Diego's father, again, and how he said, "Don't worry. When you come back, I'll give you another just like it". After the men have, what seems, the same conversation again, about how Juan needs to leave town, Juan finds his old saddle. Diego tells Juan, again, that he needs to leave. Juan refuses ("This is my

hometown, sir"). Diego tells Juan, "You'll be dead in 24 hours" Juan dismisses Diego's prophesies and walks away with his old saddle.

The next series of shots set up the premises of the film's concerns: order (Nature), chaos (society), and repetition. As Juan walks further away, he eventually ends up at a staked cross. The staked cross acts as a tool to foreshadow the cyclical element in the film to tradition, and a sense of order, which several of the character's in the film cannot impose. We can take this idea of ideology as a sense of order, and we can see it personified in characters like Don Diego Jr. and the town commissioner, someone in a constant state of failing to impose order in the town. The staked cross, as we later learn in the film, is where Juan finally falls dead from Julian's gunshots. The space of the cross acts as a symbolic return, but also as a physical departure from the imprisonment of repetition. The camera shows a wide shot of Juan. Juan is in the middle, walking towards the camera, isolating the character from his surroundings. Juan walks right down the middle of the street to talk to a man caring for a horse and asks, "Is Don Diego here? Thinking of the film in grand terms of beginning to end, we can think of the beginning of Juan's journey at the staked cross and Juan's death at the same cross. But thinking about the micro interactions between the characters, not just Juan, they're stuck in an endless cycle of repetition. While Juan is looking for a "Don Diego", the man caring for the horse misunderstands, or plainly just doesn't know, but directs him to a "Don Diego", which is meaningful in the film's understanding on nationhood. Plainly, Juan is looking for a dead man. Unknowing to the horse owner, who points him to a Don Diego, Juan finds who he's looking for, "Don Diego", but not the same "Don Diego" that he was expecting, creating a series of double that we'll see constantly in the film.

The conversation between Juan and Don Diego, the son of Don Diego Martin Ibañez, and who'll I'll refer to Don Diego from now on, marks an important point in the film. The conversation allows us to better understand Juan because it further emphasize repetition and the words and promises of dead men, which I see as the film's concerns about speaking to and alongside the past. We can see this discourse with nostalgia in Juan's character, who is returning to his past, of his old home, horse, and life; with Don Diego, in a way, an image of his father, and who takes the role of his father, both as owner and as interlocutor between the dead (his father) and the living (Juan); the Trueba brothers who are acting based on the past, and who are trying to kill Juan. I interpret these roles as a motivated attempt to find order through a mythic past. For example, Don Diego, who warns Juan of the Trueba's death threat in this scene, but also constantly throughout, is mysterious. Don Diego's life is not at stake, nor does it depends on the life of Juan, but repeatedly warns Juan, and trying to get Juan to leave the town. Don Diego's motivation is to keep order through the rule of law. But within the confines of the law, we can take into consideration the role of the commissioner who acts as an opposite to Don Diego, who is also hoping to get Juan to leave, but does so in the law's name. We can look to the scene where the commissioner throws Juan into a jail cell on the grounds of keeping order—more on this later.

The Trueba brothers represent a problematic conversation with nostalgia, specifically with the death of their father. In the scene where the brothers are grooming each other, Julian says, "I've been preparing for this day my entire life. That's why I've got no old lady, nor kids. There's nothing to tie me down. Nothing can prevent me from getting even.". Julian walks away into the house where the maid asks, "What will you two eat today?" Julian replies, "I'll tell you later", and walks away. Pedro follows Julian into a room, where Julian opens all the windows.

They stand in front of a piece of furniture, that seems more like an altar for their father, a picture hangs above the piece of furniture. Julian shares a fond memory of his father, “last time I saw him he was sitting here. I was only seven years old, but he talked to me like a man. He said, ‘This afternoon I will jail or the cemetery. In either case, Julian promise me one thing. Never be a lesser man than your father” Julian opens a closet door. He takes out a vest. Putting the vest on, Julian further reflects on the death of his father, “Later, I went with mother to retrieve the body. It was so big it wouldn’t fit in the coffin”. Once Julian has the vest on, Pedro approaches him, and grabs on to it, examining it. It’s his father’s old vest, and from what we can tell, it’s the same vest he was killed in. Pedro grabbed the vest and said, “You never showed me. It was a clean shot”. Julian negates Pedro’s observation by saying, “It had to be a dirty trick. It had to be”. Pedro observes that it wasn’t a dirty shot, since the bullet hole was in the front of the vest. Julian, again, shoots down Pedro’s opinion, “Don’t believe everything you hear. Honor abides no doubt”

In this scene, we better understand Pedro and Julian as characters and their intentions of revenge. There is a clear distinction here between the two brothers. Both characters seek revenge through cyclical violence, but Julian takes a harder stance than Pedro. The scene begins with the slow pan of the two brothers grooming. Julian expresses how he’s been waiting for this moment his whole life, ignoring romantic relationships, children, or anything else. Julian’s stance is interesting in the constant's backdrop theme of repetition. If we think of repetition in the film as same, but different, as it was expressed in the scene with the Juan and the horse, or with the relationship between Don Diego junior and senior, we can place Julian as a character who is removed from that framework. I say this because of Julian’s comments about marrying and children, or the act of reproducing. Julian does not reproduce, physically and

philosophically. Julian represents a sense of stillness, or still-time. He becomes a defender of his father's myth, of unquestioning loyalty to the nostalgia. Pedro serves as a contrast to Julian's engagement with nostalgia.

Julian puts on his father's vest. Pedro approaches the vest and touches it, feels it. Pedro didn't know it was a "clean shot, " in which Julian negates the question and reaffirms the myth, "it was a dirty shot". The brothers are talking about the myth and their roles in the narrative. Pedro's questioning acts are a tool in which we can examine the narratives of all these characters, one of doubting the legitimacy of these myths, or conversation about the past, a nostalgia. Through these characters, the film acts as a critique of nostalgia, of the pitfalls, the repercussions, and the circular logic of nostalgia. Although the two characters are stuck within a nostalgia, they both approach it differently. Julian does not question it, but Pedro does. This scene is of many which play with the idea of repetition, of returning to the words and promises of a dead man as nostalgia. So, Julian's loyalty to his father is not a loyalty to the father figure, but a loyalty to nostalgia's circular logic, returning to the past from the present, and in constant conversation with the past where the future never comes, or is out of reach. Julian is stuck in the past, while Pedro is breaking through the idea of past, present, and the possibilities of a future, whatever that might look like.

The notion of nostalgia plays a big role in Ripstein's film. On a surface level, *Tiempo de morir* is a western. It falls into the old ideas of the genre. So, the sense of nostalgia is at constant play within the narrative and its characters. But thinking beyond this surface level, and of what role nostalgia plays in the film, we can look to the theme of revenge as the central force for Pedro and Julian. Revenge is constantly out of reach. There are multiple sources of information, from Juan, from the commissioner, from Pedro and Julian. It's unclear if the revenge is just or

unjust. This act of revenge exposes Julian’s hard-headed loyalty to nostalgia, but also places Pedro as a multiplicity of personalities, or narratives. I think of the scene when Pedro speaks with Silvia. Silvia is pleading with Pedro not to duel with Juan. She says, “When he went away, he was like you, young and determined. I saw him yesterday after 18 years and it terrified me”. If the complicated relationship, or the reliving of a past, wasn’t enough in the relationship between Pedro and his father, Silvia further complicates that relationship with her comparison to Juan. And as a later scene will show the two characters are closer in relationship than the audience might have thought.

In the final scene, Juan arrives to the showdown on horseback. He ties his horse to a stake and walks. The scene cuts to Pedro waiting for Juan on the other side, instead of Julian. Juan takes his position, as Pedro already has. Juan puts on his glasses. Julian barges in, desperate and confused. Suddenly, Pedro and Juan draw their guns and shoot. Juan draws first and kills Pedro. Julian stands for a second and runs to Pedro's lifeless body, as he watches the man who killed his father, and now his brother, walk away. Julian grabs the gun and went after Juan. Behind Juan, Julian holds a gun, yelling for Juan's attention. Julian yells, "Stop and face me, so we can die like men!" Julian keeps yelling for him. Juan won't turn. Julian's desperation drives him to run around Juan, who is still walking steadily towards nowhere in particular. Julian runs in front of Juan and threatens to shoot him in the back, honorably if that is what it takes. Juan disarms himself, taking off his gun holster, leaving him vulnerable to any attack. In a moment of frustration, Julian picks up and throws the gun holster at Juan. Julian begs him to put it on and fight with honor. Juan keeps walking. Julian yells, "I can't kill an unarmed man"; "Coward"; "Murderer of my home. Defend yourself, coward." And it is at this moment that Julian shoots. But, to Julian's astonishment, Juan doesn't drop dead like Pedro. He keeps walking, even with a bullet hole in his

back. Julian picks up the gun holster again and shoot Juan in the back three times. Juan won't fall. The camera moves behind Julian to show us Juan walking away, to the staked cross at the beginning of the film. Julian cries "Die already, old man", and shoots into the ground as Juan keeps walking towards the staked cross. Julian's irrational shooting continues, over and over. The camera shifts to Juan as he's crossing the cross, the same one we saw at the beginning of the film. Music plays. Juan falls to his right knee which gives way to the rest of his body. Juan dies as soon as he passes the staked cross. End credits.

Pedro's storyline ends in the final scene. Julian witnesses the happenings and drops to his knees, devastated holding his brother's body. This is a turning point in the film because Juan transforms from the man who killed Julian's father, to the man who killed Julian's father and brother. It is easy to see this dichotomy as a commentary on machismo ideology, which runs side by side with Mexican national identity, and through this specific film. This also marks the breakdown of Julian's world. It is a point of trauma for Julian, again. Julian is suffering from the death of his brother, but also carrying the burden of his father's death, and, as we'll learn later on in the sequence, the death of his home. Julian's psychological state is that of shock, horror, of the uncanny, of seeing his life, everything that he had worked for, end. And for the man that did it to walk away, slowly and patiently. Julian's mourning of his father is also a mourning for his home, a further complication of Julian's identity. This break of identity is also a break in ethical and philosophical state, one that drives Julian to break with tradition.

Juan walks away after he kills Pedro. Julian, in a fit of fury, starts yelling at Juan. The camera shows a calm and collected Juan, walking steadily somewhere, although we later find out it is to the staked cross, seen early in the film. Around Juan, the camera shows Julian in a state of panic, of constant, unrestrained frenzy. Julian yells at Juan, trying to get him to turn around so he

can shoot him. Juan is unfazed by any of it. I see this interaction as Julian's attempt to control a narrative, a narrative that is so ingrained into his character. If he could only get Juan to turn around, Julian can set things straight, he will get revenge for his father and brother. But Juan will not budge, he will not turn around for Julian to take the honorable shot. The character of Julian breaks with the moral code in the western genre, facing your enemy and taking a shot from the front. Just like Pedro had mentioned earlier in the film, but with his father. We're as sure as the characters in the film--except for Julian. Julian fires the first shot. Juan keeps walking. Julian shoots again. Nothing. He shoots again. Nothing. Out of desperation, Julian cries and shoots at the ground repeatedly. Juan's right knee hits the ground, pulling the rest of his body and what it symbolizes down to the ground, back to nature, where it came from.

The last scenes of the film brings the narrative together into the unifying whole. In the last few minutes of the film, in the middle of his frenzy, Julian screams out, "Murderer of my home" (Asesino de mi casa) to Juan. For Julian, Juan symbolizes the loss of a home. That loss stems from the loss of identity for Julian. Julian forms his identity on loss, and the past, and what is lost in the conversation with nostalgia. Julian is at constant odds with the rest of the characters. Julian breaks down because of the resurrection of the myth of his father, of facing the present. Julian mentally break down once he faced the present. He cannot take it, as other characters warned him about carrying the burden of murder. Here, Julian must live with the burden, like Juan once did.

Juan's death is of particular symbolic importance. It holds the idea of circular time, as much of the film already does. We can see the element of repetition. Juan is shot but keeps walking until he reaches the staked cross. The staked cross represents the idea of cyclical time, of repetition, of begin and end at one point. In the film, it narrates this idea through the entire film.

This, the staked cross, is where Juan started his return and where it ends, it's the end of a beginning. The final shot has Juan on the ground to the left of the cross, while Julian is to the right. If we think back at the wisdom that Silvia tells Pedro in the scene at her house, she says "You were just like him. He left for 18 years and now he's back." That same statement can apply to Julian, who is serving another type of time, the time of nostalgia, the time of revenge within a structure of feeling that he can't escape, and never does. Returning to the final shot, while Juan has died, both physically and symbolically, Julian remains breathing, but still angry. Coincidentally, Julian is standing tall and exhausted, carrying the burden of murder on his hands, fulfilling some sort of destiny, and by the same cross where Juan started his own journey.

In chapter one, I analyzed how incest as repetition leads to anxiety and trauma in *Nosotros los pobres* and *La mujer del puerto*. In *Nosotros los pobres*, the threat of incest becomes a focal point for the character of Pepe, especially in the scene where he self-harms by banging his hand against the walls of the physical home. In *La mujer del puerto*, Rosario's accidental relationship with her sibling leads to a self-reflexivity, an inwardness so deep that it leads the body to act against itself, resulting in suicide. In *El ángel exterminador*, the film suspends time for the dinner guests. By creating a circular logic, both philosophical and physical, Buñuel isolates the dinner guests from time itself, a sort of entrapment that blinds from present, past and future. It bewilders the dinner guests in what seems like an eternity for them, where they cannot distinguish past ("How long have we been here?"), present ("what time is it?"), or future ("…will we escape this horrible eternity.") For the characters in the film, traditional notions of time are non-existent. Similarly, for the characters in *Tiempo de morir*, temporality is in constant negotiation with a mythic past. For Juan Sagayo, the attempt to return to a mythic home results in death. There's a similar fate for Julian and Pedro. Pedro lives through the nostalgia by

attempting to seek vengeance for his father's death. When Pedro tries to rewrite that nostalgia, one that presents itself through psychological trauma, he is killed by Sagayo's gun, like Pedro's father. For Julian, the situation is a bit different, but with similar outcomes. Julian ignores advice about carrying a murder on your conscience and successfully kills Sagayo. Right after the murder, Julian walks away from the body with the burden of Sagayo's death—a burden that Sagayo once carried along with its psychological trauma.

Time plays a critical role in the narrative and in the lives of the characters within the film. In EAE, as mentioned earlier, the disengagement with traditional modes of time negates characters any engagement with the world outside of their physical space. They can reconcile some memories but cannot understand how they are in this mysterious situation and how to get out. As viewers, we become witnesses to their lack of consciousness and inability to see political and cultural structures beyond their activities within the home. This cyclical sense of time persists as the dinner guests turn to a form of "savagery" or "backwardness", as defined by the guests. Failing to move away from cyclical time drives some to mysterious bodily disintegration and others to death. Similarly, to a degree, the issues of entrapped within a time presents itself in *Tiempo de morir*.

Nostalgia traps Juan Sagayo in *Tiempo de morir*. Juan Sagayo is trapped within his version of nostalgia of the past, of what his home was, represented, and how to get it back. In an early scene in the film, we see Sagayo return home and ask a rancher for his horse. The rancher, confused, questions Sagayo: "Did you expect your horse to be here after 18 years?" Sagayo says, "no, but perhaps something like it." There's a sense of absurdity in Sagayo's thinking, the expectation of the same horse waiting for you after 18 years, but there's also something interesting that the conversation poses, a conversation about living through nostalgia, of longing

for a past, even if that past is not what it was. For Pedro and Julian, their engagement with nostalgia also becomes a matter of life and death. The brothers live their life to avenge their father's death, even when the story about how and why their father died remains unclear to them and the audience. The unreliable narrative about their father becomes a space where Pedro and Julian can fill the holes of memory, a sort of myth making on their part. But this act of re-writing leads them to an inevitable demise. Pedro dies at the hands of Sagayo. And Julian lives with the burden of the death of Sagayo, his father, and his brother.

Cyclical time becomes the downfall to the characters in both films, and to a larger historical context, the point of departure to understand how these films engage with Mexican Golden Age cinema's nation-building aim, and form new ways in which cinema registers and produces anxieties about modernity and engagement with a global economy. This cyclical time produces an ahistorical perspective on the characters in these films, an inability to understand oneself in a historical context. Through this historical perspective, the characters in the film embody a form of psychological repression, "a deliberate evocation of a falsified past" (3). In what Carlos Fuentes defines as "mistificaciones en las que un pasado muerto quiere pasar por presente vivo", the characters of Julian and Pedro rely on a falsified narrative of their father, sometimes disagreeing on how and why their father died, and filling in the narrative holes at their own desire. This desire presents memory as functioning in individualistic and dangerous ways, resulting in death or an entrapped form of self-reflexivity.

This self-reflexivity is not unique to the films in question but to the broader historical, artistic context in which they it produced them. Echeverria, writing about *Cien años de soledad* and the Latin American novelist, is useful in thinking through this notion of film. He writes:

> I dare say in all major Latin American novelists, self-reflexivity is a way of disassembling the mediation through which Latin America is narrated, a

> medication that constitutes the pre-test of the novel itself. It is also a way of showing that the act of writing is caught up in a deeply rooted, mythic struggle that constantly denies the author to generate and contain knowledge about the other without at the same time generating a perilous sort of knowledge about one's mortality and capacity to know oneself.

The films in question disable the way genre was previously used to narrate its own nation, but also show how cinema's deep roots in myth creation for nationhood. The films also show the "mythic struggle", the impossibility and dangers of mythmaking. Instead, the films show a country in the perils of modernization and urbanization and act as an archive, as defined by Echeverria. For the two films in question, Golden Age cinematic genre is history; Buñuel and Ripstein act as the inner historians, who, in this case, watch, read and interpret cinematic genres; and the films themselves are unfinished manuscripts, but re-produce themselves into another version of itself, in an incestuous relationship with its own cinematic narrative.

Time and modernity remain at the center of both cases. The films exemplify a form of mediating the tension between a "revolutionary ethos" and a cosmopolitanism essential in engaging with an international economy. In *The Golden Age Otherwise: Mexican Cinema and the Mediations of Capitalist Modernity in the 1940s and 1950s*, Ignacio Sanchez-Prado states: "…films render visible a cultural network that registered and confronted the anxieties of the modernization process that moved Mexican society from revolutionary unrest and nation building to a new era marked by increased cosmopolitanism and uneven yet considerable economic development…" (243). The films in question undoubtedly engage with the discourse of national identity through its re-writing of the Golden Age conservative genre. The films, also, expose a Mexico in political and economic transition, one that demands a closer look at the dangers of mythmaking in the nation-building process, and the downfalls of modernity's obsession with time and progress. Buñuel and Ripstein will remain key figures in Mexican

cinema. While their films responded directly to post-revolution sentiments, they exposed an underlying anxiety in the process of rapid urbanization and modernity unforeseen by earlier directors and artists. These two cases act as a foundation to understand the global Mexican cinema of post-1994 in terms of symbolic economic and cultural languages. Through their use of traditional Mexican genres, imported surrealist film directors and foreign cinematic influences, the films of Buñuel and Ripstein prepare their viewership for a Mexican cinema that would eventually negate its nation for the free market, and cinema produced under neoliberalism.

CHAPTER THREE: IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE HOME-SPACE IN *AMORES PERROS* (2000) AND *POST TENEBRAS LUX* (2012)

This chapter argues that Iñarritu's *Amores perros* and Reygadas' *Post tenebras lux* register and produce visual representations of Mexico's neoliberal economic and ideological transition. Through the cinematic depiction of the domestic space, the films in questions establish a definition of the private and public through characters' interaction with the domestic space. The characters in these films produce, break, and attempt to re-establish the idea of the home and dismantle ideas of private and public. I am interested in the way those moments of transition, of the breakdown between private and public, within the films materialize as points of trauma for the characters in the film, and how that trauma translates to the impossibility of the home space.

The 1990s is a moment of transition in Mexican history. Political turbulence, high profile assassinations, and the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the emergence of the Zapatistas, and an economic crisis that devalued national currency characterized the moment of transition. In 1988, despite criticisms of electoral fraud, Carlos Salinas de Gortari's election symbolized a moment of transition for Mexico. Salinas de Gortari set out to 'modernize' Mexico by implementing NAFTA and a series of neoliberal reforms that aimed to privatize previously nationalized companies. In a key move to Gortari's modernization efforts was the amendment of Article 27 of the constitution, which re-assessed the ejido system established by President Lázaro Cardenas. The ejido system defined the right of communal ownership of lands and prevented the ejidatorios from selling their lands to private buyers. In 1992, Gortari signs NAFTA alongside the United States and Canada. The agreement resulted in a reduction in tariffs and placed local businesses at risk. This signaled the end of the protectionist stance of the Mexican government.

Before the inauguration of NAFTA, the country dealt with a wave of violence that increased social unrest and economic instability. Amongst those events that marked the moment of transition: the assassination of archbishop of Guadalajara, Cardinal Posada in 1993; the 1994 uprising of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN); the murder of the presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio in Tijuana; The assassination of secretary general José Francisco Ruiz Massieu in Mexico City. In 1994, the economy suffered a setback through the devaluation of the national currency. Then President Zedillo's decision to float the peso resulted in the currency losing half of its value and leading to even further economic crisis. In 1995, Zedillo launched an armed offensive to do away with the EZLN conflict. The president's action exacerbated an already tense relation with indigenous communities. Zedillo's actions resulted in a wave of national and international protest. In the same year, ex-president Salinas de Gortari fled Mexico because of several political scandals which resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of his brother, Raul Salinas. It was amid this sociopolitical climate—electoral fraud, promised prosperity and deception, assassination, and economic instability— that the films in this chapter were produced. The films analyzed in this chapter depict a nation in transition. Mexican cinema of the 1990s makes up a period of transition, of cinema's ability to register the changing times of a country's definition of the nationhood.

Alejandro Gonzales Iñarritu's *Amores perros* entered the global cinema market through its narrative experimentation and stylistic features, like rapid editing, fluid camera work, and the use of a range of shots. Iñarritu's film was a privately funded 'national' film with an international success, which elevated Mexico's cinema to the global markets. *Amores perros* holds an important role in revitalizing Mexico's cinema, and signals a change in film financing, with the shift from public to private. As Paul Julian Smith noted, within Mexico the film's

enormous success was because of more professional marketing strategies, achieved through the vertical integration of the producer Altavista, and its parent company, Estudio Mexico, part of CIE, the giant live entertainment company. For a while, the film remained a strictly national success. But once it achieved national success, it attracted several international distribution interests. The film's producer, Martha Sosa, describes how the production crew used Cannes to launch the film: "We created something extraordinary, spinning an aura around the film to make it seem much bigger than it actually was. From a Mexican perspective we made it look as if we'd won the world cup…we needed to create a lot of noise and you cannot do that with advertising alone" It is worthy to note that Iñarrritu himself comes from a marketing background before his work in feature films.

If *Amores perros* hit the jackpot of mainstream international success and distribution, Carlos Reygadas' *Post tenebras lux* did the complete opposite. Reygadas, often associated with label of New Mexican Cinema, takes a slow approach to capturing the mundane effect of everyday experience, using non-professional actors and cinematic influences from Andrei Tarkovsky and Bela Tarr to Michelangelo Antonioni. His quiet films depict the lives of characters in everyday situations, ranging from a love story across socioeconomic classes in *Batalla en el cielo*, which competed for the Palme d'Or in 2005, to social dynamics in Mennonite communities in *Stellet Licht* (2007). Thematically related to *Post tenebras lux*, *Batalla en el cielo* depicts the story of two characters: Ana, a young, light-skinned woman from the upper-middle-class background; and Marcos, a thirty-something-year-old dark-skinned, overweight man from a lower-class background. In an interview with BOMB magazine, Reygadas describes the film: "you could read the relationship of Ana and Marco as some kind of metaphor of the racial oppression in Mexico. On the other hand, their relationship can also be seen as just a love story"

(BOMB Magazine). While we can view the film as a simple love story, it's difficult to shy away from the obvious racial and class disparity between the characters. Marcos, a lower-class taxi driver, often fantasizes about sexual encounters with his passenger, Ana. The film unfolds as a series of everyday life events for both characters, like many of Reygadas's film.

Post tenebras lux is a semi-autobiographical depiction of upper-middle-class people living in the outskirts of the urban center. At the center of the story, Juan is a middle-aged professional spends time contemplating his upper-middle-class life, giving orders to his laborers, Jaro and Siete, playing with his kids, Ruth and Eleazar, and often meditating on the meaning of life, sexuality, and marriage with his wife Natalia. Juan and his family live in a large home in a rural part of the country, neighboring his laborers who deal with their own problems within their community and also deal with Juan's problems, though he never fully realizes it. Juan and his neighbors seldom interact, and when they do, it is mostly in terms of labor relations.

The first narrative in *Amores perros* tells the story of Octavio, Susana, and Ramiro. Octavio and Ramiro are brothers. Susana is Ramiro's wife, but also Octavio's lover. The group lives in a small apartment with their mother, who seems to hold the home together through her labor, but rarely takes a strong narrative role. Ramiro holds a job at a supermarket, while Octavio makes money from dog fights. Octavio is in love with Susana, even though Susana is hesitant to engage in the relationship at first, because of her marriage with Ramiro and their son, and with another child on the way. Octavio proposes to run away with Susana to Ciudad Juarez with savings from his odd jobs. In the beginning of the film, we witness how one of those odd jobs involves the family dog, Cofi. Octavio notices Cofi's fighting spirit in a scene where the dog mauls another. Octavio takes Cofi to neighborhood dog fights. The dog wins several fights. Octavio saves up money for the escape to Ciudad Juarez, a border town. Octavio's reliance on

and ambition for Cofi are short lived. Cofi enters a fight where he dominates the other dog, again. In a fit of rage, the losing dog's owner shots Cofi and Octavio's only financial stream, shooting down the fantasy of running away with Susana. Octavio attacks Cofi's aggressor and drives away, inciting a high-speed chase between the two dog owners. Octavio dodges through incoming traffic while Cofi is bleeding out. The car spins out of control and crashes into Valeria's car. The scene ends for now, but picks up later in the film.

The relationship between Octavio and Susana is near impossible. The couple is having an affair in a home where Susana lives with her husband. The pair sneak away to find romance in odd places within the home. In one scene, Octavio and Susana have sex in the bathroom where moments earlier Ramiro brutally and unfairly attacks Octavio. This dichotomy shows how the couple mixes romance and trauma within the domestic space. This scene shows how space once reserved for privacy is an arena for revenge from events that happened outside of its sphere, Octavio attacking Ramiro at work. Octavio and Susana realize this relationship is near impossible through these interactions, their financial situation, and the proximity to Susana's husband. Despite these difficulties, the two develop a relationship within the apartment, having sex constantly throughout the space, all while Susana is having a relationship with Ramiro. This inversion of the space's purpose is further emphasized as the couple saves up money for their move. The couple keeps a suitcase with savings. Order is in a fragile state. The couple creates a sense of order within the apartment through the suitcase, as a bank for winnings from illegal dog fighting. The couple hopes to move away someday.

Octavio's urgency to move away derives from the relationship's proximity to Susana's husband, as I stated earlier, but also from his own proximity to his brother. The relationship between Octavio and Ramiro is a cyclical and violent one that displaces their sense of security

and domesticity. We can see this through the scene where Octavio attacks Ramiro at work; and where Ramiro attacks Octavio in the shower with an iron rod, a constant fight that stems from the love triangle.. Octavio's desire to break with this cycle is a representation of the desire to be in the privacy and domesticity associated with the nuclear family. But, as we see towards the end of the film, Octavio's wish i not fulfilled. The work he put in is not enough to make the move or convince Susana to move away. Octavio cannot secure himself a place beyond his social class. The film's social order denies Octavio class mobility by placing him where he started without Susana's full attention and without money. Even though Octavio cannot fulfill these desires—of class mobility—he is critical in other character's narratives and relationship to the film's social order, and key in understanding the way the narrative denies class mobility within the given social order.

The film presents two ways in which Octavio can interact with the upper-middle classes: through the television screen and through the car accident with Valeria. In a scene that takes places in Octavio's room, we see how he and a friend watch a talk show starring Valeria. In this show, Valeria talks about her career and romantic interest. Valeria explains how her love interest is backstage. The love interest comes out. They exchange words on television. The two friends turn off the television and walk away. Later in the film, we find out that Valeria is not dating the person on-screen, and that her love interest is married to someone else, drawing a division between Octavio and Susana's affair. The other interaction between Octavio and Valeria is through the car crash. Octavio is driving to survive while Valeria is driving for leisure. Their respective cars, one nicer than the other, collide in a mashup of steel, social class, and human bodies. In a physical sense, the car act as a mediator between the two characters, in the same way that the television acts as a proximity to truth for Octavio while watching Valeria on-screen.

Through the television and through the accident, Octavio is only within proximity of her class and the idea of class mobility. The consequences and interpretation for Valeria differ from Octavio. For Octavio, the accident leads to losing his money, Susana, and the possibility of the future. For Valeria, the interaction with someone outside of her upper-middle class bubble causes psychological and physical traumas that threaten her sense of social order, her body, and her ability to work.

The story of Daniel and Valeria begins on a television talk show. In the talk show, Valeria is an actress being interviewed by the show's hosts. We learn that Valeria is an actress/model. The hosts ask Valeria for personal romantic information, celebrity gossip, who she's seeing, if anybody at all. Valeria responds with some abstract information, but eventually reveals that her lover is backstage. The hosts ask for the lover to come on stage. The lover is Andres. The hosts ask Valeria and Andres about their relationship. The scene cuts and shows the couple coming out of the studio. Andres invites Valeria to eat. She's thankful but declines by saying "This is one thing and that's another" alluding to their on-screen relationship and the off-screen relationship. Andres begs. And Valeria eventually agrees. Andres sneakily changes plans on Valeria, instead he takes her to an unknown apartment. They enter. She asks questions about the reason for their visit to the apartment. She notices that a lot of furniture looks like her own. Andres says, "It's all from your home". Andres shows Valeria the apartment, unveiling a poster of her posing as a model. This confuses Valeria. It seems as if Andres moved all her stuff into this apartment. Andres shows Valeria the view of the apartment. Right outside of the apartment's large window hangs a billboard of Valeria modeling a perfume called "Enchant" an important symbol throughout their narrative and the film. The gesture shocks Valeria. She panics and tries to leave, thinking Andres is taking the on-screen relationship off-screen. Andres hands keys to

Valeria and says, “here are the keys to your apartment” Valeria lashes out in anger and confusion. We hear a voice in the background off-screen. It's Daniel.

The on-screen relationships are complicated. As we saw briefly earlier in the film, Daniel is married to Julieta. They have two kids and live at their home. In an earlier scene, we see Daniel and the family arriving home. The phone rings. One child picks it up, but there’s no answer on the other side and hangs up. The phone rings again. This time, Julieta picks up, but nobody answers again. Julieta makes a snarky comment about Daniel’s lover calling and hanging up. We can assume it’s Valeria calling. And returning to the scene with Andres and Valeria in the apartment, we learn that the scene was an elaborate prank between Andres and Daniel. Once Daniel appears in the scene, Valeria runs into his arm. We can piece together that Daniel and Valeria are in an affair, and that the person calling Daniel’s home was Valeria, as Julieta suspected. We also learn that the relationship between Andres and Valeria is a publicity stunt, creating a contrast between fact and fiction. The relationship between Daniel, Andres, and Valeria is the foundation in which to understand the film’s major themes, of affairs behind closed doors, of the private matters between Daniel and Valeria, and the public, on-screen relationship between Valeria and Andres. This re-definition of the public and private is at the forefront of the film. It confronts us with public truths through television, by seeing the relationship between Andres and Valeria on screen as something real. It also confronts us with private truths, the relationship between Daniel and Valeria. Daniel lives in two homes: at his home with Julieta and the children; and the apartment with Valeria. Daniel moves across domestic spaces, serving different purposes, similar in the way Octavio, Susana, and Ramiro move and define space. It is of note, and a theme I will return to in the section on *Post tenebras lux*, that Daniel can move

between physical domestic spaces, while movement is limited for Octavio, Susana, and Ramiro to one home, an issue of class, access/lack of resources, etc.

The domestic space serves as a reflection of the characters psychological traumas. In the same scene where we're introduced to the couple, Valeria runs into Daniel's arm. In that quick sprint, Valeria steps on a weak wood plank that breaks with the pressure of her foot. The accident creates a hole in the domestic space, and that becomes a haunting and point of trauma for the couple, especially for Valeria. For Valeria, moments of traumatic experience seem to occur constantly. The first traumatic moment is the gruesome car crash, leaving her in poor physical health and confined to a wheelchair. The second moment of trauma is when she is at home playing fetch with her dog. Valeria accidentally throws the ball into the hole. The dog naturally fetches the ball and falls into the hole. Valeria is home alone and cannot get the dog out. Eventually, Daniel returns home from work. He also tries to get the dog, but has no luck. The dog is, literally, stuck inside the home and becomes a point of contention for the couple's psychological well-being and their relationship. The windows of the apartment also play a critical role in the scene and the couple story. I interpret the windows as tunnels to the outside world, just as the physical hole in the ground is an exposure to the outside. The windows are physical openings in the home. Through the windows, Valeria sees her billboard, a reminder of a modeling career in jeopardy. And as the narrative progresses, the windows that overlook the billboard become a point of departure in thinking about Valeria's lost modeling career. These openings parallel the hole in the middle of the house in how it exposes the inside to the outside, exposing the inside of the home to that rats that Valeria claims to have seen, heard, and killed her dog, supposedly. Two large black-and-white posters of Valeria hang on a wall inside the apartment. The posters hanging inside the home also act as tunnels of nostalgia, where the home

space (present) is in conversation with Valeria's modeling career (the past and fading future). Adding to this element of nostalgia the pictures are in black and white. Both non-physical 'windows' play an important role in the conversation between past and present, and the blurring between the private and public. We see Valeria's condition. She's hurt and unable to be the public figure she once was, all the while being haunted by her past through the tunnels of nostalgia that are physically in the home—the window and the poster.

The home's openings play a critical role in the film's interpretation. I define openings in two ways: 1) a physical opening, like the hole, where the inside of the home is exposed to the physical dangers of the outside world. 2) a non-physical openings, much like the function of the posters, and their representation of a past long-gone for Valeria. As we saw, the broken wood plank, or the hole, becomes a point of psychological trauma for Valeria, breaking her down psychologically and socially with the world around her. Through this line of thinking—of openings in the home—we can better understand how the film's difficulty in defining private and public, and how that ambiguity translates into psychological trauma.

Valeria's interactions with these windows, with nostalgia, become a prominent theme through the couple's narratives. We find Valeria returning to these openings to see herself on the billboard. For Valeria, the home is in constant negotiation with the past and present, with the public and private. The home is no longer a neatly defined space, but one of ambiguity, where the public is at constant stake within the private. As she is inside the home, where the hole lives, and represents a tunnel to the outside world, the home is no longer enclosed in a private space, but in a public sense, where the fluidity of commerce, economics, and danger looms large. This fluidity becomes a point of anxiety for Valeria and Daniel. Later in the scene, Valeria is talking to her agent about her modeling career. She tells her agent about the progress of her health and

how she'll be ready in no time. The agent tells Valeria to take it easy, and they'll address other jobs once she gets better. And when Valeria asks about the Enchant campaign, the agent says, "Enchant, forget about it. They hired you when you were well. Now things are different." She hung up. The shot opens up to Valeria laying on her bed. The shades are closed. Valeria's world is closing in, furthering her anxiety and trauma about the rupture in her private and public life.

In the next scene, Valeria looks through old photographs of herself. She grows bored with the photographs and tries, again, to get the dog out of the hole. In her weak attempts to get the dog out, she hurts herself further, physically and psychologically. The scene cuts to Daniel at work. His secretary interrupts him and says, "There's a call. I think it's your wife." Daniel picks up the phone and answer "What's happening, Julieta?" Daniel quickly finds out its Valeria, a case of mistaken identity. The couple fight about it for a second and eventually dismiss the mixup. Valeria tells Daniel that the rats ate the dog. Daniel is confused, "Which rats?" The scene cuts to Daniel coming home. Valeria tells Daniel about the thousands of rats under the floorboard. Daniel asks, "How do you know?". She replies, "because I saw them", but, as the viewer knows, she did not. She claims to have heard the dog make a noise. In a fit of frustration, Daniel grabs a hammer and starts hammering through the floorboards. He makes the hole even bigger. This opening causes Valeria further distress, but encouragers Daniel to make the hole bigger. The phone rings as Daniel is hammering away. Valeria wheels herself over to answer. She answers, and no one is on the other side. Daniel is still making the hole bigger. Valeria is holding the phone, cussing at the quiet anonymous caller. Valeria hangs up and asks Daniel about the caller. Daniel doesn't know—but we can probably assume it iss Julieta. Valeria reminds Daniel that she used to call him at his old home, and how he probably gave Julieta a similar answer.

The scene is telling in the way the disruption of private and public affects the characters in the domestic space. For Daniel, the office and the home are in constant flux with the private and public. The public becomes the private as Valeria calls him. Daniel's work is a public space, a place where work is done. But Valeria's call inverted this relationship. The private makes it into the public. Once Daniel gets home and gets the call where no one answers but Valeria picks up, is another inversion, re-definition of space, and an example of how Daniel's two domestic spaces intertwine. Although we are unsure of who is on the other line when Valeria picks up the phone, we can assume it is Julieta looking for Daniel. Valeria reminds Daniel of how she would call him at home in the past. I see this as the fluidity of the domestic space in the film and of a nostalgia, or past, that isn't so far from the characters' lives. In earlier scenes, Valeria enters, interrupts, and causes a point of anxiety, in the home of Daniel and Julieta. But, as we just saw, Julieta is now interrupting and becomes a point of anxiety for Daniel and Valeria, and at such a perfect moment, when Daniel is making the hole. This opening of the hole is, again, part of that traumatic process for Valeria, as we see her constantly at odds with the surrounding space, but also her body at odds with itself.

Valeria's body becomes another point of trauma. Being in the public eye, as a model and actress, she relies on her body to be a part of a public sphere, to be part of the grander whole of society. The accident leaves her unable to take on such a role. She loses her contract with Enchant, and even her agent is unsure of her return. In a scene where Valeria wakes up in the middle of the night, she looks out the window to her billboard. Daniel wakes up, too. He catches her looking at her old modeling billboard, representing a confrontation with nostalgia. She says, "My leg really hurts. I can't stand it. He said it's normal for it to hurt sometimes, but it feels like it will burst" Daniel asks what he can do. She says, "Hold me." Valeria's body is deteriorating,

fighting against itself. Valeria's self is fleeting. Daniel holds on to the last bits of what's left of Valeria. In a physical sense, Valeria's body has literal openings through her physical injuries and amputation. It's fighting itself to keep itself together in the process of recuperation. Her body is open, exposing her insides. Similarly, Valeria's open wounds parallel her home's open wounds. There's a correlation between Valeria's body and the domestic space. The openness of the home and the body are points of trauma for the characters involved.

In the last scenes of their stories, Valeria is, again, looking at old photographs of herself in magazines and childhood pictures. The camera cuts to Daniel at work, calling his ex-wife. Julieta answers, "Sweetheart?". Daniel stays quiet and eventually hangs up. The scene cuts to Daniel coming back to his house to find the hole is much bigger, leaving us to assume that Valeria made it so. Daniel walks to the bedroom and finds that the door is locked. He bangs and yells for Valeria to open. There's no response from the other side. He gets tired and takes a nap. The scene cuts back to Daniel pleading with Valeria to open the door. He is patient at first but grows tired as there's still no reply. He eventually breaks the door and finds Valeria on the ground, seemingly dead. He hugs her and tries to get her back. The camera cuts to the hospital. The doctor tells Daniel, "We should have intervened earlier, but there was already a lot of damage. No blood could get to the muscles and [pause] advanced gangrene set in. I had to amputate her leg." The scene cuts, again, to Daniel at his home, looking outside of the window at the Enchant billboard. The dog's bark interrupts Daniel's concentration. The dog is alive and under the floor. Daniel hurries to the sound and breaks the floor making the hole even bigger that it already was. He gets the dog out. He finds the dog bitten and bleeding. The scene ends with Daniel holding the dog in his arms. The scene cuts to a shot of a one-legged Valeria, the model and actress, arriving to her house. The shot follows her from behind her wheelchair. We see the

holes are bigger and spread through most of the floor. She wheels herself straight to the window, opens the blinds. The shot cuts to a medium shot that includes Daniel into the frame and the large photograph of Valeria as a model inside the home. The camera cuts to Valeria crying and looking outside the window. But, instead of seeing Enchant billboard as we would expect, she sees an advertisement promoting the space for rent. Her billboard, her tunnel to her old self is taken down, and replace by a "space for rent" sign. The final shot is of Daniel holding Valeria from the back, the holes in the ground, and the large backdrop of Valeria's old self hanging in the living room. These last scenes present another inversion and interruption of the domestic space. When Daniel calls Julieta. Daniel stays quiet, but Julieta knows the act too well, as we suspect she did earlier in the film. This silence, on both of their part, is an approach to the impossibility of their domestic situation. The characters themselves alienate themselves from the domestic space(s) they inhabit.

We learn about Chivo through the intertwining narratives. Our first interaction of Chivo is early in the film. He's vagabond, as the camera shows him digging through trash and scraps, looking for useful supplies and putting together broken machines. Later, through scenes and conversations with other characters, we learn that Chivo is a hired assassin. We also learn that Chivo has no relationship with his family, a point of trauma for him. In the film's final chapter, the film introduces two characters: Leonardo, a crooked cop; and Gustavo, a businessman. The scene begins in the middle of a drive. Gustavo gets a call. Leonardo tells Gustavo to shut the phone off when "we get to the house, turn that piece of shit off, okay? He hates that crap." Through Leonardo and Gustavo's conversation, we learn that Chivo is a former professor who joined a guerilla group, someone who used bombs to attack a mall, kidnapped a banker, and murdered cops. Leonardo tells Gustavo that Chivo had a whole army of people after him, and

that it was Gustavo that caught Chivo in a seemingly accidental interaction. We also learn that Chivo left his wife and daughter to fight for the guerillas and pursue political activism full-time. His wife remarried and his daughter thinks her father is dead. Chivo went "crazy" after leaving prison and turned into a drunk. Leonardo became friends with Chivo, even giving him money and a place to stay. Leonardo throws Gustavo's cell phone out of the window. The pair arrive at Chivo's place. Once Gustavo and Leonardo arrive at Chivo's home, we learn that the reason for the visiting is to hire Chivo to kill Luis, Gustavo's business partner and brother-in-law. Chivo agrees to the paid assassination.

Chivo is another piece of the domestic puzzle in *Amores perros*. As we learn from the conversation with Leonardo, with the scene of him and his former family, he is someone dead to some characters. We can see this through conversations between family members and Chivo: "You're dead to them", and with Leonardo's conversation where he says, "His daughter doesn't even know he exists". Chivo is a character that embodies both life and death, of the old and the present, the embodiment of the 1960s and 1970s dream of social change, and disillusionment with the nation-building project. Chivo is a character, like Valeria and Daniel, whose driving factor is nostalgia. We hear not only of Chivo acting as a bridge between past and present, but we see how he interacts with the past, especially through photography, like Valeria.

We can see the role of photography in Chivo's life. In one scene, we see him take pictures of himself in a photo booth. We, later, see him break into his old family home—flowing through the domestic space—finding an old photo book of his family and him, only to replace the picture of his old self, with the new self. He wants to interact with his past but cannot because of emotional or traumatic experiences. Chivo's trauma is losing his past life, and interacting with a past through the nostalgia of photography, and through the domestic space he

breaks into, and the domestic spaces he creates in his makeshift home, full of stuff he finds on the street and dogs who serve as a family. We can think of trash, in this context, as the act of re-purposing that Chivo does with stuff, stuff that's thrown away, but repurposed by Chivo. There's a cyclical logic to the things Chivo does, with photography of his family, but also with the stuff he collects on the street. Chivo fills the domestic space with his, and strangers', idea of nostalgia.

In a scene where the three narratives intertwine, Chivo stalks Luis from afar. In the middle of this scene, Octavio and Valeria's car accident interrupts the actions. Chivo runs to help. Chivo runs to the scene of the crash. He opens the door to Octavio's car, notices that Octavio's wallet is hanging from his pocket. Chivo grabbed the wallet while witnesses crowd around to help the injured. During this moment, Chivo notices Octavio's injured dog in the back of the car. Chivo grabbed the dog and went home. And as he is checking his pockets to see what he stole from the scene of the accident, he finds photographs of the owner, of Octavio and Ramiro, and of Octavio and Cofi. He closes the wallet and puts it away. Eventually, Chivo nurses Cofi back to health. He keeps the dog with the rest of his animals. In a moment of transition, from Chivo's everyday life to psychological trauma, he returns home to finds that Cofi has attacked the rest of his animals, and that his home is in a state of chaos, with things misplaced, and blood everywhere. Chivo has a psychological breakdown. Through this scene, we can better understand how this act reconceptualizes Chivo's definition of the domestic space. For Chivo, the home space is recycled objects, memories, and dogs. He lives in a makeshift home, putting it together by things he finds on the street and photographs of his family. Cofi's violent act interrupts Chivo's physical and philosophical definition of domestic space. For Chivo, the death of his animals is the death of his home, as his animals are a critical part of Chivo's and the

space's identity. Cofi's attack symbolizes this destruction of the home space, of the family. This disruption of home is the beginning of Chivo's re-definition of home—as a private, nostalgic present—and the tunnel between public and private.

In a key scene where Chivo forcefully takes Luis into his home, Chivo interrogates his victim with questions and supplies a few answers. When Chivo asks Luis who he thinks put a hit on him, Luis names his wife, lover, lover's husband, other lovers. Chivo shuts down all Luis's responses. He then tells Luis that it was Gustavo, his business partner and half-brother, perhaps a nod to the Cain and Abel story, similar to the one between Octavio and Ramiro. Luis offers to pay Chivo to let him go. Chivo denies the offer and puts a handkerchief on Luis's mouth. Chivo calls Gustavo to see him at his house and to get the rest of the payment. Gustavo shows up, hesitant and scared, and sees Luis tied up. Gustavo panics only to see Chivo pointing a gun at him, furthering his anxiety. Gustavo then pleads with Chivo, "this wasn't the deal," and Chivo invites Gustavo to do the murder himself. Gustavo can't pull the trigger. Chivo grabs the gun, points it at Luis and asks Gustavo if he should shoot. Gustavo is in shock and cannot answer. Chivo hits Gustavo and ties him up alongside Luis. This scene acts as a further disruption of Chivo's private and public life. Chivo brings his work into his home. Chivo is a character is in constant change, one undefined by spaces as he travels through all levels of society, at his makeshift home to the lives of wealthy businessmen. Chivo's ability to flow through these spaces allows him to bring Gustavo and Luis together. The interaction is symbolic because it allows the film to further problematize the idea of public and private. If we were to think of Chivo's home as a cycle of nostalgia, one in constant conversation with the past, the entry of Gustavo and Luis is an interruption of that nostalgia. It is also a break between that private space

and the public, as Chivo brings his work, as a hired assassin, to his home. Chivo purposely breaks the idea of order in his space in order to re-invent himself.

Chivo attempts ot re-invent himself by breaking into his family's home. He finds a picture of his former wife, daughter, and new husband/father. He takes the picture and replaces the new husband's picture with a picture of himself. Once inside, Chivo makes a call to his daughter. I transcribe and translate the message below:

> Maru, my love, this is Martin, your dad. Your biological father. You must think this is a ridiculous joke. Especially after all these years. I've been dead to you. But in fact, I'm a living ghost. When I last you, you had just turned two. But I swear to you, not a day passes that I don't think of you. The afternoon I left…I hugged you. I took you into my arms. Asked for your forgiveness about what I was about to do. At the time I thought there were more important things than being with you and your mom. I wanted to fix the world, so I could share it with you after. As you can see, I failed. I wound up in jail. Your mother and I agreed that she would tell you that I was dead. That was my idea, not hers. And I swore to her that I would never try to find you again, but I couldn't keep to that promise. I was dying. I was as dead as could be. I'll be back to find you once I can look into your eyes. I love you very much, my little girl

The final scenes have Chivo selling another car, which we're never sure where he got. He takes his money from the buyer. And walks into the distance with his dog, his glasses, and his professorial coat. Chivo looks at the landscape ahead and starts walking into it, hinting at a typical scene in a Western.

Chivo's transformation gives way to a new identity, one rid of his old concept of domestic space and self, and one defined by the death of his dogs. He transforms into his former professor self. This scene is a point of trauma for Chivo. It is a trauma that pushes him to break the ethical code of crime, of the deal he had with Gustavo and Leonardo. Chivo brings Gustavo, a wealthy businessman, to confront the elements that make his life possible, which is only possible through Chivo's labor of crime and violence. Chivo inverts class structures by bringing Gustavo and Luis together. Chivo proceeds to re-invent himself. He puts on broken glasses

again, as we saw earlier in the film. He steals Gustavo's coat. Chivo's new look is a nod to his former self, a haunting of his past. As we learn from the message on the answering machine, Chivo is a collage of a fleeting nostalgia that serves no one but himself. But, in a few seconds, we see Chivo trying to relive that past, a past where he left his family to fight with the guerillas. He ends the conversation by telling his daughter he'll be back, giving a sense of repetition, or the attempt to repeat the same thing. But as the ending of the film tells us, Chivo does not return. He looks toward the openness of the world that stands in front of him and takes a step into the abyss, as his old self, with only some cash, and a photo album full of nostalgia.

Post tenebras lux offers readers a variety of interpretations of the events within the story and ways to interpret the cryptic, violent and sexual images of the film. To begin, we must first examine the title of the film *Post tenebras lux*. Considering the Latin meaning of "post" to, we can think of being after, or behind, of being in front of. Contradictory, "post" is both "to be exposed in the front or hidden in the back". Tenebras translates to darkness, or gloom, or non-light, of the absence of light, while "lux" translates to light, or brightness, the light of life, an illustration, a hope, or an encouragement. The title together, as it's translated by media outlets and or the description in the back of the film's DVD box, translates to "light after darkness," where the light triumphs over darkness. Most notably, we can see this theme play out in the first minute of the film, where a child plays in a field with other animals. A child runs through the field, mountains and scenery behind her. The animals run past, behind, and in front of her. There's a growing tension with each animal on the screen, a suspended tension that lingers for the audience that one or all animals might harm or hurt the child. The tension never eases. It continues well into the darkness of the scene, and to a place where the child, Ruth, names the animals. It is a creation myth that begins in light, with tension and anxiety, and that ends in

darkness, and begins, again, with light. Out of the many elements in the scene, what adds to that tension, is the off-screen sound during the scene. While the child is in our scope of vision, we can hear the running of the animals in the background. We are unsure where they are going and the proximity to the defenseless child. In opposition to the animals on the screen, or the sounds on the screen, we can see that cows and dogs are now a direct danger to the gentle child. So, in this opening scene, the anxiety spawns from that which we cannot see, that which is behind the lens but also created by the filmic lens.

Post tenebras lux narrates the experience of an upper-middle class family from the urban center living in the countryside. The film shows the everyday experience of Juan, Natalia, and two kids, Eleazar and Rut, as they navigate life away from city life. Juan and Natalia's marriage runs into problems. Juan's existential crisis leaves him aloof, often absent from the relationship, and searching for something else. In order for Juan and his family to live in the countryside, they hired local laborers to build their home. The family receives domestic help through residents, most of whom live in poverty. Of interest in this analysis, Juan develops a close relationship with Siete, a local laborer fighting addiction and poverty.

Nostalgia and melodrama play a critical role in the relationship between Juan and his laborers. In an early scene, Siete invites Juan to an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting. The scene begins with several members telling their stories. Members share stories about losing family members to addiction, feelings of guilt associated to addiction, and overcoming mental issues. When it's Siete's turn to speak, he does not share stories of addiction, or overcoming loss, but uses his time to introduce Juan. Siete introduces Juan as "our guest, boss, friend", describes how they become friends, and how he built Juan's home. The description is of particular importance as Siete describes the home building process in exact detail. He describes the cables

used, plumbing situation, electrical work and even specific top-quality brands used to build the home. Siete concludes his time at the podium with a bit of background information on Juan: "Hoy nos acompaña porque tiene inquietudes, o problemas, yo lo invité a las sesiones. El acepto venir porque está interesado. Juanito es bien camarada y los quiere conocer a todos ustedes" (Juan joins us today because he's unhappy, or has problems. I invited him to today's session because he's interested. Juan is a great friend and he wants to get to know all of you). Juan nods at everyone. Everyone welcomes Juan. The scene cuts to Siete and Juan speaking outside.

These scenes set the tone for the rest of the film and exemplifies the relationship between Juan and his surroundings, and how his surroundings (the workers) relate to him. it is important to consider the two speakers before Siete, Daniel Colorado (aka R2D2) and Jose Luis Martinez Jimenez (aka El Sapo). Colorado takes the podium to share details of his own addiction, the guilt associated with introducing his nephew to drugs and alcohol and to promote Alcoholics Anonymous's aim and service. Martinez Jimenez shares his story of being a laborer and his problems with spending his money on prostitutes, drugs, and alcohol. The two men set the stage for this meeting being a place of a shared trauma. The AA meeting in this rural area represents the last hope for many of the people here. For Daniel, this group saved his life. He mentions how he was out of control with money and drugs, but this space saved him from ending up dead. The story is similar that of Jose Luis, el Sapo, who talks about his own issues with alcoholism, drugs, and a life that's spiraling out of control. These traumatic experiences are in complete contrast to Siete's story. Siete, instead of sharing his story about worries like other members of AA, spends most of his time talking about Juan, introducing him as a friend and boss. There is no distinction between friend or boss.

Siete's introduction of Juan is telling in the way each character relates to the idea of home and to one another. In the naming of specific brands, tubes, electrical parts, sizes, and measurements, Siete transforms the affected space of trauma for this rural community into a description of the consumer relationship between Juan and himself, Juan and the community, and unravels the class disparity between Juan and the rural community he inhabits. While Siete is describing the material used to build Juan's home, the camera focuses on the few audience's members confused in the disruption in the meeting's tone, while Juan nods in agreement with Siete's description of their relationship. This disruption also serves to understand how these characters, from different parts of the country—urban and rural—interact and the construction of their relationship. The film bases the relationship between Juan and Siete as purely transactional. Even in this place of trauma, Siete cannot describe their relationship in mutual friendship terms, instead resorts to the work done at Juan's home. This points to class disparities and privilege between characters, and the only way Juan and Siete develop a relationship. Juan and Siete can only interact through the idea of the home. Even in this space, Juan and Siete cannot connect, judging from Juan's hesitation to stay and talk with Siete about where he comes from, even admitting that he doesn't know where Siete lives. And although Siete knows where Juan lives, an intimate detail, and even builds his home, Juan doesn't. The men, for the rest of the film, I claim, can only connect via some idea of a domestic space, no matter how unequal the power dynamic, there is no other way for them to interact in a social sense. The film's traumatic event comes when the lines between private and public ruptures eventually break with class structures.

Siete and Juan speak outside of the meeting. Siete asks Juan what he thinks of the meeting, as Juan is about to leave. Siete clears the trash off a chair nearby, so Juan can sit. Siete brushes off the dirt. Juan sits. The men talk. Juan asks, "So you lend them this house?" Siete

explains that when he first came to the area, someone let him borrow the land, and he made the house himself, and now lends it to AA for no money. Juan expresses confusion when he mentions that he doesn't know where Siete lives. Juan asks how Siete got here, to the AA group and the community. Siete explains:

> It's a long story, but I'll give you the short version. When I was a boy, about thirteen, it was just another day in my house. I was sitting on the sofa, watching TV. And I heard noises from another room. So, I peeped into the room. And there was my dad and my 15-year-old sister having sex. He was a fucking alcoholic. He left us, my mom, my brothers. He fucked off. He had a family somewhere else. I did everything I could to fuck the idiot up but only fucked myself up. I ended up on drugs, alcohol, theft. Total mess, my friend. I also had a family. I haven't seen them since. I battered my wife, kids. I was cruel…They forced me into a clinic. I was there for 6-8 months. I went back to my house and there was nothing left in the house, not even a light bulb. So, I ended up here…I hope to see them again someday.

Siete then asks about Juan's problem, why he is here at AA. Juan describes an addiction to pornography that's affecting his marriage. Juan rushes to end the conversation and leaves. The scene ends.

This scene shows how the domestic space functions as a space of trauma. They hold the meeting in this scene at Siete's home. Siete tells the story about his arrival in the area. Juan's displacement from his home is a story of a broken dynamic of the home, of the home as an immoral space that pushes one out and forces to re-produce elsewhere. For Siete, that immoral space (where his father was having sex with the daughter), is re-defined and traumatic. This trauma materializes in an attempted act of revenge on Siete's part. But, as Siete explains, "I tried everything to fuck him up", he ended up only hurting himself, becoming an alcoholic and drug addict, even a thief, similarly to his father before him. And while his father set the order of the house into chaos, Siete also creates chaos in his own home, admittingly. I see this thread of events as Siete re-producing his home while trying to avoid it, and the consequences of a

revenge, similar to ideas found in Ripstein's *Tiempo de Morir*. Siete's motivation is nostalgic, and, as he admits, only ends up re-producing the violence in his previous home. This exchange is also telling of the ways the two men end up in the rural countryside, which speaks, again, to the idea of how the two men re-reproduce the home. Juan reproduces his own in the countryside from the urban center, as discussed through conversation within the film, with the help of the local laborers, like Siete. While Siete's reasons for living in the countryside differ greatly from Juan's reasons. Juan's existence in the space is purposeful and controllable. Siete, on the other hand, is uncontrollable and exists out of circumstance. The difference is key in the way we think about the domestic space in the film, especially how the home space is re-produced and where that reproduction takes place.

For Siete, the space of the countryside represents circumstance and the break with his domestic space. He's forced to create a home out of the trauma of being without a home. The narrative then turns the traumatic space is then into the AA space, where other characters can to live out and work their trauma, a space where Juan enters, hesitatingly. Juan is uneasy because of the pettiness of his own personal issues, which he mentions as an addiction to pornography. Juan's home is a representation of the ability to re-produce the home-space by his privilege as a white, architect from the city who can move about social and economic borders as he pleases. Although both men re-produce homes away from their origin homes, there's a clear reason, and ability, how and why these men live where they live.

Juan can move through different spaces, from the urban center to the countryside, from his home to the home of Siete. The narrative denies movement and fluidity to certain characters, usually those from lower classes. The ability and denial of movement is best exemplified through the scene where Juan and Natalia leave for a road trip. The couple realizes that they forgot

something back at home and turn back. The scene cuts to the family making a pit stop at a diner. At the diner, Jaro, one of Juan's other workers, is having lunch and a conversation with his family. Juan interrupts and says, "What are you doing here, Jaro? You're supposed to be taking care of the house." Jaro tells Juan that his daughter needed to go to the doctor and is only here taking a short break. Juan doesn't respond directly to Jaro, instead, he turns to Natalia and tells her, "Wait for me here then, love, and I'll be right back" then turns to Jaro and says, "Jaro, don't leave the house unattended. Many people know we'll be out for a few days." Jaro assures him everything will be fine. Juan tells Jaro, and his family, "Take care of my family", as he leaves to return for whatever Natalia forgot.

Arriving to the diner, Juan notices Jaro eating with his family and questions why he's not taking care of the house. This scene explains the way Juan and Jaro interact. Similarly, to the relationship with Siete, Juan and Jaro interact through the home-space. The first thing Juan tells Jaro is "Why aren't you at the house taking care of it?", telling of where Juan places Jaro on the class structure of the domestic space. Local laborers maintain Juan's compound, especially Jaro and Siete. Interruption of that domestic space and social structure forms Juan's anxiety. For Juan, Jaro's absence from the home is that interruption, the laborers are a representation of the pillars that allow the home to be a home for Juan at least. Not only are the laborer the people that build the house, but are the people that maintain the home, that keep the home as a home for Juan and his family. The home falls apart without the laborer's labor. I argue that Jaro's presence outside of Juan's idea of the domestic space creates an anxiety for Juan, which later materializes into a traumatic experience. Eventually, Juan asks Jaro to take care of his family. This, to me, is a form of creating a home, a safe place, at this diner, where Jaro and his family are present. Juan is

asking Jaro to re-produce what he does at his physical home—take care of the family—but at this roadside diner. Juan can reproduce his own through Jaro.

Juan returns home. He notices family belongings outside. The door to the house is open. Juan proceeds with caution. The camera switches into a point-of-view and the blurred rings re-appear around the shot. As the camera is panning outside, through the leaves and trees, it arrives to the same shot we saw Juan in earlier in the film. The camera stays on the shot of the front of the home. Juan goes to the back, leaving the shot unpopulated by the film's characters. Suddenly, Siete and another man come out of the front door carrying a television and, what seems like a computer. As they two men look out for witnesses, they make a run for it. Juan suddenly returns from the back and catches the two in the act. Juan yells, "Siete, what the fuck are you doing?" The camera gives us a closer look at what Siete and the other man are carrying; it's a television, a radio, a printer, and miscellaneous electronic hardware. Juan says, "Put it down. I won't tell anyone." Siete's friend says, "Do you think this faggot won't tell anyone?", which Juan replies with, "This is none of your business" and shoves the man hard enough to throw him to the ground. Juan goes on a rant, "What the fuck do you think you're doing? Fuck you. Who the fuck do you think you are?" Siete pulls out a gun. Juan backs away, "Calm down, man" A quick chase occurs between Juan and Siete. They go up to the terrace. Siete shoots Juan. Juan falls. The men leave everything and run. The dogs are barking. Somebody calls for Juan from a distance. The camera switches to what seems like Juan's point-of-view, sideways view of the floor and the trees. The scene ends.

The scene at the diner is a moment of anxiety for Juan, while the scene on his return to the home is anxiety realized, a traumatic experience. On Juan's return, he finds things out of place, like a stroller and the door open. We see Siete and someone else walking out with

computers and other technology. Juan grows angry, shoves the other man, and Siete shoots him. The first being that Juan's anxiety about Jaro not being at home causes anxiety and causes Juan to try to re-produce a safe place for his family by ordering Jaro to take care of them. Juan's return is the trauma that sets the tone of the rest of the film. Siete, who had a personal moment—not relationship—with Juan shoots him. The absence of Jaro, and the betrayal of Siete causes the traumatic experience of being shot. Thinking symbolically, the laborers of the home, Siete and Jaro, are physically keeping the idea of the home as a safe place for the family alive, but show the power dynamic between Juan and his surroundings. It shows Juan's vulnerability, but also the idea of the home-space as a vulnerable place sustained only by the labor of the local people.

Siete and the other man are stealing technology from Juan's home. This is the first scene, and only scene, in the film where we see the workers inside the home. We could assume they were inside because they're carrying the stolen goods. But never do we see these workers inhabit the home as guests but as criminals. We can think back to the scene with Jaro, where he talks with Juan, always outside on the patio. The only scenes where we see the locals in the house is when serving as a domestic support for the kids and the family—even then, the maid has no speaking roles and serves only as support for the home, a physical presence that represents absence, but also the foundation of the home, without her work the family's life, and lifestyle, would not be possible. Technology, as a symbolic object, serves to interact with Juan's life, of what he represents as a wealthy man living in the countryside. It is a symbolic representation of entering a modernity which only Juan can access. The theft is an attempt to interact with the process that allowed Juan and his family to exist, a process only possible with Siete and the friend's labor. In an earlier scene, Juan talks to Jaro through a walkie-talkie, and the film shows this as their form of communication. It's not much to think about as a standalone gesture, but if

we think about that role of technology and communication between the characters we see a further separation between class relationships. We can see how Juan's only point of references with the locals is the home, and he connects with them through the walkie-talkie. Then, we can see how Siete's attempt at stealing the technology from Juan's home is an attempt to break with those social and economic barriers. The theft is a gesture on Siete's side to attempt a communication, but also a reminder that it is Siete's labor that allows Juan and family to exists in this space.

After the scene where Juan gets shot, we see him in a vulnerable state. He lies in bed recovering from physical violence and psychological trauma. Natalia is next to him, comforting him with words and affection. Juan asks Natalia for a song, a Neil Young song. Natalia plays It's a Dream by Neil Young on the piano. The kids climb on the bed again, but eventually they walk away from Juan. Natalia continues singing. Juan eventually joins in the chorus. Natalia continues playing the piano and cries. The song ends. We can hear the children in the background. Juan says:

> Today I felt like when I was a kid. I felt the grass of Cuernavaca under my feet, how it pushed between my toes, how I could feel every blade. It was so cold at dusk. And the red floor on the terrace made of sand and pieces of marble. I looked at every one of the pieces one by one, lying on the ground. Each had their own forms and unique patterns. I could tell each other apart. I heard the room where my cousins and I slept. It had an echo. There was a poster of a cow that said. "Catalan Pyrenees". When we moved the blankets, it smelled like humidity. At nights, I would sleep licking the metal headboard and heard crickets that I never heard again. I don't know if they died or if I just stop hearing them. I would hear my parents and uncles laughing. I just had to exist. Now it's Rut and Elazar's turn. But I didn't feel the usual nostalgia. I felt love for all things: the windows, chairs, machines, even the movies from the nearby town. I saw how everything is alive. All the time. I felt like a freshly showered baby. Clean and dry. I know I've been sick at the end of my life. I can see it clearly now.

Natalia asks if Juan will file a police report. Juan says he doesn't remember who it was. Juan asks Natalia to put the kids to sleep, but to bring him the dogs. The camera cuts to shots of the dogs, laying by Juan's side. Juan cries.

Juan's reflection is a way of processing the trauma in the break of his domestic space, of his space being in danger by outside forces—like other people in the small town. This represents a way to show how the body is at odds with the domestic space. Much like what addiction means for Siete, and the other members of AA, their inability to control their bodies and actions, because of addiction, cause them to attempt and re-produce the domestic space elsewhere, and be left with the trauma of the inability to control their body and their spaces. Those elements, as Juan sees them, are at odds with his existences, and want, and deserve, to be part of that idea of being. Juan's recovery symbolizes the way he is able to retreat to his home, as the home is a peaceful thing for him, as one element turned against him—Siete—he still has the agency to exist in this space. Even as Natalia later asks if he's pressing charges, he says "I don't even remember who it was", who shot him, which is a lie.

Thinking of the song Natalia plays on the piano, Neil Young's *It's a Dream*. It's worth thinking between the film's narrative, a depiction of the home, and the construction of the domestic space. Natalia, and Neil Young, sing a song about a distant dream, of a hometown where the "red river stills flows", where a "boy fishes in the morning/His bicycle leans on an oak tree/ While the cars rumble over his head/ An airplane leaves a trail in an empty blue sky/ And the young birds call out to be fed" A distinct feature of the song is that it's in present tense, that things—the boy, the cars, the airplane are happening now. But, as the song, and Natalia, continues, "It's a dream/ Only a dream/ And it's fading now/ Fading away/ It's only a dream/ Just a memory without anywhere to stay". The song complements the film in the way it narrates a

fleeting memory, but also the inability to define a memory, or a dream, and the inability to place it anywhere, to give nostalgia a home. For Juan, this inability to create a home for his nostalgia is at constant odds with his surroundings, his inability to re-create a nostalgia for his children, for his family, the breaking down of his domestic space is a point of trauma for Juan.

Juan talks to Natalia about feeling like a kid again. He retraces how everything is alive, how everything is different than the next, and everything operates within its contexts. This retracing of history is his engagement with nostalgia, even though he denies this "It was not the usual nostalgia I feel". The question here is what is the usual nostalgia that Juan feels? Although this is never clear, we can deduct that Juan has a multiplicity of nostalgias, and there is no distinction between them, there's no clear line to what is real and what is not. But, as Juan continues, he says that "I felt love for all things: the window, chairs, machines, even the music from a nearby town" Juan mentions parts of the home, instead of the feelings associated with nostalgia, and of a love and appreciation for the parts of the home, as opposed to the feelings inside the home. Juan is thinking of the physical aspects of the home, the things that make up the home beyond the family, beyond the effect of domesticity. This realization is telling of Juan's perspective about Siete's actions. This is a realization Juan, perhaps, needed to exist, to be content with his existences and understanding of how his social position allows him to exist through the work of his laborers. Just like Siete explained his relationship to Juan through parts of the home, Juan shows appreciation for those parts. The traumatic experience didn't displace Juan physically, but psychologically.

Juan describes that he's been sick at the end of his life, and that "he sees it clearly now". This line acts as an interaction with nostalgia. Juan has lived in a nostalgic cloud for most of his life, chasing something that happened long ago, or trying to reproduce his childhood for his

children, of just simply existing—a privilege not afforded to other children in the film, only Juan's children. This sickness, in turn, is flushed away, according to Juan. I argue that although it seems Juan comes to terms with this sickness, or nostalgia, he never fully escapes it, the film never gives a clear answer to this. For Juan, everything is alive, and everything is real. If everything is real, dreams and nostalgia are real too, and we're left to think of how we interact with something that's constantly fleeting and re-producing itself in ways we can only fictionalize, a proximity with fiction and nostalgia, and the way we create home through nostalgia. Juan has a re-birth, a new chance to live.

In the final scenes of the film, we find Siete in the back of a pickup truck. The truck drops him off on the side of the road. Siete walks home. The shot is of his entire home, a small structure on the side of the road. There's laundry hanging outside, trash to the side of the house, a dinky fence barely holding on. Siete's daughter walks up from the inside. Siete holds her tight for a few seconds and carries her in. Siete's wife Samantha is outside. He greets her with a hug and a kiss. They hold still. She says. "I just came for the kids". He says. "How did you find me?". She says, "Someone has been trying to find us on behalf of your boss." Siete asks if it's Don Juan. Samantha replies, "yes". Siete pleads with her, tells her he'll fix everything. The scene cuts to Siete walking down a street. The fading around the camera re-appears. He ends up back at Juan's house. He notices the kids are playing outside and asks for their father's whereabouts. The kids reply, "my father's dead". The scene cuts back to Siete's home. He's yelling for Samantha, but there's no reply. There's no one home. The scene cuts back to the devil entering a home, the same creature we see early in the film. The devil walks around the house. It touches nothing. But, unlike last time, a small child sees the devil. The scene cuts to Siete walking in an open field, much like the one we saw that the beginning of the film. The camera cuts to his pierced

ear, to his hair, the stride of his step, and the movement of his hands. He slows down. He takes a deep breath, unclenched his hands, looks at the forest before him. We hear a tree falling. We see shots of the forest, of more falling trees. The camera cuts to a medium front shot of Siete and switches to a long shot from behind. He anxiously starts grabbing his head. And with force and grunting, he pulls his head off. Rain falls on Siete's body and detached head.

This scene offers more insight into the way the domestic space is constructed and who it's constructed by, physically and philosophically. Siete returns home after shooting Juan. He holds his daughter and son, even though his son ignores him. He talks to his wife and tells her he'll fix everything. Siete's final scenes is a return home, a return to his family, return to Juan's home, and to non-existence through his suicide. In contrast to Juan's story, where his situation affords him reflection. Siete's return acts as a cyclical return to the home, even if this isn't his home, his family is home, as he says he wishes to see them again. He does. The return is a broken circle, as Siete can't return home. Siete wants to be with his family, but like his father, he left his family. And now that he has his family, but has done damage to someone who might look for him—confirmed by his wife—he has to return to the scene of the crime, which he does. Siete returns to the scene of the crime. It's the only way he'll be able to close the circle and return home to undo the trauma caused by the theft.

Siete returns to the scene of the crime, a return to the home he helped build. He's confronted with Juan's children. He asks for their father, in which the children reply, "Daddy is dead", which he answers by returning to his home, again. This points to the impossibility of a home for Siete. Thinking back to the story he told to Juan, how he was living at home, saw his father molest the daughter, how Siete tried to take revenge on the father, for breaking the dynamics of the home, and how Siete ended up hurting himself, and his own family. Siete is,

again, producing the same cycles in his story. The only way for him to be at home, with his family, is to fix what he's done, and he tries to do this by returning to the scene of the crime. The scene of the crime is a point of anxiety, which later materializes into trauma. Is Juan dead? We, the viewers, know he's not dead. We see him in bed, recovering with no real complications. Why do the kids say their "daddy is dead"? Dead to who? In seems that the answer is Juan is dead to Siete. If we interpret this as real, as everything is real, including dreams and nostalgia, Juan is dead to Siete. We then take this idea of the death of Juan as real in our analysis of the film. Since Juan is dead, Siete cannot fix the situation, he's unable to fix the situation he told his wife would, as his wife returns, only because she says "there's someone looking for you, someone who is your boss". This complicates the issue even further. For Siete, Juan is both dead and alive. Perhaps Juan is dead, symbolically in that Siete won't be able to recover the lost home. And alive because the action he took will live on constantly. So, for Siete, Juan is both dead and alive, a nostalgia, a mix of the past and the presents, of uncertainty of death and the certainty of dying, a mix of real and unreal, of being and not being. Juan represents this duality.

After finding out Juan is dead, Siete returns to his home again. Only to find that there's no one there. Juan's actions dictate Siete's ability to exist, and it is in this scene that we see that on a surface level. This return home, for Siete, is the same return home he talked about earlier in the film, when he talked about returning home to take revenge on his father. That revenge is never fully realized. Siete can never get back at the man that destroyed his domestic space. It causes Siete to go on a spiral of alcohol and drugs, spiraling into addiction, unable to see behind the clouded dangerous circle of addiction, of doing the same thing over and over. Juan's death causes anxiety for Siete. Siete's return, and finding no one there, is a return to the earlier anxiety with his own family. The narrative reproduces the scene. Finding no one at the house, creates the

impossibility of the home space for Siete. Siete won't be able to return, or have a rebirth, like Juan does

The final scenes show Siete returning to where the film started, almost a full circle. Seemingly, Siete's return to the place where the film started, the open field is a form of circular storytelling. The film begins with the life of a child, a vibrant innocent child, representing life. The final scene represents the opposite. Considering the impossibility of the home for Siete, through his stories and actions, the anxiety creates a traumatic experience, a different way to see the world where the only option is death. In a critical scene in the film, the camera capture Siete in a medium shot, where we see him above the knees. We're confronted with the image of him, a whole image of him. Quickly, the camera cuts to a long shot of Siete standing in the middle of the field. He takes his hands to his head and rips off the head from his body. For me, this scene could be a representation of somewhat of a circular narrative, of ending the film where it started, or beginning of life and ending with death, the counterparts to each other, the birth and death process. The anxiety of not being able to be at home leads Siete to this moment. The body does away with itself, suicide. In the same way, that we see the body and the home, we can think of Siete's anxiety of the body at odds with itself to the point of self-destruction. It's also interesting to note that Siete doesn't resort to killing himself with a gun, or a knife. It's through his own body that destroys the body. This brings up the idea of the body against itself, of the sickness of circular logic, or the impossible task of returning to a home, whether it's family, a physical place, or a philosophical idea. Siete breaks with the narrative by ending his own life at the hands of himself.

Amores perros and *Post tenebras lux* visualize neoliberal class bubbles through narrative and form, and whose aesthetic and production characteristics align within what Ignacio Sanchez-

Prado defines as sublime neoliberal (neoliberal sublime). In Esteticas de la imaginación neoliberal: el cine mexicano post-1988, Ignacio Sanchez-Prado, defines sublime neoliberal as: "construye una fantasia de modernidad capitalista avanzada fundada en los sujetos incomodos para el goze y establecimiento de las clases media y altas" (x). We can see these ideological tendencies in both films. In *Amores perros*, we can see how the film aligns poverty as an interruption of modernity through the accident between Valeria and Octavio. The film narrates the opposite lives of the characters. It is only through the traumatic experience that they can interact. The crash symbolizes the trauma of that class interaction. Similarly, in *Post tenebras lux*, that interaction is visualized through the scene where Siete is stealing from Juan. Like I mentioned earlier, Juan's workers never enter the home they help build. And it is when Siete enters the home that trauma occurs—Juan is shot. It is when Siete attempts to enter Juan's class bubble that trauma happens. But even though the characters end up with traumatic experience, like Octavio and Valeria, it is ultimately Siete that suffers the worse consequence. Aside from the issues within the narrative, the films' form allows an insight into the ideologies that shape characters' behaviors within the film, most notably through the film use of non-linear storytelling, aesthetics, and their historical context.

In *Out of Time: Desire in Atemporal Cinema*, Todd McGowan proposes a cinematic category to better understand cinema that defies traditional linearity, like *Amores perros* and *Post tenebras lux*. The logic of desire is a dominant trait in a linear narrative, where there is a forward-moving attempt at attainment of a lost object. In contrast, atemporal cinema is driven by the logic of the drive, embracing loss through the repetitive attempt to encounter the object. The repetitive component in the drive's logic is the intersection of biological life and the social order. Therefore, the subject of the drive understands that biological life will never experience

fulfillment through the object and what fulfills the subject is the process of repetition, as opposed to the object itself. Atemporal films rearrange our conception of the relationship between cinema and time. Cinema offers the experience of temporality with atemporal cinema films turning away from linearity to non-linearity and a logic of drive. Instead, the films rely on a circular logic to make sense of the issues within the film. Given the open ending in both films, they do not rely on a neatly closed conclusion, but an open-ended one, one that returns to where it started without a conclusion.

The films' fractured narratives are "crossed linguistic, national, and generic borders, cutting through traditional divisions created by film markets", as Debora Shaw points to in her book The Three Amigos, a study of the big three, post-1988 Mexican film directors. In her book, she outlines the transnational aspect of these filmmakers and how their status outside of Mexico has allowed them to cross national and financial contexts. This leads the study of Latin America film into taking into consideration the transnational directors, modes of production, and distribution, exhibition, narration, and politics into account. This shift in transnational cinema comes in the wake of a dissolved state-funded cinematic programs and institutions. In short, the collapse of this network gives way to a semi-private model that takes over the way citizens experience cinema. Sanchez-Prado outlines these levels of change: 1) production (thanks to the transition from state sponsorship to mixed public-private and fully private schemes), 2) exhibition (thanks to the decline of state-owned theaters and a corresponding surge in privately owned multiplexes, which today accounts for nearly 90 percent for total screens in the country) and 3) consumption (from the urban popular sectors who largely enjoyed the pre-1992 model to the middle-and upper classes who could afford to attend the private multiplexes in the wake of price liberalization)" (6) The way cinema is experienced and funded in Mexico changes into a

market-centered arena. These changes, altered the way films are made, and also what Mexican films tended to be about. As see from both films, these economic shifts into a neoliberal, global apparatus, takes center stage in its narrative and production, particularly through the films' depiction of class mobility in the characters of Chivo and Siete.

Amores perros and *Post tenebras lux*' register the political and economic transition of the 90s in Mexico through global cinematic tendencies. Like other films in the previous chapter, the domestic space remains at the center of these character's lives. In *Amores perros*, Octavio's and Susana's love affair is challenged by living in such close proximity to Ramiro. Their private passions seems to spill into various spaces within the home, re-defining the purposes of various spaces within their home. Daniel's and Valeria's problem, also, begin within the home. For these characters, the moment of trauma begins with the physical opening Valeria accidentally created. The opening represents a relation with the outside world, one that's detrimental to the couple's well-being, and especially to Valeria's body and psychological state. Similarly, that relation to the outside world, characterized by the hole, is similar in them to the bigger accident in the film—the one between Octavio and Valeria. For Daniel and Valeria, the relation to a world outside of their neoliberal class bubble is dangerous, and that danger is represented by Octavio and the danger that lies beyond the hole (the rats, the impossibility of getting their dog back). These social bubbles are only in contact by accident. And when they do make contact, a traumatic experience occurs. Similar to Daniel, Valeria, Octavio, and Susana, Chivo suffers a similar fate in relation to his home. He voluntarily leaves his home to fight for the social good of everything, exemplified in his narrative of being a retired professor who dedicated his life to fighting with guerillas. Chivo disrupts the social order by leaving his place as an upper-middle class university professor to fight the social order alongside guerillas. This has profound

consequences. He inevitable loses the comforts of his life, his professorship, goes to prison, becomes a hired assassin for the social bubble he was once a part of, and, the greatest loss is his family, which he is constantly trying to speak to, but seeing as he has left that bubble, and as the film's narrative stated, there is no contact between the upper-middle and the lower classes. Any contact between these two results in losing all the comfort of the upper-middle class life, or death, like Siete in *Post tenebras lux*.

Chivo and Siete serve a similar purpose in each film. Both characters cannot enter the upper-middle class and the films visualize these attempts. But, given that the narrative allows these characters to roam free, it also denies them that privilege. For Chivo, the social order he once was a part of denies him this constantly, and in fact, uses him as a hired assassin to do their dirty work. Siete is also a hired worker whose labor serves the upper-middle class that denies him entry into that social sphere. Siete builds Juan's home, and even in describing his relationship with Juan, he uses the types of brands used in the home's construction, all high-end. So, I interpret that scene—of Siete stealing from Juan—as an attempt to enter Juan's upper-middle class world, but it denies him, like Chivo in *Amores perros*, except for Siete the consequence is suicide. We can also see traces of this line of thinking with Octavio and Ramiro, as they attempt to make money off of their fighting dog. The point of contention between Octavio and Ramiro is two-fold: Susana and upward class mobility through the dog. While Susana ends up with Ramiro, Octavio ends up alone, living at his mother's house, living with the failed fantasy of running away with Susana, at a failed attempt to domestic life.

These films register and produce images of a nation in neoliberal economic and ideological transition. By looking at the domestic space, we recognize how the definition of home is at stake and how the public and private spheres relate to one another. Sometimes, when

that outside comes in contact with the inside (example: Daniel and Valeria's relation to that beyond their apartment; Juan's home invasion) result in a traumatic experience. This visualization of trauma allows us to better understand the way which class operates within the films' social order, and how that social order criminalizes and enjoys that which is beyond its ideological reach. Octavio, Ramiro, Chivo in *Amores perros*, and Siete in *Post tenebras lux* are characterized as the criminality that disrupts modernity's progress, yet whose labor is indispensable for that modernity to progress in the realms of economics and politics.

CHAPTER FOUR: *¿PARA QUE NOS VAMOS, SI AL RATO VAMOS A REGRESAR?*: SENTIMENTAL IMAGININGS AND RE-PURPOSING THE MELODRAMATIC IMAGINATION IN *GÜEROS* (2014) AND *ROMA* (2018)

This chapter analyzes the way characters in Ruizpalacios' *Güeros* (2014) and Cuaron's *Roma* (2018) interact with the physical and ideological form of the domestic space to uncover each film's respective social-historical context and reveal contemporary ideas of an imagined community. Through the use of and reference to Mexican Golden Age aesthetics, the films in question are longing for the loss of a home space, while trying to build an imagined community that extends beyond political borders. This imagined community is not the traditional nation alluded by Benedict Anderson, but one made up consumer-citizens around the world, and one that aligns with corporate interest and neoliberal policies, as theorized by Nestor Garcia Canclini and Sarah Banet-Weiser. I consider Netflix's corporate decision to invest in Mexican production more than any other country, and the tendency to produce TV and film closely aligned to Golden Age aesthetics, as building its own imagined community. In *Güeros*, a group of young people journey through Mexico City's neighborhoods in search of a mythic rock hero. The young people in *Güeros* come face-to-face with the man behind the myth and are deeply disappointed and affected by the impossibility to interact with the object of desire. While in *Roma* Cuaron uses the character of Cleo to chase a nostalgic idea of childhood, resulting in an admission of guilt about narrating such a story and uncovering the limits of nostalgia. I contextualize the narrative of Cleo against economic and cultural policies that favor upper-middle-class characters, who interpret her labor as indispensable, but treat her body, and its reproduction as dispensable in the hands of State violence. Both films resort to black and white cinematography and set during student protests ('71 and '99) as a backdrop of social unrest against neoliberal policies. This chapter explores the way each film interacts with nostalgia, returns to Golden Age

aesthetics through its narrative and production, and further problematizes the definition of national cinemas.

Although Cuaron and Ruizpalacios are tied to popular streaming services, both directors stands at different places in terms of career trajectory. At this point in Mexico's cinematic history, Cuaron is old news. A member of the original 'three amigos' that lead the latest Mexican cinematic boom, Cuaron received full backing and creative control on *Roma* from Netflix, a rare opportunity for any director. Ruizpalacios, a director with fewer years of experience but rising in popularity, produces *Güeros* through mostly Mexican production companies, but later picked up by Netflix for online streaming. Recently, Ruizpalacio directs his new film, *Museo* (2019), to be picked up by YouTube Originals, a new venture by the steaming site to enter movie production. Ruizpalacios's YouTube Original comes shortly after the director's involvement with the widely popular Netflix Original Series *Narcos Mexico*, which seemed to set off a chain reaction in terms of Netflix's interest in Mexican productions.

In *How Netflix Expanded to 190 Countries in 7 Years*, published in the Harvard Business Review, Louis Brennan describes Netflix's strategic expansion and the surprising rate which it rolls out that strategy. Brennan states, "By 2017 it [Netflix] was operating in over 190 countries, and today close to 73 millions of its some 130 million subscribers are outside the U.S. In the second quarter of 2018, its international streaming revenues exceeded domestic streaming revenues for the first time." Brennan's piece describes that Netflix did not enter these markets all at one. Instead, it selected adjacent markets in terms of geography and distance, "or perceived differences between markets". The first expansion was into the Canadian market in 2010. Through this expansion, Netflix developed an international reach where "foreignness" would be

less of a problem. After Canada, Netflix had its vision set to another neighboring country—Mexico.

On February 12, 2019, various Hollywood news sites reported that Netflix is set to produce 50 projects in Mexico. After success with productions like *Roma* and *Narcos Mexico* the streaming site is set to engage with Latin America's top market (Variety, Hollywood Reporter, Forbes). The amount of projects surpasses any other country's production where Netflix streams. Content Chief Ted Sarandos tells The Hollywood Reporter, "To give you a sense of the scale and scope of this, we announced a few months ago that in the same time frame we will have 30 original shows in India, so Mexico is our most in any one territory." It's worth to note that among these productions are *Como caida del cielo*, a music comedy about Mexican singer Pedro Infante, regarded as one of the greats during the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema; a production tentatively titled *Ahi te encargo,* a rom-com written by producer Leo Zimbron, who wrote Nosotros los nobles, a contemporary spinoff of *Nosotros los pobres* (1948); and a documentary project executive produced by Gael Garcia Bernal called *Rio Grande, Rio Bravo*, a reference to *Rio Grande* (1950) and *Rio Bravo* (1959), also set around the time of Golden Age Cinema. One recent example of Netflix's tendency to channel these Golden Age elements is the series *Casa de las flores*, a comedic melodrama which pulls influence from, what Ayala Blanco terms, *melodrama sociofamiliar, melodrama negro,* and *melodrama de cabaret.*

Casa de las flores is a comedic melodrama set in contemporary Mexico. A Netflix Original Series, the third series after *Club de cuervos* and *Ingobernable*, *Casa de las flores* narrates the story of dysfunctional upper class family dealing with their father/husband's suicide. In the midst of this chaos, the family is dealing with the emotional baggage of their father's suicide, in addition to keeping their financial lives afloat. The family realizes that the father left

behind secrets, a mistress, and suspicious, borderline criminal businesses. *Casa de las flores* mirrors Golden Age cinematic tendencies in the way it unravels life-changing secrets, uses the *melo* in melodrama to produce spaces and emotions, and the spaces where the melodrama takes place. The series stars Veronica Castro as Virginia de la Mora, who represents traditional values as the matriarch in the family. As the series unravels, Virginia's world collapses through her husband's death; finding out about her husband's affairs and secret daughter; finding out that her son, who is seemingly in a relationship with his female fiancée, is in an affair with a male family friend; finding out that her daughter is dating an African-American man from the U.S., drawing a point of racist anxieties in Mexican culture; and, most obvious to Golden Age stereotypes, finding out that her husband owned a cabaret at the margins of the city—a satirical references to *cabaret melodramas.* Despite its settings, themes, and cast of stars, *Casa de las flores* is not audience-specific in terms of geography. Running jokes through the series require and understanding of both Mexican and U.S. culture and geography. For example, one character, fed up with the family drama, threatens with leaving to the U.S. and enrolling at Parsons The New School of Design, a prestigious fashion school in New York City, a joke geared towards a multicultural and and specific class-based audience. This case can also be made for *Club de cuervos*, another Netflix Original Series also influenced by similar Golden Age rhetorics—excess of emotion, death of the father, music as a narrative device, secrets as traumatic experiences, clear boundaries between public and private, etc. The TV show, particularly these Netflix Original Series, remain a point of unexplored scholarship and would make great points of departure of analysis.

If the Golden Age of Mexican cinema's objective was to produce a loyal citizen to the nation, Netflix is embarking in a similar corporate strategy, but removing the state and replacing

it with its own corporate interests, reach, and through similar aesthetics and rhetorics. Benedict Anderson alludes to the relationship through his analysis between media and democracy. Anderson argues that citizenship is bound to “imagined communities”. This imagined community was formed through the commercial printing press. Printed books, newspapers, and other material standardizes language and discourse, which bounded citizen-subjects to recognize each other through commonalities and shared time. For Anderson, “print capitalism” was critical in the move from monarchy to democracy. To take Anderson’s ideas about “imagined communities” and “citizenship”, and the importance of “print capitalism” in that equation, the issues presented in this chapter resemble something more appropriately called “streaming capitalism”, where the function of the nation is replaced by corporate interest, and formulates a different kind of “imagined community”, one that extends beyond the confines of geographic boundaries to reach customers, and one where its survival depends on constant growth from quarter to quarter.

The basis of my argument stems from Néstor Garcia Canclini’s and Sarah Banet-Weiser’s work on consumer culture. Garcia-Canclini argues that the nation’s role is based on legal citizenship is not at stake and undeniable. Canclini claims that the practice of citizenship becomes consumer-oriented and the consumer-citizen attributes a sense of belonging rooted in consumption and brand communities, and any rights, duties, and social activities fall within the “sphere of consumption.” Banet-Weiser sees this behavior in brands like Fox, MTV, and Bravo. She gives the example of Nickelodeon, and claims to “empower” its viewers by exercising their right to consumer freedom. In this example, viewers are encouraged to “simultaneously escape adult rules through membership” in the “Nickelodeon Nation”. The network fuses the promise of political and cultural power—and cleverly connects both to participate in and identification with

the niche-oriented Nickelodeon brand. This is the type of consumer-citizen that Netflix and other online streaming sites are forming through their content. In 2015, and in example, Netflix buys world distribution for the film *Beasts of No Nation*, a story of a child soldier in the midst of a civil war. *Beasts of No Nation* becomes one of the first films distributed and released theatrically and online on the streaming site. I am not interested in the film itself, but in the symbolism of the film's title—*Beasts of No Nation*. The title is helpful in understanding how Netflix moves across markets with little regard to national, political, and cultural boundaries. The title helps me understand how Netflix (a corporate beast) interest in Golden Age aesthetics to build its own imagined community of consumer-citizens. The analysis that follows considers characters interactions with the domestic space as a reflection of this relationship between corporate entities and its consumer-citizens, where the idea of the nation fades into nostalgia and identity.

My argument builds on the work of Elena Lahr-Vivaz in her book *Mexican Melodrama*. In her book, Lahr-Vivaz pairs readings of Golden Age films and contemporary films to show how the latter exploit the fragmentation that the former seeks to "cover over through melodramatic excess" (4). The author explores the importance of Golden Age films in constructing national and continental identities, discussing the relationship between melodrama, modernity, and Mexico. Lahr-Vivaz focuses on the general loss of belief in cinema's ability to conflate narrative and nation and argues for Golden Age and contemporary Mexican cinema as allegories of interventions of constructing its place in modernity. I view contemporary Mexican cinema, much like Lahr-Vivaz, as an attempt to build an identity through Golden Age cinematic tendencies. The films visualize these tendencies through the film's aesthetics, representation of the domestic space, and the relationship between the film's characters and their relationship with the idea of home.

Two years apart, and both in black-and-white, *Güeros* and *Roma* depict urban, Mexican narratives to a global audience. In *Güeros*, brothers Federico, also known as *Sombra* (shadow), and Tomas set out to find a long-lost rock musician. Fede lives in Mexico City and attends UNAM. Tomas, Fede's much younger sibling, lives with his mom in Veracruz. After getting into trouble, Tomas's mother sends the boy to live with Fede. Tomas arrives in Mexico City to find that Fede lives in an apartment without electricity, spends his time complaining about the protests happening at UNAM—"I am protesting the protest"—and listening to pirate radio, hosted by Fede's love interest Ana. Fede is not a part of the student movement, nor working on his thesis, as he should be. Instead, Tomas convinces Fede and a friend to set out on a road trip to find a long-lost icon of Mexican rock music. Part road movie, part buddy film, *Güeros* shows a journey through a city amidst growing cultural, political, and educational inequality, with a backdrop of the student strike at UNAM in 1999. Similarly, *Roma* is set to the backdrop of the '71 student massacre and depicts the story of Cleo, a domestic worker for an upper-middle class family. The film narrates the story of Cleo as she serves her role in the family's everyday lives, her unsuccessful attempts at romance and giving birth, but also cultural, social and racial dynamics in contemporary Mexico. Often referred to as Cuaron's autobiography, *Roma* is an attempt to tell a story about Cleo, and the admission, by Cuaron, of the impossibility of that retelling.

Melodrama plays a critical role in both films and in my analysis. *Güeros* and *Roma* re-purpose melodrama of the Golden Age to tell their respective stories. The Oxford Dictionary defines melodrama as a "sensational dramatic piece with exaggerated characters and exciting events intended to appeal to the emotions." The dictionary also notes that the term's origin are in the "early 19th century: from the French *melodrama*, from Greek *melos* 'music' and French

drame 'drama'. In addition, I look to Peter Brooks to understand how melodrama functions in both films. In *The Melodramatic Imagination,* Peter Brooks states, "The connotations of the word [melodrama] are probably similar for us all. They include: the indulgence of strong emotionalism; moral polarization and schematization; extreme states of being, situations, actions; over villainy, persecution of the good, and final reward of virtue; inflated and extravagant expression; dark plotting, suspense, breathtaking peripety" (10). Brooks' definition serves as a baseline understanding of melodrama, and the way it functioned in Golden Age cinema, and how it function in these contemporary productions. Golden Age films used melodrama to bring an "imagined community together", the films in this chapter use the melodramatic imagination to reach a nation and a nation beyond its national boundaries—"Mexico y el Mexico de afuera"

Melodrama serves as a sentimentality for the past, a nostalgia. Given that both films are period pieces, the films visualize a complicated relationship with nostalgia. Nostalgia is defined as an "acute longing for familiar surroundings, especially regarded as a medical condition; homesickness" (Oxford) and "sentimental longing for or regretful memory of a period of the past, especially one in an individual's own lifetime; also sentimental imagining or evocation of a period of the past." (Oxford) The protagonists in each film interact with the idea of nostalgia in different ways but ultimately arriving to the same conclusion. In the case of *Güeros*, Tomas and Fede chase the nostalgia of a mythic rock hero. In *Roma,* it is Cuaron who attempts to chase a mythic home through Cleo.

What is the purpose of the melodrama in contemporary Mexican film? To answer this question, I return to Anderson's definition of "imagined communities." Anderson states, "The newspaper readers, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly

rooted in everyday life…Fiction seeps quietly and continually into everyday reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations "Anderson argues that "imagined communities" in Latin America form in the 18th and 19th century, when newspapers were widely distributed, newspaper readers were able to recognize themselves in other readers, creates a shared time, a sense of simultaneity shared through the media. It is through the media that the imagined community begins to take form, and it is through media outlets, in the 19th and 20th century, that the imagined community extends national boundaries, and a process further complicated by streaming services like Netflix.

In her book *Mexican Melodrama,* Lahr-Vivaz argues that in the melodrama in Golden Age cinema, "the 'imagined community' of print culture morphs into the 'empathetically imagined community' of screen culture because of the screen's ability to encourage spectators' identification with actors and characters and with the other audience members with whom they have traditionally shared the theater experience" (22). To recover those early motives in Mexican cinema, and apply them to contemporary streaming services, leaves us with a complicated relationship between nation-building efforts in a globalized world where the boundaries are blurred for those with the privilege of citizenship. Rather than the imagined community within national boundaries, *Güeros* and *Roma* are speaking to a global community of Mexico, that, if privileges of citizenship allow, traverses around the globe. Both films attempt to build this global community by staying faithful to an early definition of melodrama ('music' and 'drama'). Music plays a critical role in both films. In *Güeros*, the entire narrative relies on finding a musician lost in a complicated national rock history. In *Roma,* popular music of the time plays a role in producing spaces for Cleo, and to a certain extent other characters.

Aside from *melos*, the film's sounds contribute to the overall contemporary brand of melodrama. In an interview about *Solo con tu pareja* and *Y tu mama tambien*, Cuaron states, the Spanish in both films "…is very, very, very, slangy. I think it's something that was very refreshing…particularly for younger audiences in Mexico" Cuaron takes a unique approach in *Roma,* where *chilango* is mixed with Cleo's *Triqui* language. And, in *Güeros*, Ruizpalacios also uses the slangy language to convey a localized message to a global audience, Mexican and otherwise. I argue that this fragmentation of language and sound contributes to the disconnection between the people in the film, the people who this movie is about , and the audience watching it. I am reminded of a scene in *Güeros* where Fede says, "Puto cine Mexicano. …y los chingados directores, no conformes con la humillación de la conquista, van con los críticos del viejo continente y dicen que nuestro país es nada mas que marranos, rotos, puercos, rateros, traidores…" Fede comments on the cultural and physical difference between those portrayed in the film and its audience. In *Roma*, this distinction is made early in the film, through the class dichotomy imposed by the opening scene, between those that wash the floors and those flying in airplanes—more on this later.

Both films place student protests as narrative backdrops. *Roma* depicts the student protest of '71, otherwise known as the Corpus Christi massacre, while Güeros contextualizes its narrative through the student strike at the *National Autonomous University of Mexico* (UNAM) of 1999. The Corpus Christi massacre and protest takes places on June 10th, 1971, where seven thousand students in Mexico City peacefully showed to show opposition to the government, and showed solidarity with the movement happening in Nuevo Leon. This major protest was the first since the Tlatelolco massacre of '68. As students marched, riot police blocked paths, agitating and spraying tear gas. Within this march, the Mexican government, and in part the United States

government, introduced one thousand, government-trained clandestine paramilitary group known as the *Halcones*. The *Halcones* joined riot police in attacking students with weapons, while snipers took aim from surrounding buildings (Cite). In *Roma*, Fermin, Cleo's boyfriend, is part of the *Halcones*. In a scene that seems to reference the Golden Age cinema, with its epic depictions of nature, Cleo arrives to Fermin's training grounds. We see a large scale training camp of young men from surrounding neighborhoods. We see the initials LEA in the background, Luis Echeverria Álvarez, then President of Mexico; a Mexican military general, a man with glasses with a sweatshirt that reads "Wes Point", intentionally missing the T in West Point, the military academy; and a more formal man dresses in a button up and slacks, symbolizing a cliché of a CIA operative abroad, smoking and observing. The scene takes a turn when Zovek, the film's wrestling star, makes an appearance.

The student strike of '99 depicted *Güeros* is a continuation of the tension in student protests of the 60s and 70s, like the one depicted in *Roma*. The strike was a response to tuition hikes by administration and the lack of student participation in the decision-making process. The tuition hikes and lack of student participation in the process signaled efforts by the Mexican government to mirror the nation's neoliberal economic development. The older, most prestigious universities' efforts were also mirroring a growing sentiment for Mexico to open its markets and play a role in the global economy, the rebellion of the Zapatistas in Chiapas is an another example of the conflict between local economic and sovereign concerns against a market-driven, corporate effort to globalize Mexico's economy. On April 20th, 1999, students and supporters occupied faculties and schools throughout the university. Shortly after, the students formed the *Consejo General de la Huelga*, dominated by two political groups, moderates and leftists, who were affiliated to a number of different political movements that often clashed ideologically with

one another. This ideological clash is represented in the scene where we are introduced to Ana. Ana is giving a speech on the importance of unity to the student protesters. In this scene, Furía, Ana's boyfriend, quickly shuts her down by calling her a "neoliberal bourgeois", and accusing her of standing with the neoliberal politics of the university. The scene is further complicated by shouts of the crowd for Ana to take off her clothes, showing gender inequality in a protest composed of many political ideologies. These protests serve as backdrops to narratives about class, gender, and race in contemporary Mexico, and as an insight into how cinema registers and produces historical consciousness.

Ruizpalacio's *Güeros,* a term often used to refer to light-skinned or blonde people, narrates the story of a road trip between four characters: Federico, who usually goes by Fede, or *sombra*; his younger, light-skinned brother Tomas; Santos, Fede's roommate, friend, and university student; and Ana, Fede's love interest and leader of a faction within the student protests. The group traverse through Mexico City's urban landscape to find a mythic rock hero by the name of Epigmenio Cruz. Through the journey, we find that the group is at odds with the spaces they inhabit: Fede is protesting the protest; Tomas is exiled from home and sent to live with his brother. Santos, a graduate student at UNAM, finds that the space that nurtured his work, the research lab, is destroyed because of the lack of funding; and Ana, a leader in the movement, is at odds with factions within the movement itself. In my reading of *Gueros*, I see its motive as a nostalgic longing for home, where the characters involved are looking for a mythic home, through the road trip to find Epigmenio, but also realizing the impossibility of that return to a home space.

Fede, or Sombra, and Tomas are brothers. Tomas arrives in Mexico City, where Fede attends university, after getting in trouble back home in Veracruz. Tomas arrives at Fede's

apartment and is introduced to Santos, Fede's roommate and a graduate student in the university. We learn that Fede is a university student, and as he claims is in "protest against the protest". We never learn Fede's reasons against the protest or his political leanings. We only get glimpses of his criticism towards the world around him, but they seem to contradict themselves through the film. For example, in these early scenes, Fede proposes that the group go to a proper breakfast, a continental breakfast. He questions this idea of the continental breakfast, "whose continent? Is it their breakfast? Is it our breakfast? Who is they and who are we?". In another scene, Tomas questions Fede's intentions and role in the protest. Tomas asks, "Are you taking part in the protests?", Fede replies no. Tomas asks, "Are you a scab" Fede replies with a defensive no. Throughout the film, we see several examples of Fede's disdain, and unexplained hatred towards scab workers, and those who cross the picket lines, even though he is not part of the grander political student movement. We also see that in scenes where Fede takes a political stand, it is always motivated by love, particularly for Ana.

Fede and Tomas are constantly at odds through racial differences and ideological motives. Skin color is a focal point between the two through the entire film. In scenes where Fede introduces his friends to Tomas, his friends never cannot point out the difference in skin color between the brothers. The difference becomes a point of comedy through the film, with some of Fede's friends questioning their family relation. Ideologically, Fede represents stillness, of not taking part in the protest, or taking a stand against anything, while Tomas represents movement. It is, ultimately, Tomas who pushes the narrative of the film forward through his insistence on looking for Epigmenio Cruz, and through questioning Fede's intentions. The group finds out that Epigmenio Cruz is ill and possibly dying. It is Fede who reads the news headline, Fede interprets this headline as the death of the singer, even though nothing in the

newspaper reports his death, just his illness. Tomas insist that he is still alive. And the two yell at each other about why they should/shouldn't embark on finding Epigmenio. In the middle of the fight, Fede yells at Tomas about the reasons for not going, "Tengo que hacer mi tesis, entiendes?! Mi puta tesis, okay?", where Tomas yells, "a la verga con tu puta tesis, con tu puta huelga, y con tu puta vida!" (a sentiment shared by some viewers). The scene ends, but it is ultimately Tomas—with his shirt that reads "DON'T LOOK BACK"-- who encourages the road trip to find Epigmenio, and who drives the narrative forward, away from Fede's disillusionment with the world/political context around him.

Early in the film, we learn that Fede suffers from panic attacks. Sometimes, he deals with it through smoking cigarettes, or finding solace through a young neighbor with Down Syndrome, and sometimes finds solace in poetry and music. We can see this through the scene where Fede sits on his computer listening to Ana host a pirate radio station. Fede clicks the same keyboard over and over. Ana reads a poem dedicated to that a person that is never complacent with anything, "No eres el único con un hueco en la pansa, no eres el único que no se llena con nada". The poem is titled *Extensión de la casa*. The poem is transcribed below:

> Observamos los escombros largamente, como si en ellos reconociéramos los vestigios de la casa, como si en cada piedra pudiéramos adivinar los espacios en los que crecimos, tantos fragmentos de nosotros derrumbados, pero esas piedras afiladas, una sobre otra, ese montón de piedras es la casa y ya nadie vendrá a derribarla, "que la casa esté en todas partes" dijo uno de nosotros, y nos acercamos para tomarla en las manos, para extenderla a los lugares más queridos, para lanzar con fuerza la casa hacia el agua, a las ramas más altas de los arboles y a la intimidad de los pozos. Que las piedras de la casa se confundan con el resto de las piedras, para que en las noches podamos recostarnos bajo la tierra tibia y estemos resguardados, sin muros ni techumbre

The poem reflects a longing for home. It attempts to find solace in domesticity anywhere and everywhere. With Fede, a character at odds with the university, and away from home, he is dealing with the anxiety of being without a home. We can see how he and Santos live, in a dinky,

dirty apartment, where they have to steal the neighbors' electricity to survive the weather, or just to turn on the light. We also see this with the ease with which both characters leave it behind with no emotional attachment. For Fede and Santos, this is not a home. In the film's context, the poem exemplifies the way characters are longing for the nostalgia of a myth—Epigmenio. The movie is a road movie which takes places in one city, but it is also a chase movie, as one character discusses in the scene where they're entering the university by car. The characters in the film are longing for that home space, represented by Epigmenio, a symbol of their missing father and the comfort of nostalgia, and how they arrive to Epigmenio, through Fede and Tomas' absent father.

Before the guys set out on the city wide road trip, Tomas shows Fede and Santos a tape of Epigmenio Cruz. The scene is set outside while Fede and Santos sit on the hood of their car, listening to Ana host the pirate radio show, again. Tomas asks Fede to put on Epigmenio's tape on the car stereo. And in what we think might be a tender moment between brothers—Fede smiles at Tomas and says, "you still listen to this?"—Fede shoots Tomas' idea down by telling him that the car's tape player does not work. Instead, Fede takes the tape and puts it into a portable tape player. The film transitions the viewer into Fede's point of view, or point of hearing, when he plugs in the tape. When we expect to finally hear Epigmenio's music, we hear nothing. This silence becomes symbolic through the film, as every time a character plays Epigmenio's music, the audience hears silence as a placeholder for the music. The camera shows Fede listening to the music. He smiles. Santos asks to listen to it. Fede hands over the headphones. Santos is also in amazement. Tomas interjects, "He made Bob Dylan cry." Fede also adds, "He could have saved national rock music." This silence, coupled with Tomas's and Fede's comments about the singer creates a myth around Epigmenio, an impossible for us to

judge for ourselves, let alone know if everything they say is true. The film denies us sound in the same way that nostalgia denies these characters a comfortable conclusion to the film and idea of home, best exemplified through the meeting with Epigmenio, which I will return to shortly.

The film's chapters offer an insight into the structure and meaning of the road trip. Unlike traditional road trip movies, the characters in *Güeros* embark on a road trip within one city, Mexico City. After the scene where the gang listen to Epigmenio Cruz, the guys set out to find the mythical rock hero. The film is divided by chapters informed by space and direction. The chapters are as follows: 1) Sur 2) Poniente 3) Ciudad Universitaria 4) Centro 5) Oriente. The film begins in the south, or southeast in approximation with Mexico City and Veracruz. It is Tomas that makes this move from the south to the north, and also Fede, although that is never visualized, we can assume that since they're both brothers with family in Veracruz—an important element I will return to at the end of this analysis. The gang travels through different parts of Mexico City, Poniente and Ciudad Universitaria, and Centro, to ultimately arrive at Oriente, a marginal, crime-ridden neighborhood in Mexico City. And it is in this *Oriente* that they find Epigmenio. But the road to Epigmenio is not as straightforward as the chapters portrays it to be.

The gang's voyage and direction is a point of confusion for those involved, adding an element of wandering and confusion to the road of self-discovery. Early in the film, after Tomas runs out of the car to throw up, and Fede runs after him, the brothers run into what seems like a farm. Fede consoles Tomas after throwing up. Tomas looks around and asks, "where are we?" Fede replies, "we're in Mexico City", a vague answer to a simple question. This conversation happens again later in the film, where Fede asks, "Where are we?", and, this time, Tomas answers, "We're in Mexico City." Both characters reach moments of bewilderment in their own

city. This element of bewilderment with in the city is re-enforced by Fede and Santos driving instructions. In one scene, where Santos is driving, Fede instructs Santos to go straight ("Vete derecho"). Santos replies, "Derecho or derecha?" The two friends argue about what direction to take. When Santos takes a right (derecha) the gang takes a wrong turn into a bad neighborhood and run into a suspicious character that jumps into their car, and force them to take him. The gang later ditches him and the road trip is restored. This confusion between *derecha* and *derecho* happens again, but while Fede is driving and Santos is giving direction. This confusion allows us a deeper understanding into Fede, who is at the center of confusion with direction and place in both scenes. Fede, who is sometimes apolitical, cannot tell the difference between derecho and derecha in the same way we cannot tell his political stance. In some scenes, Fede appears to adapt a right (derecha) leaning ideology, especially in the scene where Ana is speaking in front of the student protest. In others, Fede appears to be left leaning. We can see this through his hatred of scab workers and unwillingness to even entertain the thought of disrespecting picket lines. We see Fede choose a political side only when Ana is involved.

The bond between Fede and Ana becomes clear during the road trip. At first, the film introduces us to Ana's voice through the pirate radio station. Fede finds comfort in her poetry and playlists. Ana's feelings are not mutual, but romantically distant. Although Ana flirts back with Fede, she is romantically tied to a revolutionary who sides against her publicly. I think back to the scene where Ana is giving a speech in front of the student body, in hopes to unite the protesters to a common cause. Not only is this the first time we see Ana, but see how she, also, is stuck in a space of contradiction. In this key scene, when Ana is giving a speech, she receives applauses of agreement. But suddenly, we see her boyfriend Furia stand up to oppose her intentions and calls her another typical neoliberal subject from "tropical letters", Ana's academic

department. When Ana defends herself against her boyfriend, she receives more applause, but is quickly shut down by other voice demanding she takes off her clothes. This space of protest is depicted for its stance on gender roles within the microcosm of the movement. According to the protesters in front of her, she is as much an ally as she is the opposition through her politics, gender, and social status. This contradiction drives Ana to frustration, which becomes the reason she goes on the road trip.

Ana and Fede rekindle possibilities of a romantic relationship on the trip, most obvious in the scene were Ana asks Fede why he never made a move. But, similar to Fede, we find out that Ana is also in constant contradiction with her surroundings. We can see this element in the scene where the group is driving to an after-party for a movie premier, invited by Ana's non-student protester friends. Fede takes the wheel. Ana takes the passenger seat. She changes out of the clothes she wore at the protest, adds make up, and does her hair—changing her appearance to enter into an upper-middle class space full of movie directors, actors, producers, etc. After Ana finishes with her new look, she and Fede joke around with different accents. Fede mimics and references Jaibo, protagonist of Buñuel's *Los Olvidados*, and says "Mejor a regresar a Los Olvidados." Ana replies, also with Jaibo's accent, "Es mas bonito el tono." Fede comments, "A poco no me paresco al Jaibo" and Ana replies "Si pero mas gachito." Fede suggest the couple play with another accent of the "Golden Age of Mexican cinema." Ana obliges. The group arrives at the party, only to be, again, at odds with the space itself.

Once at the party, Ana sits with her upper-middle class friends, while Fede, Tomas, and Santos are forced to find a place of their own. Ana joins a group of friends in the middle of a conversation about Mexican cinema and its place on the global stage, of French filmmakers and

criticism. The three guys walk away in disgust. They sit in a nearby staircase, away from the main area of the party. Fede says,

> Puto cine Mexicano. Agarran algunos pordioseros y dicen que ya están haciendo cine de arte. Y los chingados directores, no conformes con la humillación de la conquista, van con los críticos del viejo continente y dicen que nuestro país es nada mas que marranos, rotos, puercos, rateros, traidores…

Tomas replies, "pues si lo es". And Fede replies, "Si pero que lo hagan con su lana, no el heredaría nacional." In a way, Fede is referencing Mexican art cinema, but also *Güeros* itself, a Mexican film in black-and-white, produced through private funding. This is not the only time the character reference the film itself. Right before the group enters into the university area, Fede and a friend discuss the politics of the protest. Fede has issue with the friend's leftist take, not surprisingly, but eventually the conversation leads to the quality of *Güero's* script. We see the camera fumble around and a clapper comes into the shot, with the name of the film, scene number, and take. The friend is not happy with the script and calls it a simple chase movie, everyone is always chasing something. The characters are all chasing something as an individual and as a collective whole in the same way the film is chasing a nostalgia through its aesthetics, self-references, and Mexican cinematic references. The film is attempting to tell a truth from within, but cannot once it self-realizes, in the same way the subject can not self-reflect because it transforms into a subject looking at a self-referential subject instead of the subject itself. Güeros' self-reference makes the film a cyclical narrative, a critique of itself about its own limitations, stuck in a space of contradiction and nostalgia, like the characters within.
The film represents that contradiction and wrestling with nostalgia through the final meeting with Epigmenio Cruz.

The group stumble to the bar on accident. They all take a seat at the bar and find Epigmenio sitting alone at a table. Juan Gabriel's "*Hasta que te conocí*" plays. The group

observes from afar. Finally, Tomas gets up from the table and starts walking in Epigmenio's direction. We can hear Juan Gabriel's song louder than we did before, specifically in the part where he sings, "*hasta que te conocí*" Tomas introduces himself, tells him everything Cruz's music means to him, and asks if he can autograph his tape. The song continues to play. The camera turns to Cruz, who has an uncanny resemblance to Luis Buñuel's in his later Mexican years. Cruz looks up and says, "Quien chingado eres, y que putas estas hacienda en mi casa?", he pushes Tomas tape from the table, dropping it on the ground. Fede steps in while the the song returns to the chorus, Juan Gabriel singing "Hasta que te conocí". Fede says,

> Venimos, pues, porque yo y mi hermano te escuchábamos todo el tiempo, porque tengo meses sin dormir, hasta que llego Tomas. Pero lo que quiero decir es que este casete era de mi jefe. El me lo enseño hace muchos años. Ya no esta con nosotros. Es de tu música. Al principio no entienda nada, pero ahora lo entiendo muy bien. Entiendo los que dices. Entiendo lo que mi papá entendió. Que en la vida te vas a cruzar con un montón de pendejos que no saben nada, que no saben ver que hay detrás de las cosas. El mundo material pues. Que no importa que pase, solo que tengas eso, que puedas ver detrás de las cosas, lo que no te pueden quitar es ese sentimiento. Tu lo escribiste. Dijiste, ese sentimiento. Pos ahora se de que sentimiento hablar. Mi papá decía que si el mundo es una estacione de tren, y la gente los pasajeros la gente, que los poetas no son los que van y vienen. Son los que se quedan en la estación viendo los trenes partir. Por eso lloraba mi papá cada vez que escuchaba tu voz rota, porque eres de los que ven a los trenes partir

Fede ends his speech. The music stops. The camera turns to Epigmenio. His eyes are closed and hunched over on his chair. Tomas says, "Esta muerto?". Santos checks Epigmenio's breathing and says, "Esta dormido." In this scene, and through speech, Tomas and Fede come face to face with the myth they helped create. From the beginning of the film, even when we cannot hear Epigmenio's music, Fede and Tomas create a narrative through heresy, through the stories their father told him about making Bob Dylan cry, to the stories they found along the way. They come face-to-face with a nostalgia that falls asleep and becomes inaccessible to both Fede and Tomas. It is of note that the brothers approach Epigmenio at the same time that Juan Gabriel's song says,

"*Hasta que te conocí*". The song marks a turning point for both characters where the process of mythmaking leads to an anti-climactic encounter with the myth itself, where Epigmenio not only refuses to sign their tape, but falls asleep, in perhaps, Fede's most emotionally intense speech. The symbolism of the train and poets reoccurs, when Epigmenio was supposed to be the poet with the answers, the one who watches the train go by. He is a myth that disappears into a dream, only accessible through fragments, the same fragments one uses to build a home, as Ana's poem narrates early in film.

The group drive back home after the disappointing encounter. They get stuck in traffic, traffic caused by the student march. Ana realizes she is late to the protest and yells at herself in disappointment. In a rush of anxiety, she grabs her stuff and leaves the group in the car, rushes into the march of protesters. Fede runs after her, but Ana is long gone. Fede notices and stands in the middle of the march. The camera show protesters yelling, cars honking, and Fede in dead center of it all. Tomas puts his body out of the car window, takes out a camera, and points it at Fede. The camera turns into the point-of-view of Tomas' camera. It captures Fede in the middle of the protest, still and observant, like "a poet, watching the trains go by." Fede smiles. Tomas smiles back.

Cuaron's *Roma,* released to much critical acclaim, narrates the story of Cleo, a domestic worker working for an upper-middle class family in the affluent neighborhood of *Roma*. The narrative shows how Cleo is both part of the family and apart from it. The relationship between Cleo and the family is troubling, as the film shows the family's reliance on her labor and Cleo's inability to be part of the family. Ultimately, *Roma* is Cuaron's attempt at recreating a childhood nostalgia about the people(s) that made his life possible. Here, that person is Liboria Rodriguez, an indigenous Mixtec woman and Cuaron's childhood nanny. Cuaron spoke to Variety about this

nostalgic trip and some issues that arise from it. He states, “Jorge Luis Borges talks about how memory is an opaque, shattered mirror, but I see it more as a crack in the wall. The crack is whatever pain happened in the past. We tend to put several coats of paint over it, trying to cover that crack. But it’s still there” (Variety). Cuaron describes a sense of guilt about the film, about social class, and racial dynamics. *Roma* represents these sentiments through the impossible task of re-telling Cleo’s narrative and the film’s inability to recreate a mythic past. The film is self-referential in the way it portrays those inabilities of nostalgia, in the way *Güeros* also references itself.

The film opens with a still shot of the ground and sound of scrubbing nearby. Within a few second, water from somebody scrubbing the tiles floors ebb and flows into the camera view. The water accumulates in the center of the shot forming a reflective rectangle in the center of the shot. We see an airplane through the reflection. The camera pans up to show Cleo washing other parts of the floor. The camera moves slowly through the space, showing parts of home, a bike, a small apartment where Cleo walks into. The camera cuts to an interior shot of the larger home, where Cleo is cleaning. The camera moves gently through the space while Cleo steps in and out of the shots periphery. The camera’s movement moves without regard for Cleo’s whereabouts, leaving Cleo to wander through the domestic space and the camera’s direction.

This first sequence uses water as a tool which to reflect on family and social class dynamics. In this scene, the full shot of the floor is all-encompassing, it takes up the entire screen. The only indicator outside of that full shot is the sound of Cleo pouring water and soap on the floor. We eventually see the water on screen, it mixes with soap and ebb and flows within the shoot. The water forms a small puddle on the floor. The puddle causes the water to stay still and create a reflection. The reflection is of the sky from the ground. The airplane crosses on the

reflection. Here, the film is setting the precedent for Cleo's place in the narrative. The shot is telling of two separate relationships: 1) Those cleaning the floors and those flying in airplanes 2) Cleo washing the floor and the family who that floor belongs to. This family dynamic is a constant theme through the film. Cleo is part of the family, but also an outsider that holds its dynamics together. And, as we see with Cleo's friends, they are also part of the social fabric which allows the upper-middle classes to exists.

The panning shot in this sequence is important to understand the relationship between Cleo and the narrative itself. As Cleo enters the domestic space, the camera's pans through the house with Cleo moving in and out of the frame. The camera narrates the space by moving across the home. Cleo moves in and out of the shot, sometimes leaving her out of focus, or in a room where the camera is not pointing. This relationship between Cleo and the camera is telling, again, of the relationship between the family and Cleo. The film narrates the family's story and the divorce between Sofia and Toño, the events that followed the divorce, while Cleo process personal traumas. In example, when Cleo is about to tell Sofia about her pregnancy, Sofia interrupts her with less urgent, personal matters. It is until Sofia's concerns are met that Cleo gets to tell her about the pregnancy. Cleo asks, "Will you fire me because of it?" Sofia rejects any sign of doing away with her and consoles her, for now. Both the reflection of the airplane in the water and the camera's movement show how Cleo is always at distance with Sofia's family, even in matters of life and death.

Early in the film, Cleo is washing clothes by hand in the upper-part of the home. The scene begins with a shot of the ground, again, water dripping out of a leaky pipe. Cleo washes clothes and sings Juan Gabriel's 1971's hit, "*No tengo dinero*." The two boys, Paco and Pepe, step into the shot, playing a cop-and-robbers type game. Cleo tells them , "You shouldn't be up

here", but the boys ignore her and continue with their game. Pepe hides behind a water tank while Paco approaches his prey with caution, holding the gun close to his eyes as if getting ready to shoot. As Paco approaches the water cooler, he leaves his back exposed to the Pepe's attack. Pepe points his gun at Paco. Paco finds it unfair, he says "You were supposed to die!", Pepe replies, "Why me?", and Paco says, "Because it's my game", and Pepe forfeits the rigged game. Paco leaves the shot, exposing his back to Pepe, again. Pepe takes a shot, even though the game is over, and lingers in the area. Cleo notices Pepe's sadness. Cleo and Pepe have a conversation. Cleo asks, "what's wrong?", but the little boy refuses to talk. She asks again. The little boy replies, "Can't talk. I am dead." Cleo lays on the other side of the boy, mirroring his position. The little boys asks, "What's wrong?", and she replies, "Can't talk. I'm dead" The camera shifts up to show neighboring houses with similar upstairs set ups, where other domestic workers are also washing clothes.

The scene's establishing shot is of a leaky pipe. Water is gushing on the rooftop's floor. Cleo is washing the family's clothes and listening to music. Again, water is a reflective tool which to understand Cleo's dynamics within the family and issues of social class, and appears in definitive moments in the narrative. While water is gushing on the floor and Cleo washes the family clothes, she sings Juan Gabriel's "*No tengo dinero*" The song tells the story of a young, poor man unable to marry his lover. The young man claims to not have any money, but only love to give. Cleo sings the lines, "…when I tell you that I'm poor, you won't ever, smile again…I long to have it all and lay it at your feet…but I was born poor and you'll never love me…" The song foreshadows the relationship between Cleo and Fermin.

Cleo is at the center of this rooftop sequence. She labors over her family's clothes with water. She fills the space with her voice, with a song that resembles her and Fermin's narrative.

Cleo produces the space through labor and song until its interrupted by the two boys, Paco and Pepe. Cleo stops singing once the kids interrupt her work and song. She cautions, “You shouldn’t be up here” and “Don’t go near the edge.” Through this scene, we can understand the way music drives the narrative in *Roma,* much like melodrama of the Golden Age. The boys interrupt the scene by invading her space, a space where they’re technically not supposed to be, and by ignoring Cleo’s orders, visualizing her place in the family hierarchy. The boys ignore Cleo and continue playing.

The sequence also shows how Cleo is a part and apart from the family, and Cleo’s inability to impact the space itself. Paco loses the game of cops and robbers when Pepe surprises him by shooting him in the back. Paco’s complaint is that he started the game, and this is not how it’s supposed to happen. This gesture points to an unhappiness with destiny, of how things were supposed to be and how they are. It is interesting to see how Paco walks away from destiny that he does not like, and Pepe remains sad that the game is over. This is telling of Cleo’s inability to be part of a future, or to engage with how her future will play out. With Cleo in the background, the boys are acting out the ability to control one's destiny, a privilege that Cleo can only witness and never be a part of, even when she voices her concern. This sequence displaces Cleo from any say in the narrative's context. The sequence shows Cleo’s inability to take part in the everyday life of the family, even though much of their everyday life depends on Cleo’s labor. The family keeps her at a careful distance. The same family showers her with love, as we see at the end of the film, but also at a distance, like the reflection of the airplane on the floor and Cleo washing the floor.

The interaction between Cleo and Pepe further emphasizes her relationship with the past. As we learn from scenes with Pepe, he claims to have lived many lives, died many times, and

learned many things through these experiences. I see Pepe as a symbol for a lingering nostalgia that the film is constantly trying to reach. In the tender scene where Pepe claims that he "can't talk" because he's "dead", and Cleo mimics this by taking on the same thing, we can see how these two characters function with one another. Cleo is nurturing Pepe's nostalgia by interacting with it, by asking questions, and taking care of these old lives that he claims to have had. This is the first of many scenes where Pepe tells Cleo about the lives he's lives, and how Cleo is persistently nurturing those stories. This relationship shows how Cleo nurtures nostalgia. When Pepe refuses to talk because he's "dead", Cleo does the same. In this last scene, Cleo also claims to be dead. This act takes on a different connotation than Pepe's association to a nostalgic past. Perhaps foreshadowing Cleo's still-birth, Cleo's as a dead character—even in this playful scene—creates an identity of stillness, of being without a future. Cleo is stuck caring for the family, depending on the family for health, labor, and an emotional support that comes close to sincerity and always with orders. The film treats Cleo as a dead character, one that births still-birth, and someone who nurtures nostalgia is stuck in a mythic past. At the end of Pepe and Cleo's interactions, the camera slowly pans up, showing the rest of the neighborhood. We see other domestic workers doing their work in the rooftops. We see other versions of Cleo beyond this specific narrative about this domestic space.

The family takes a trip to the countryside. Once at the site, the family greets old friends, while Cleo unpacks their luggage and puts it in their respective rooms. We find out that Cleo is friends with the family's domestic worker. The two catch up as they set sleeping arrangements for the family. While they both arrange sleeping quarters, Cleo notices taxidermy of dogs hanging on the wall. Cleo looks at the dead dogs and her friend answers her unasked question,

“They’re all dogs that lived here.” The camera cuts to a shot of the dogs’s stuffed heads. Cleo reflects on the heads of dead dogs and a dog approaches to lick her hand.

The voyage to the countryside is of significance because it shows how that family can move between center and margin. Here, the urban center of Mexico City treks to its outskirts in land that, literally, belongs to indigenous populations—“the campesinos are trying to take the land”, says someone at the party. Through a great part of the film, the children ask Sofia about “where Cleo is from”. We can understand that she is from the countryside, not the city. Cleo cannot return home on her own, and requires that the family take her to the margins to be at home. For Cleo, the margin is home, physically and symbolically. She can only return to a version of home through the family’s decisions of taking a trip to the countryside.

Once at the house Cleo wonders about the taxidermy on the wall. The dead dogs on the wall represent proximity to death. The animals are dead, but their physical representations are still alive. The conundrum of taxidermy is of having a dead animal alive. Here, I do not mean alive in the physical sense, but as in past tense. For the owners, as we learn from Cleo’s friend, all these dogs have died, but are still here. This mirrors the film’s interaction with nostalgia, of its inability and disappointment that it’s unattainable, even in film form. As she’s looking at the dead dogs on the wall, a dog approaches her and licks her, putting his tongue with her hand. She feels the relationship between past and present, of being alive and dead at once. The taxidermy symbolizes an attempt to capture a memory, how Tomas took the picture of Fede in the final scene of Güeros, and in the way Cuaron is attempting to capture a memory with this film. *Roma* is the realization that nostalgia flees as we try to recreate it. Another question arises from this scene: What role does Cleo play in Cuaron’s autobiographical work? We can look to the relationship between Pepe and Cleo. Pepe embodies nostalgia with his grand tales of past lives.

Cleo nurtures these stories for Pepe, asking questions about the tales he tells. In this scene, we can see how Cleo is the impossible object of nostalgia for Cuaron, a desire to return to a home space. The party scene re-emphasizes this argument.

The next few scenes show the family party. While Cleo and other domestic workers run around taking care of the children, adults dance and sing along with a man in a costume that resembles a devil. The song *Corazón de melon* plays. The monster encourages everyone to get up, dance, and sing along. In the middle of the party, Cleo's friend invites her to a party happening downstairs with the rest of the domestic workers. At this party, Cleo takes an alcoholic drink and accidentally drops it. Her cup breaks on the ground and spills the drink into the pavement's crevices, creating a small puddle in one crack which also creates a mirror-like reflective effect, recreating a reflecting moment for Cleo and for the audience. A fire breaks out in the woods in the middle of the party. The entire party runs outside to try to stop the fire from spreading. Adults and children grab buckets of water and throw it onto the fire. In the middle of this chaos, the man dressed like a monster walks through the shot, observing the chaos and not helping. He stops and sings, *Barndomsminne frå Nordland* (Childhood memory from Nordland), a Norwegian nationalist hymn. The part of the song is transcribed below:

Oh, I know a land far up towards the north
with a bright shining shore 'tween mountain and fjord.
There I gladly am guest, there my heart is attached
with the most delicate ties
Oh I remember, oh I remember,
Oh I remember, so well this land

Where a mount rises towards sky with its crown of snow
and leaf-clad anew mirrors its image in the ocean,
and it smiles toward the shore with its breast on fire
in the sun-drenched evening
Oh I remember, oh I remember,
Oh I remember, so well this mountain

This home is so dear to me like the best on earth.
Here my heart is near, this bewitching fjord,
and the vivid mountain, and the radiant evening
the mind plays, it plays with them
Oh I remember, oh I remember,
Oh I remember, so well this home

The Norwegian hymn points to central themes in the film's narrative. The song is longing for a lost home. It longs for the natural landscape of that home, and narrates how memory recreates these spaces. The song does not describe the home, but it describes what it remembers, through memory. There is a distance between memory and the home, in the same way *Roma* tries to recreate Cuaron's experiences and the distance between Cleo and the social classes she serves. *Barndomsminne frå Nordland* is a childhood memory much like *Roma*. Here, the film serves as a tool to understand the role of social classes in Mexican society. Natural elements, especially water, work as a mirror the same way the act of nostalgia acts as a mirror of the self, of our wishes to return to a mythic home. Water, in *Roma*, is the ebb and flow of nostalgia's promise. It's ebb and flow is just a tease of that return and the impossibility of returning to that home.

The final scenes of the film resolve the problem of nostalgia and social class. The family takes a trip to the beach town of Veracruz The waves are crashing too hard for Pepe. To run away from the waves, Pepe runs back to shore only to fall in a small hole in the sand, a hole he dug earlier in the scene. Cleo picks him up and takes him to a nearby chair. Here, Pepe tells a story another story about his past lives. He describes being a sailor "but drowned in the storm. The waves were huge. I didn't know how to swim", mirroring the possibility of Cleo's experience with the ocean that stands in front of both. As Pepe tells his tale, Cleo notices the other kids are swimming too deep into the ocean. This is reminiscent of the rooftop scene, where Cleo tells the kids not to get close to the edge. In this scene, the kids do get close to the edge of

the shore, and get caught in the dangerous space between land and water, where the water ebbs and flows violently. Cleo runs into the ocean to save the kids. This scene, as what Cleo warns us earlier in the film, the margins are dangerous. The space in between center and margin are at stake through the film, and the film says that these areas are dangerous. For example in this scene, where the kids ask to play close to the edge. They eventually go further into the ocean and trauma happens once you go in, but the trauma is not entirely for the kids. Cleo must deal with the trauma, as she goes into the ocean not knowing how to swim. In *Roma*, Cleo must deal with the consequences of the family's actions when they get too close to the edge.

Looking at these last films through the framework of the *Barndomsminne frå Nordland*, we can see how the ocean is a reflective component of the scene. Again, water is present in the scenes. There are two things of interest: the Sophia's role in the narrative and Cleo noticing that Paco has gone too far from shore. She runs into the water. She walks into the waves, being pushed further back from the kids. The wide shot shows the immensity of the ocean, and the kids' heads occasionally pop up out of the water . She yells for Sofi and Paco. After much struggle, she reaches both kids and brings them to shore. She hugs them on the shore. The mom runs back. The family hug each other, creating the iconic cover to the film. Cleo says "I didn't want her to be born", the mom says "we love you so much" The rest of the family cries in agreement..

The family drives back home in reflective silence. The kids arrive to a semi-empty house. The children notice the absence of their father's bookshelves. Cleo takes the luggage to respective rooms. The kids retell Cleo's heroic rescue while Cleo returns to her domestic duties. At this point in the film, the retelling of Cleo's heroism is a memory—the act of retelling itself symbolizes memory, and tells us what issues that lie with it. The kids retell the story in much the

same way that Cuaron retells his own. In this scene, the retellings an act of remembrance, of how the idea of Cleo, but not of Cleo herself, the lived person with feeling and emotions. The kids do not talk about Cleo's breakdown—the climax of the film for the audience and Cleo—but of how Cleo rescued the children and not about putting her own life in danger.

As the children are retelling the story of how they almost lost their lives, Cleo grabs a pile of dirty clothes and walks up the stairs to do laundry. The camera follows her going up into the rooftop area. The camera stays still and we see an airplane cross the sky, again. The camera stays still. The credits roll and another plane crosses the screen. The conclusion mirrors the opening scene. But even through a mirror, the reflection remains a reflection, not a re-production of the opening scene itself. This last sequence helps us to understand the way which Cleo will remain apart from the family, even though the family needs Cleo to eat, function, and in this latest case in the ocean scene, literally to live. As the children retell the story, and Cleo grabs her stuff, the film dichotomizes Cleo as a nostalgia and Cleo as the lived reality of that fiction. I say nostalgia because it is not a true re-telling of what happened; the children re-tell their own version of the events, and skewed with subjectivity. That subjectivity turns Cleo into a great mythical hero, a mythical hero with laundry duties.

Cleo's stillbirth represents her role in the film's historical context and a consequence of state violence. To understand Cleo's stillbirth, I return to two scenes: when Cleo's water breaks while shopping for a crib with Sr. Teresa and the hospital scene where we learn about her stillbirth. In the scene where Cleo is shopping with Sr. Teresa, we see and hear the violent protest outside. Cleo and Sr. Teresa look out the window and see a riot break out. Suddenly, men and protesters with guns swarm the crib store. The camera slowly reveals that the men in the store are the *Halcones*, the paramilitary group sponsored by the U.S. and Mexico government. And to add

to the traumatic experience of the scene, it is Fermin, Cleo's former lover and father to her child, who is pointing a gun at Cleo. The *Halcones* leave the scene. Cleo's water breaks from the trauma. Sr. Teresa rushes Cleo to the hospital. In the hospital, Cleo returns to the *IMSS*, a state-sponsored hospital, to give birth. They arrive to a full emergency room. Sr. Teresa tries to check Cleo into a registration desk, but realizes that she does not know Cleos full name, nor middle name or age when asked. The staff help Cleo. Dr. Alvez steps in to take Cleo into surgery. Once in the emergency room, the staff still not hearing a heartbeat. After a few seconds, we staff tells Cleo that her baby was born dead. They allow her to hold the baby for a few more seconds. The staff takes the baby to prepare for next steps. The scene ends.

The cause of trauma, and reason for Cleo's water breaking, is because of the *Halcones* breaking into the store and Fermin pointing a gun at her. Cleo is contextualized and traumatized by state-sponsored violence through the *Halcones* and Fermin. Cleo's relationship to the *Halcones* is much deeper than historical background. Fermin gets Cleo pregnant and avoided her all together, even threatens her with violence in the scene where she goes to see him train. Later, in the scene where she's shopping with Sr. Teresa, is it the *Halcones* that are causing the violence outside, and storm the crib store. It is, ultimately, Fermin who points the gun and causes the moment of trauma, symbolized physically by water. It is also worth noting that the hospital Cleo delivers her child is state-sponsored—the *IMSS*—and where her employer took her for treatment instead of a private doctor, further distancing Cleo as a member of the family, but as a person who should be treated by public tax payers.

We can better understand the significance of Cleo's stillbirth and relationship to the *Halcones* through Foucault's idea of biopolitics, "the way in which the specific problems of life and population have been posed within a technology of government" and Giorgio Agamben's

argument that *homo sacer,* "the sacred man who can be killed in a religious ritual", has become conflated with the idea of *zoe*, "bare life, another longstanding philosophical concept, which refers to a life that is completely worthless and marginalized". In Agamben's view, under the power of the twentieth century capitalist State, all people eventually become this combination of *homo saucer* and bare life. As a result, the State can dispose of them as it sees fit. Cleo is the "sacred" and that "who can be killed." She is both a sacred to her employer, as they need her to hold their lives together (and nurture their nostalgias), yet who's body, and the reproduction of that body, is indispensable at the hands of the State. To deepen our understanding of Cleo's relationship to the film's backdrop, we can see how Cleo cannot reproduce, but can protect her employer's white children during the ocean scene.

Zižek makes a similar observation in Cuaron's other films. In the supplement material for the DVD release of Cuaron's Children of Men, Zizek divides the narrative structure into "foreground" and "background", where the social historical of the post-9/11, post-Iraq invasion, and neoliberal policies. The foreground, for Zižek, is the plot of a conventional character that goes from ordinary to martyrdom. The foreground serves to entertain through well-worn clichés about heroes and Hollywood conventions. Zižek argues that these clichés are critical to understanding the film's politics, as "the fate of the individual hero is the prism through which one sees the background even more sharply." *Roma* narrative functions similar to that of *Children of Men*, in that its "foreground" is plagued with clichés (Golden Age aesthetics, white directors cinematic relationship with indigenous communities), and its "background" reveals the sociopolitical role of Cleo others like her in the face of state violence, race, gender, and international politics, and neoliberal policies. Similarly, Nicole Sparling, in her article, *Without a Conceivable Future: Figuring the Mother in Alfonso Cuaron's Children of Men*, makes a

connection between the film's pregnant mother and the "background." She states, "In her predicament (of being pregnant and stateless) Kee embodies contradiction as, on one hand, she is a target of both than atopolitics (politics of death) and biopolitics (politics of life) and, on the other, she resists figurative and material violent that attempts to define her so absolutely." (163) As Cuaron represents Kee, the pregnant mother in a dystopian narrative, he uses Cleo as a mythical hero figure and a biopolitical figure set in state-violence against indigenous people's labor and existence.

The film ends in the similar way it begins. Cleo steps out into the patio to the rooftop. The camera points at her as she's walking up the stairs. We can see two buildings—the rooftop to the left and the house to the right. Cleo walks to the left, to the rooftop of her own home, and disappears. We see another plane cross the screen. In similar form to the opening credits, where we saw the plane only as a reflection, we see the plane with our own cinematic eyes. The plane in this scene, though the same as the opening scene, says something a little different. If the opening scene showed us the distance between the plane and the floor through a reflection, this shot shows us a closer distance between the floor and the plane. In this shot, Cleo is not on the floor but a level up. This raises her close to the plane—even by a few feet. But this distance is not enough, and never will be. If we were to interpret this relationship as a symbol of class relations, this shot shows that those that wash the floors and do the laundry can come close to those on the plane, can live in the same home, can risk their lives in order to save yours, but will always be at a distance as they return to washing the floors and doing the laundry.

During the scene where Cleo eats lunch with her friend, and Fermin and Ramon walk in, we hear the song by Javier Solis, "*Sombras.*" The first verse narrates the aches of a lost love, of a

burning desire to self-inflict a wound to show the limits of ones love, and to die right after. The chorus goes as follows, "Sombras nada más/Acariciando mis manos/ Sombras nada más
En el temblor de mi voz/ Pude ser feliz/ Y estoy en vida muriendo/ Y entre lágrimas viviendo
El pasaje más horrendo/ De este drama sin final." The *sombra* (shadow) is a figure of reality, a reflection of person. In *Roma*, Cleo serves as the shadow that nurtures Cuaron's nostalgia. In the film, we see this visualized through the relationship between Cleo and Pepe. This relationship, again, points to the impossibility of nostalgia's promise, a return home.

In *Güeros*, Fede is an individual stuck between ideologies. In some scenes he expresses discontent about the political issues around him, "I'm protesting the protest." In other scenes, he lashes out when being called a "scab", or someone against the protest. Fede is characterized by a sense voluntarily contradiction against the spaces he inhabits, at his apartment, and at the general assembly when defending Ana. Fede comes to represent stillness through his unwillingness to leave the apartment, his decisions about the movement, and to road trip and find Epigmenio, which Tomas convinces him into. Tomas acts as an opposite of Fede, with his shirt that reads "DON'T LOOK BACK". Tomas represents a sense of movement and progress. He is, the one that encourages Fede and Santos to take the trip. Tomas' innocence is the driving force of the road trip. He believes that Epigmenio is still alive despite what Fede's assumptions. It is Tomas that believes in the nostalgia of Epigmenio, a nostalgia passed down from the boys' absent father, and a myth they create through their road trip. Tomas never expresses political sides. Tomas commits to looking back, despite the slogan on his shirt. Ana, unlike Fede, is politically committed, although she finds herself at odds with the surrounding space. The film visualizes this sentiment in the scene at the general assembly, where she's speaks about political unity, and where a crowd of men yell for her to take off her clothes, all while Furia, her boyfriend, calls her

a “neoliberal” sympathizer. Santos, perhaps, the last interesting of the group, is also ambivalent towards the movement, showing no real sides for or against, like Tomas. The only time we see him take a side is when he finds that his research lab did not survive the power outage at the university, the only point of trauma for Santos.

Ultimately, *Gûeros* is a story about a group of young people searching and mourning for a home. Tomas is exiled by his family in Veracruz. Fede is away from home, and spends his time listening Ana’s poetry, which also deals with the loss of a home, and the feeling of emptiness—“No eres el único con un hueco en la pansa, no eres el único que no se llena con nada.” For the group, especially for Fede and Tomas, finding Epigmenio Cruz equates to finding that fulfillment. It’s an attempt to fill in the “hueco en la pansa” that Ana describes in her poem. But, as we, and they, find out, the grasp of nostalgia is temporary and flees as the grasp becomes tighter, as the object of desire fades away. Epigmenio fall asleep during Fede’s epic speech. Once the group finally gets to meet Epigmenio, everything fades back into a memory, while Epigmenio fades into a dream state. Güeros shows an interaction with nostalgia, and the disappointment attached in reaching into the past and seeing the impossibility of the object of desire.

Roma paints a different picture of nostalgia and a sense of mourning to an inaccessible past. Within the film’s narrative, we see how characters interact with nostalgia, but we see who nurtures that nostalgia, physically and philosophically. There is a clear distinction between Pepe, who claims to have lived past lives, and Cleo, who listens to his stories and encourages him, and takes care of him. Pepe and Cleo’s relationship should mirror Cuaron’s relationship with Libo, Cuaron’s childhood nanny. Cuaron attempt to capture the story of Cleo and understands its limitations. We can see the limitations of telling the story in two scenes: 1) The opening shot of

the reflection with the airplane 2) and the final scene with another airplane, but this time without a reflection. The two scene understand the limitations about telling stories about those washing the floors and those flying in airplanes, especially in the 1970s.

Roma, as a narrative, is the story about an indigenous, domestic worker's place in her employer's home. The film shows Cleo being a part of the family, sometimes sitting alongside them to watch TV, but always seconds away from being ordered to get something. She remains inside, but always at the margins. Her labor is usually invisible to her employer. Her situation does not mirror, in any way, to Sofia's, even if Sofia claims solidarity with her. And even in her most vulnerable moments—after losing her child—Cleo remains the help. Stepping back from the narrative, and inspecting the production of the film, *Roma* is Cuaron's attempt at capturing a moment in time, a mourning and search for a past long gone. *Roma* is Cuaron's Epigmenio Cruz, a mourning for the past, an attempt to capture that past, and the melancholia associated with the disappointment attached to nostalgia—of the impossibility of the object of desire. The film's narrative and production point to bigger trends in contemporary Mexican film and television and the state of film and distribution—the uses and abuse of nostalgia.

In the late 16th century, Johannes Hofer publishes a paper considering *nostamania* and *philopatridomaniai* to describe a pain resulting from the desire to return to one's home. Hofer settles on a combination between *nostos* and *algos* to describe the medical condition (Natali 1). In Marcos Piasan Natali's *History and the Politics of Nostalgia*, the author describes the evolution of the word, "Throughout the eighteenth-century Europe the word would gradually be adopted by specialist and laypeople alike to describe a diseased provoked by excessive attachment to a distant homeland…by the end of the eighteenth-century, the notion was expanded to include pathological attachment to any faraway place and, later, to distant times and

persons." (1). Nostalgia begins as a medical condition, affecting the body through emotional turns into a cultural condition, one that allows us to see how and why this yearning for the past is important. With *Güeros* and *Roma*, characters engage with nostalgia to a certain degree. In *Güeros*, the group mourn loss by searching for Epigmenio Cruz, resulting in melancholia. *Roma* uses and abuses the character of Cleo to approach a nostalgia of childhood and shows Cleo as a nurturer of that nostalgia. Cleo carries Cuaron's nostalgia on her back. Both films visualize mourning and melancholia because of engaging with nostalgia.

In his essay *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud describes mourning as a common "reaction to the loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of the person, such as fatherland, freedom, an ideal" and melancholia as "mentally characterized by a profound painful depression, a loss of interest in the outside world, the loss of the ability to love, the inhibition of any kind of performance and a reduction in the sense of self, expresses in self-recrimination and self-directed insults, intensifying into the delusory expectation of punishment" (311). We see this definition play out in both films, through the narrative in *Güeros* and through the act of filmmaking in *Roma*. The loss of something is also in the background through both films. We can see this through the portrayal of two different student protest.

The student protests contextualize each film at a moment of loss or transition. *Roma* represents the Corpus Christi massacre of '77 in its background. The film contextualizes its nostalgia when a single political party (PRI) held power for most of the 20th century, and at a moment where the Mexican government was attempting to establish itself as a strong player in a global economy. The massacre is also the result of the '68 massacre, which was also a protest against Mexico hosting the summer Olympics, a move to establish itself as the first Spanish-speaking country to host the competition. *Güeros* visualizes the student protests in 1999, when

UNAM was putting a cost on public education, and Mexico was implementing aggressive neoliberal policies to aspects of private and public life. Both protests, though in different times ’77 and ’99, show the same outcome against the privatization of education and public life. What’s at stake in these protests is the loss of a state apparatus and the replacement of neoliberal politics and policies.

WORKS CITED

Acevedo-Muñoz, Ernesto R. *Buñuel and Mexico: The Crisis of National Cinema*. University of California Press, 2003.

Ackerman, John. *El mito de la transición democrática*. Temas de Hoy, 2014.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed, Verso, 2006.

Bachelard, Gaston, and Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*. Beacon Press, 1969.

Baugh, Scott L. "Developing History/Historicizing Development in Mexican Nuevo Cine Manifestoes around 'La Crisis.'" *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 34, no. 2, Dec. 2004, pp. 25–37. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/flm.2004.0034.

Béjar Navarro, Raúl, and Héctor Rosales, editors. *La Identidad Nacional Mexicana En LasExpresiones Artísticas: Estudios Históricos y Contemporáneos*. 1. ed, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México : Plaza y Valdés, 2008.

Brennan, Louis. "How Netflix Expanded to 190 Countries in 7 Years." *Harvard Business Review*, Oct. 2018. *Hbr.org*, https://hbr.org/2018/10/how-netflix-expanded-to-190-countries-in-7-years.

Brooks, Peter. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess: With a New Preface*. Yale University Press, 1995.

Carlos Reygadas by Jose Castillo - BOMB Magazine. https://bombmagazine.org/articles/carlos reygadas/. Accessed 10 Feb. 2020.

Chávez, Daniel. "The Eagle and the Serpent on the Screen: The State as Spectacle in Mexican Cinema." *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 45, no. 3, Dec. 2010, pp. 115–41.

Dever, Susan. *Celluloid Nationalism and Other Melodramas: From Post-Revolutionary Mexico to Fin de Siglo Mexamerica*. SUNY Press, 2003.

Freud, Sigmund, and Peter Gay. *The Freud Reader*. 1st ed, W.W. Norton, 1989.

García Canclini, Néstor. *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts*. University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

García Canclini, Néstor, and Néstor García Canclini. *Imagined Globalization*. Duke University Press, 2014.

García Espinosa, Julio. *Una Imagen Recorre El Mundo*. Editorial Letras Cubanas ; Distribuido por Ediciones Vitral, 1979.

Garduño, Everardo, et al., editors. *Globalización, Posmodernidad y Sobremodernidad*. Primera edición, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales-Museo, 2013.

Gillingham, Paul, and Benjamin Smith, editors. *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968*. Duke University Press, 2014.

Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Harvard University Press, 2002.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, 1 edition, Wiley-Blackwell, 1992.

MacLaird, Misha. *Aesthetics and Politics in the Mexican Film Industry*. First edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

McGowan, Todd. *Capitalism and Desire: The Psychic Cost of Free Markets*. Columbia University Press, 2016.

Mukherjee, Roopali, and Sarah Banet-Weiser, editors. *Commodity Activism: Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times*. New York University Press, 2012.

Nicole L. Sparling. “Without a Conceivable Future: Figuring the Mother in Alfonso Cuarón’s Children of Men.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2014, p. 160. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.5250/fronjwomestud.35.1.0160.

Oroz, Silvia. *Melodrama: O Cinema de Lágrimas Da América Latina*. 2a ed., rev. E ampl, Funarte, 1999.

Pacheco Méndez, Guadalupe, et al. *Cárdenas y La Izquierda Mexicana: Ensayo, Testimonios, Documentos de Guadalupe Pacheco Méndez, Arturo Anguiano Orozco y Rogelio Vizcaíno A*. J. Pablos Editor, 1975.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema*. Rakennustieto, 2001.
---. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Wiley-Academy ; John Wiley &Sons, 2005.

Pensado, Jaime M. *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture during the Long Sixties*. Stanford University Press, 2013.

Poniatowska, Elena. *Amanecer En El Zócalo: Los 50 Días Que Confrontaron a México*. 1. ed, Planeta, 2007.

Prado, Ignacio M. Sánchez. “Cine Latinoamericano y Neoliberalismo: Ideología, Deseo, Clase.” *Hispanófila*, vol. 177, no. 1, Dec. 2016, pp. 115–25. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/hsf.2016.0032.
---. “The Golden Age Otherwise:: Mexican Cinema and the Mediations of Capitalist Modernity in the 1940s and 1950s.” *Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America, 1896-1960*, edited by RIELLE NAVITSKI and NICOLAS POPPE, Indiana University Press, 2017, pp. 241–66. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/j.ctt2005vd4.19.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Home: A Short History of an Idea*. Viking, 1986.

Sánchez Prado, Ignacio M. *Naciones Intelectuales: Las Fundaciones de La Modernidadliteraria Mexicana, 1917-1959*. Purdue University Press, 2009.
---. *Screening Neoliberalism: Mexican Cinema 1988-2012*. Vanderbilt University Press, 2014.

Shaw, Deborah. *The Three Amigos: The Transnational Filmmaking of Guillermo Del Toro, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and Alfonso Cuarón*. Manchester University Press, 2013.

Smith, Paul Julian. *Amores perros*. British Film Institute, 2003.
---. *Mexican Screen Fiction: Between Cinema and Television*. Polity, 2014.

Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. University of California Press, 1991.

Sprengler, Christine. "Setting the Stage:: The History of Nostalgia." *Screening Nostalgia*, NED-New edition, 1, Berghahn Books, 2009, pp. 11–38. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qdbm4.6.

Steinbock, Anthony J. *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*. 1 edition, Northwestern University Press, 1995.

Tuñón, Julia. *Los Rostros de Un Mito: Personajes Femeninos En Las Películas de Emilio Indio Fernández*. 1. ed. en Arte e Imagen, Conaculta : Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía, 2000.
---. *Mujeres de Luz y Sombra En El Cine Mexicano: La Construcción de Una Imagen (1939-1952)*. 1. ed, Colegio de México : Instituto Mexicano deCinematografía, 1998.

Vargas, Juan Carlos, editor. *Tendencias Del Cine Iberoamericano En El Nuevo Milenio: Argentina, Brasil, España y México*. 1a ed, Universidad de Guadalajara, 2011.
---, editor. *Tendencias Del Cine Iberoamericano En El Nuevo Milenio: Argentina, Brasil, España y México*. 1a ed, Universidad de Guadalajara, 2011.

Vasconcelos, José. *Discursos 1920-1950*. Trillas, 2009.
---. *La Raza Cósmica: Mision de La Raza Iberoamericana, Argentina y Brasil*. 16a ed, Espasa-Calpe Mexicana, 1992.

Woldenberg, José. *Historia Mínima de La Transición Democrática En México*. 1. edition, El Colegio de México, 2012.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acevedo-Muñoz, Ernesto R. *Buñuel and Mexico: The Crisis of National Cinema*. University of California Press, 2003.

Acland, Charles R. *Screen Traffic: Movies, Multiplexes, and Global Culture*. Duke University Press, 2003.

Agamben, Giorgio, and Daniel Heller-Roazen. *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press, 1998.

Aldama, Frederick Luis. *Mex-Cine: Mexican Filmmaking, Production, and Consumption in the Twenty-First Century*. University of Michigan Press, 2013.

Alvarado, Manuel, et al. *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*. BFI, 1993.

Amador, María Luisa, and Jorge Ayala Blanco. *Cartelera Cinematográfica 1912-1919*. 1a ed, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos, 2009.

Arredondo, Isabel. *Motherhood in Mexican Cinema, 1941-1991: The Transformation of Femininity on Screen*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014.

Aub, Max. *Conversaciones Con Buñuel: Seguidas de 45 Entrevistas Con Familiares, Amigos y Colaboradores Del Cineasta Aragones*. 1a ed, Aguilar, 1985.

Ayala Blanco, Jorge. *Aventura Del Cine Mexicano*. 1. ed., Ediciones Era, 1968.

---. *El Cine Actual, Confines Temáticos*. Primera edición, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2014.

---. *La Búsqueda Del Cine Mexicano (1968-1972)*. 1a ed. en Editorial Posada, Editorial Posada, 1986.

---. *La Condición Del Cine Mexicano: 1973-1985*. Editorial Posada, 1986.

---. *La Fugacidad Del Cine Mexicano*. 1. ed, Océano, 2001.

---. *La Grandeza Del Cine Mexicano*. 1a. ed, Océano, 2004.

---. *La Herética Del Cine Mexicano*. 1. ed, Oceano, 2006.

---. *La Justeza Del Cine Mexicano*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011.

Babb, Sarah L. *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Bartra, Roger. *La Jaula de La Melancolía: Identidad y Metamorfosis Del Mexicano*. 1a ed, Grijalbo, 1987.
---. *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character*. Rutgers University Press, 1992.

Baxter, John. *Buñuel*. 1st Carroll & Graf ed, Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1998.

Bazin, André. *The Cinema of Cruelty: From Buñuel to Hitchcock*. 1st ed, Seaver Books, 1982.
---. *What Is Cinema?* University of California Press, 2005.

Berg, Charles Ramírez. *The Classical Mexican Cinema: The Poetics of the Exceptional Golden Age Films*. First edition, University of Texas Press, 2015.

Berg, Charles Ramírez, and Charles Ramírez Berg. *Cinema of Solitude : A Critical Study of Mexican Film, 1967-1983*. University of Texas Press, 2009.

Bhabha, Homi K., editor. *Nation and Narration*. Routledge, 1990.

Blake, Linnie. *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity*. Manchester University Press, 2008.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. Basic Books, 2001.

Buache, Freddy. *The Cinema of Luis Buñuel*. Tantivy Press; A. S. Barnes, 1973.

Buñuel, Luis, et al. *Luis Buñuel, Prohibido Asomarse al Interior*. 1a ed, J. Mortiz/Planeta, 1986.

Celli, Carlo. *National Identity in Global Cinema: How Movies Explain the World*. 1st ed, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Chedraui, Carmen Irabien. “The Perfect Dictatorship: Political Satire in Contemporary Mexican Cinema.” *Cinéaste*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2016, pp. 44–45. JSTOR.

Day, Stuart A. *Staging Politics in Mexico: The Road to Neoliberalism*. Bucknell University Press, 2004.

Doane, Mary Ann. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Indiana University Press, 1987.
---. *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency,the Archive*. Harvard University Press, 2002.

Domínguez Ruvalcaba, Héctor. *Modernity and the Nation in Mexican Representations of Masculinity: From Sensuality to Bloodshed*. 1st ed, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Edwards, Gwynne. *The Discreet Art of Luis Buñuel: A Reading of His Films*. Marion Boyars, 1982.

England, Marcia R. *Public Privates: Feminist Geographies of Mediated Spaces*. University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

Evans, Peter William, and Isabel Santaolalla, editors. *Luis Buñuel: New Readings*. BFI, 2004.

Fox, Claire F. *The Fence and the River: Culture and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Franco, Jean. *Cruel Modernity*. Duke University Press, 2013.

Freud, Sigmund, et al. *A Case of Hysteria: Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works*. Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953.

Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Basic Books, 2010.

Gledhill, Christine, and British Film Institute, editors. *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and Thewoman's Film*. BFI Pub, 1987.

González Echevarría, Roberto. *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*. Duke University Press, 1998.

Haddu, Miriam. *Contemporary Mexican Cinema, 1989-1999: History, Space, and Identity*. E. Mellen Press, 2007.

Hamnett, Brian R. *A Concise History of Mexico*. Third edition, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Hershfield, Joanne. *Mexican Cinema/Mexican Woman, 1940-1950*. University of Arizona Press, 1996.

Hinojosa Córdova, Lucila. *El Cine Mexicano: De Lo Global a Lo Local*. 1. ed, Editorial Trillas, 2003.

Interview with Arturo Ripstein: No Contest on JSTOR. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41389688. Accessed 13 Mar. 2019.

Irwin, Robert McKee, et al. *Global Mexican Cinema: Its Golden Age: "El Cine Mexicano Se Impone."* Palgrave Macmillan on behalf of the British FilmInstitute, 2013.

Jean, Franco. *Critical Passions: Selected Essays*. Duke University Press, 1999.

Joseph, G. M., and Daniel Nugent, editors. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Duke University Press, 1994.

Kinder, Marsha. *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity InSpain*. University of California Press, 1993.

Krohn, Bill, and Paul Duncan, editors. *Luis Buñuel: Chimera 1900-1983*. Taschen, 2005.

Lahr-Vivaz, Elena. *Mexican Melodrama: Film and Nation from the Golden Age to the New Wave*. The University of Arizona Press, 2016.

Landy, Marcia, editor. *Imitations of Life: A Reader on Film & Television Melodrama*. Wayne State University Press, 1991.

MacLaird, Misha. *Aesthetics and Politics in the Mexican Film Industry*. First edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

McAnany, Emile G., and Kenton T. Wilkinson, editors. *Mass Media and Free Trade: NAFTA and the Cultural Industries*. 1st ed, University of Texas Press, 1996.

McClennen, Sophia A. *Globalization and Latin American Cinema: Towards a New Critical Paradigm*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Monsiváis, Carlos. *Amor Perdido*. 4. ed, Biblioteca Era, 1978.
---. *Los Rituales Del Caos*. Ediciones Era, 1995.

Mora, Carl J. *Mexican Cinema: Reflections of a Society, 1896-2004*. Third edition, McFarland & Co., Inc., Publishers, 2005.

Mora, Sergio de la. *Cinemachismo: Masculinities and Sexuality in Mexican Film*. 1st ed, University of Texas Press, 2006.

Moreno Montero, José Antonio. *Deseos de Comunidad: El Personaje Intersticial En La Novela y El Cine de Los Noventa En México*. Primera edición, Ediciones Eón, 2015.

Mraz, John. *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity*. Duke University Press, 2009.

Néstor. García Canclini. *Culturas híbridas: estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. Nueva edición actualizada., Paidós, 2001.

Noble, Andrea. *Mexican National Cinema*. Routledge, 2005.

Noriega, Chon A., editor. *Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Paranaguá, Paulo Antonio. *Arturo Ripstein: La Espiral de La Identidad*. Cátedra : Filmoteca Española, 1997.

Paz, Octavio, and Enrico Mario Santí. *El Laberinto de La Soledad: Edicion Conmemorativa--50 Aniversario*. Primera y única edición, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000.

Pick, Zuzana M. *The New Latin American Cinema: A Continental Project*. 1st ed, University of Texas Press, 1993.

Podalsky, Laura. *The Politics of Affect and Emotion in Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Prado, Ignacio M. Sánchez. "Carlos Fuentes, the Cinephile." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 69, no. 2, 2015, pp. 81–82. *JSTOR*, doi:10.1525/fq.2015.69.2.81.
---. "Cine Latinoamericano y Neoliberalismo: Ideología, Deseo, Clase." *Hispanófila*, vol. 177, no. 1, Dec. 2016, pp. 115–25. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/hsf.2016.0032.
---. "Claiming Liberalism: Enrique Krauze, Vuelta, Letras Libres, and the Reconfigurations of the Mexican Intellectual Class." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2010, pp. 47–78. *JSTOR*, doi:10.1525/msem.2010.26.1.47.
---. "El Arte de La Violencia Sistémica. La Explotación Neoliberal Como Estética y Mercancía En El Cine Mexicano Contemporáneo." *Hispanófila*, vol. 178, no. 1, 2016, pp. 11–20. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/hsf.2016.0056.
---. "narrativa, afectos y experiencia: las configuraciones ideológicas del neoliberalismo en méxico." *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, vol. 35, no. 69, 2009, pp. 115–33. JSTOR.
---. "Vanguardia y Campo Literario: La Revolución Mexicana Como Apertura Estética." *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, vol. 33, no. 66, 2007, pp. 187–206. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/25485836.

Reyes, Aurelio de los. *Cine y Sociedad En México, 1896-1930*. 1a ed, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México : Cineteca Nacional, 1981.
---. *Filmografía Del Cine Mudo Mexicano, 1896-1920*. 1a ed, Filmoteca UNAM, 1986.
---. *Los Orígenes Del Cine Mexicano (1896-1900)*. 1a ed, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983.
---. *Medio Siglo de Cine Mexicano (1896-1947)*. 1a ed, Editorial Trillas, 1987.

Ripley, Mark. *A Search for Belonging: The Mexican Cinema of Luis Buñuel*. WallFlower Press, 2017.

Rozado, Alejandro. *Cine y Realidad Social En México: Una Lectura de La Obrade Emilio Fernández*. 1. ed, Universidad de Guadalajara, Centro de Investigación y Enseñanza Cinematográficas, 1991.

Rulfo, Juan. *El Gallo de Oro y Otros Textos Para Cine*. 1. ed, Ediciones Era, 1980.

Sandro, Paul. *Diversions of Pleasure: Luis Buñuel and the Crises of Desire*. Ohio State University Press, 1987.

Schettino, Macario. *Cien Años de Confusión: La Construcción de La Narrativa Que Legitimó al Régimen Autoritario Del Siglo XX*. Primera edicion, Ediciones Culturales Paidós, S.A. de C.V. bajo el sello editorial PAIDÓS, 2016.

Singer, Ben. *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*. Columbia University Press, 2001.

Stone, Rob, and Julián Daniel Gutiérrez-Albilla, editors. *A Companion to Luis Buñuel*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Taibo, Paco Ignacio. *"Indio" Fernández: El Cine Por Mis Pistolas*. 1a ed, J. Mortiz/Planeta, 1986.

Treviño, Jesús Salvador. "The New Mexican Cinema." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1979, pp. 26–37. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/1212204.

Víctor Fuentes. *Buñuel en México: iluminaciones sobre una pantalla pobre*. Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, Excma Diputación Provincial de Teruel ; Gobierno de Aragón, Departamento de Cultura y Educación, 1993.

Villaplana, Virginia, editor. *El Cine de Arturo Ripstein: La Solución Del Bárbaro*. De la Mirada, Ediciones, 1998.

Volpi Escalante, Jorge. *La Imaginación y El Poder: Una Historia Intelectual de 1968*. 1. ed, Ediciones Era, 1998.

Waldron, John V. "Introduction: Culture Monopolies and Mexican Cinema: A Way Out?" *Discourse*, vol. 26, no. 1/2, 2004, pp. 5–25.

West, Dennis. "Confronting The Crisis In Mexican Cinema." *INTI*, no. 29/30, 1989, pp. 215–18. JSTOR.