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A Porous Cinema:

Cosmopolitanism and Cinephilia in Chilean Art Film (2005-2015)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

Ezekiel Edward Trautenberg

2018

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Porous Cinema:

Cosmopolitanism and Cinephilia in Chilean Art Film (2005-2015)

by

Ezekiel Edward Trautenberg

Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Verónica Cortínez, Chair

Between 2005 and 2015, a distinctly cosmopolitan form of art cinema flourished in Chile. Alberto Fuguet, Pablo Larraín, Alicia Scherson, and Sebastián Silva, who released their first feature-length films between 2005 and 2007, are markedly cosmopolitan filmmakers who exemplify this strain of cinema. Four films by these filmmakers—Fuguet’s *Se arrienda* (2005), Larraín’s *Tony Manero* (2008), Scherson’s *Il Futuro* (2013), and Silva’s *Nasty Baby* (2015)—are emblematic of the cosmopolitan and porous qualities of early-21st-century Chilean art cinema. The defining features of these four films are the cosmopolitan profiles of their filmmakers; their creators’ use of transnational strategies of production, distribution, and exhibition; their circulation at film festivals; their affiliation with the genre of art cinema; and their depiction of cinephilia and filmmaking as quintessentially cosmopolitan practices.

The release of these Chilean productions and co-productions coincides with the beginning of the post-Transition to Democracy period as well as the expansion and maturation of the country's film industry. From 2005 through 2015, the number of new Chilean productions and co-productions released in local theaters increased significantly over the preceding Transition to Democracy period (1988-2005). Many of these films were exhibited at some of the world's most prestigious film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, and Venice. This decade-long series of success at film festivals culminated at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival, where Larraín's *El club* and Silva's *Nasty Baby* won the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize and Teddy Award, respectively. Notwithstanding its accumulation of awards and prestige at film festivals, contemporary Chilean art cinema has received limited attention from scholars, especially outside of Chile. This dissertation contributes to the conversation about Chile's art cinema and film industry in the early-21st century.

This dissertation is divided into two parts. In the first two chapters, I focus on the structural factors shaping the development of this cinema between 2005 and 2015. In the first chapter, I analyze Chile's film industry with a focus on production output, audiences, legislation, and organizations involved in the production, distribution, and exhibition of Chilean cinema. In the second chapter, I examine film festivals' multifaceted roles as exhibitors, curators, producers, and distributors of Chilean art film. The second half of the dissertation, chapters three through six, offers close analyses of *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby* and their representation of cosmopolitanism through the interrelated practices of cinephilia and filmmaking.

The dissertation of Ezekiel Edward Trautenberg is approved.

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For Mom

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## INTRODUCTION

*Los cuatro grandes poetas de Chile  
son tres:  
Alonso de Ercilla y Rubén Darío.  
—Nicanor Parra*

Early-21st-century Chilean art cinema is a fundamentally cosmopolitan and transnational endeavor.<sup>1</sup> The filmmaking practices and films of Alberto Fuguet, Pablo Larraín, Alicia Scherson, and Sebastián Silva exemplify this cosmopolitan strain of art cinema. These four filmmakers are *kosmopolites*, or “citizens of the cosmos” (Heater 7). They have lived, studied, and worked abroad; employ transnational strategies of production, distribution, and exhibition; and circulate at film festivals across the world. They embrace the cosmopolitan ethos articulated by the Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges in his lecture “The Argentine Writer and Tradition” (1951): “we must believe that the universe is our birthright and try out every subject” (427). In this dissertation, I analyze four feature-length art films by Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva released between 2005 and 2015: Fuguet’s *Se arrienda* (*For Rent*, 2005), Larraín’s *Tony Manero* (2008), Scherson’s *Il Futuro* (*The Future*, 2013), and Silva’s *Nasty Baby* (2015). These films are emblematic of the transnational strategies of production, distribution, and exhibition of Chilean art cinema in the early-21st century and depict cosmopolitanism through the interrelated practices of cinephilia and filmmaking.

Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva form part of a loosely-connected group of Chilean art cinema filmmakers who emerged in the years since 2005. The beginning of their filmmaking careers coincides with the consolidation of Chile’s democracy, the codification and expansion of state support for Chilean cinema, and the development of the country’s audiovisual industry.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Although Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva’s careers overlap—they released their first feature-length films between 2005 and 2007 and spent part of their formative years under the military dictatorship (1973-1990)—they do not comprise a cinematic generation. These filmmakers are not particularly close in age: Silva was born in 1979, fifteen years after Fuguet.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, they possess no shared manifesto or aesthetic vision, nor do they identify themselves as a cohesive movement or group. Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, Silva comprise a loose group of cosmopolitan filmmakers who employ transnational filmmaking practices, are affiliated with the genre of art cinema, and circulate at film festivals around the world. These four filmmakers can be distinguished from their peers through their active self-fashioning as cosmopolitans; their avid embrace of transnational strategies of production, distribution, and exhibition; and their incorporation of cosmopolitan themes through representations of cinephilia and filmmaking.

These four filmmakers and their films can be distinguished via their practices and generic affiliations from the group of filmmakers that precedes them, what Leah Kemp labels “the cinema of the transition” (1990-2004) (*Citizenship* 69).<sup>3</sup> Drawing on Kemp’s doctoral dissertation, *Citizenship in Chilean Post-Dictatorship Film: 1990-2005* (2010), I highlight the differences between the industrial contexts and careers of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva, and Chilean filmmakers who began their careers during the Transition to Democracy period (1988-2005), like Cristián Galaz, Gustavo Graef Marino, Gonzalo Justiniano, Ricardo Larraín, and Andrés Wood. On the one hand, these differences are related to structural developments

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<sup>2</sup> Further complicating an age-based categorization of these filmmakers is the fact that Fuguet was born a year before Andrés Wood (b. 1963), a filmmaker who is associated within the cinema of the Transition, but who continued to make films during the post-Transition period.

<sup>3</sup> Gonzalo Maza, Pablo Douzet, and Cecilia Rodríguez argue that “El cine chileno de los 90 es un cine sin manifiestos, ni reales ni simbólicos” (28; “Chilean cinema of the 90s is a cinema without manifestos, real or symbolic”).

within Chile's film industry. Beginning with the passage of two landmark audiovisual laws in 2003 and 2004, which established the Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes (National Council of Culture and the Arts or CNCA) and the Fondo de Fomento Audiovisual (Audiovisual Fund), respectively, the Chilean state embarked on a concerted effort to codify, diversify, and expand its support for Chilean productions and co-productions. The Audiovisual Fund, the single largest source of funding for Chilean filmmakers during this period, began distributing funds in 2005. The CNCA, the Corporación de Fomento de la Producción de Chile (Chilean Economic Development Agency or CORFO), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were the primary organs through which the state supported cinema between 2005 and 2015. The state-owned bank BancoEstado, the Consejo Nacional de Televisión (National Council of Television), bilateral co-production agreements, and a law allowing private citizens to write-off donations for individual artistic projects were also important resources for Chilean filmmakers and their films.

Increased state investment coincided with and fomented the establishment of a variety of organizations and initiatives dedicated to the production, distribution, exhibition, and promotion of Chilean cinema. These organizations and initiatives include the not-for-profit Cineteca Nacional (founded in 2006), the digital database Cinechile (founded in 2009), the not-for-profit organization CinemaChile (founded in 2009), Alberto Fuguet's online distribution and exhibition platform Cinépata.com (founded in 2009), the distribution initiative Market Chile (founded in 2013), and a novel distribution and exhibition agreement between filmmakers, producers, distributors, and exhibitors that went into effect in 2014. Other organizations supporting the development of Chilean cinema include the global streaming and production company Netflix, which entered Chile in 2011, and international film festivals, which play a key role as producers, distributors, and exhibitors. The number of Chilean films, defined as Chilean productions and co-

productions, premiering in local cinemas experienced sustained growth from 2005 through 2015. Whereas a low of ten Chilean films premiered in 2007, a high of forty films were released in 2014. Between 2005 and 2015, 225 fiction and non-fiction Chilean films by 189 filmmakers were released in local theaters, a significant increase over the preceding Transition to Democracy period.<sup>4</sup>

Parallel with growth of the country's film industry, the genre and themes of the cinema of the Transition and post-Transition art films like *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby* diverge in notable ways. The films of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, Silva and their contemporaries move away from narratives of the dispossessed and *costumbrismo*—a focus on “the perceived idiosyncrasies of Chilean culture”—that characterize Chilean cinema during the Transition to Democracy (Kemp, *Citizenship* 3). The four art films studied here look outward, feature porous narratives and incorporate the interrelated themes of cosmopolitanism, cinephilia, and filmmaking. However, these films do not represent a complete break with the allegorical cinema of the Transition. They encompass Chile's recent history ranging from the Pinochet dictatorship (*Tony Manero*), the Transition to Democracy (*Se arrienda*), and the experience of tens of thousands of Chileans living abroad (*Il Futuro* and *Nasty Baby*).

I identify five tropes that characterize *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby*: (1) the cosmopolitan identities of their creators; (2) the transnational filmmaking practices of their filmmakers; (3) their affiliation with the porous genre of art cinema; (4) their circulation at film festivals around the world; (5) their representation of cinephilia and filmmaking as quintessentially cosmopolitan practices. On this first point, Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva embody what Mette Hjort calls “cosmopolitan transnationalism,” a type of transnational

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics compiled from annual reports by the Cámara de Exhibidores de Multisalas de Chile (Chamber of Chilean Multiplex Exhibitors or CAEM).



filmmaking “defined by the cosmopolitanism of the particular individuals who exercise creative control over the filmmaking process” (20).<sup>5</sup> These four Chilean filmmakers have lived, studied, and worked abroad, and hold a variety of roles in the film industry, as producers, screenwriters, and, in the cases of Fuguet and Scherson, university professors. They present themselves as distinctly cosmopolitan figures whose life experiences and worldviews inform and shape their filmmaking. Their cosmopolitan approach to cinema is reflected in the transnational production, distribution, and exhibition strategies they employ, as well as their circulation at film festivals across the globe.

Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva are part of a historical tradition of cosmopolitan Chilean filmmakers that extends back to the early-20th century. Salvador Giambastiani, one of the most prominent Chilean filmmakers of the silent period, was an Italian immigrant.<sup>6</sup> Among the notable cosmopolitan Chilean filmmakers from the second-half of the 20th and early-21st centuries are Sergio Castilla, Pedro Chaskel, Patricio Guzmán, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Miguel Littin, Héctor Ríos, Raúl Ruiz, and Antonio Skármeta. These filmmakers spent significant periods of their careers outside of Chile (although not always by choice), and their films circulated prominently in art houses, film festivals, and multiplexes across the world. In addition to forming part of this cosmopolitan lineage in Chilean cinema, the careers of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva also share much in common with their contemporaries in Latin America, most notably, the Mexican filmmakers Alfonso Cuarón, Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González

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<sup>5</sup> Deborah Shaw (2013) offers a similar, albeit narrower category of “transnational directors,” whom she defines as “directors who work and seek funding in a range of national contexts, while they have their films distributed in the global market” (60-61).

<sup>6</sup> One of Giambastiani’s films was a 1919 documentary produced for the Braden Copper Company. Fragments from the film, which documents life in and around the El Teniente copper mine, were restored by Patricio Kaulen and Andrés Martorell, and released in 1957 under the title *Recuerdos del Mineral ‘El Teniente’*.

Iñárritu.<sup>7</sup> These three Mexican directors also employ transnational strategies of production, distribution, and exhibition; circulate prominently at film festivals; and, like Larraín and Silva, have established themselves as prominent figures in Hollywood, while maintaining their critical status as art cinema filmmakers.

Alberto Fuguet was born in 1964 in Santiago, Chile. When he was a child, Fuguet moved with his family to Encino, California, where he lived for eleven years. They returned to Chile in 1975, two years after the military coup. Fuguet studied journalism at the University of Chile and was an early contributor to “Zona de Contacto” (“Contact Zone”), a youth supplement founded in 1991 and published in *El Mercurio*, Chile’s newspaper of record.<sup>8</sup> More recently, Fuguet worked as a professor of journalism at Universidad Alberto Hurtado and Universidad Diego Portales in Santiago. In addition to his career as a journalist, critic, and academic, Fuguet is one of Chile’s most prominent authors. He published his first book, the short story collection *Sobredosis*, in 1990. Since then he has written or edited over a dozen works of fiction and non-fiction.<sup>9</sup> In 1994, Fuguet attended the prestigious International Writer’s Workshop at the University of Iowa, an experience which shaped his literary career. He is also a creator and the principal proponent of McOndo, an artistic ethos that celebrates the individual, globalization, and the promise of new digital technologies (Fuguet and Gómez, “Presentación del País McOndo” 9-

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<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and Guillermo del Toro’s filmmaking careers see Shaw, *The Three Amigos*.

<sup>8</sup> “La Zona de Contacto” ceased publication in 2010, after moving online in 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Fuguet subsequently published the novels *Mala Onda* (*Bad Vibes*, 1991); *Por favor rebobinar* (1994); *Tinta roja* (1996); *Las películas de mi vida* (*The Movies of My Life*, 2003); *Missing* (2009); *Aeropuertos* (2010); *No ficción* (2015); and *Sudor* (2016). He is also the author of the short story collection *Cortos* (*Shorts*, 2004); the graphic novel *Road Story* (2007); the chameleonic essay and non-fiction works *Primera parte* (2000); *Apuntes autistas* (2007); *Cinémeta (una bitácora)* (2012); *Tránsitos: Una cartografía literaria* (2013); *Todo no es suficiente (La corta, intensa y sobreexpuesta vida de Gustavo Escanlar)* (2015); and *VHS (unas memorias)* (2017). Additionally, Fuguet edited and compiled *Mi cuerpo es una celda* (2008), a posthumous autobiography by the Colombian author Andrés Caicedo (1951-1977) and co-edited the anthology *Una vida crítica: Cuarenta y cinco años de cinefilia* (2013) by Héctor Soto. He is also co-editor and contributor to the short story anthologies *Cuentos con Walkman* (1993), *McOndo* (1996), and *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (2000).

11). Fuguet rose to global prominence as an author and public figure in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 1999, he was featured on *Time* magazine's list of the "50 most important Latin Americans for the Next Millennium." He also appeared on the cover of the May 6, 2002 international edition of *Newsweek*, which contained a profile of the author titled: "Is Magical Realism Dead?". And in 2010, Guggenheim Foundation awarded him a fellowship in the field of fiction.

Fuguet began his filmmaking career in the early 2000s. His first incursion into the film industry was the screenplay for Martín Rodríguez's *Dos hermanos (en un lugar de la noche)* (Chile, 2000).<sup>10</sup> Fuguet continued to write even as he ventured into directing. Fuguet wrote and directed the short films *Las hormigas asesinas* (Chile, 2005), *Matías va a terapia (Mala onda: Matías va al sociólogo)* (Chile, 2008), and *2 horas* (Chile, 2008). He also wrote and directed four feature-length fiction films: *Se arrienda* (Chile, 2005), which he co-wrote with Francisco Ortega; *Velódromo* (Chile, 2010), which he co-wrote with René Martín; the Nashville-set *Música Campesina* (USA/Chile, 2011); and *Invierno* (Chile, 2015). He is also the writer and director of the feature-length essay film *Locaciones: Buscando a Rusty James* (Chile, 2013), a meditation on Francis Ford Coppola's 1983 film *Rumble Fish*.<sup>11</sup> In addition to these films, Fuguet directed music videos for Chilean pop singer Javiera Mena and the band Teleradio Donoso.

Fuguet is deliberate and outspoken in articulating his identity as a cosmopolitan filmmaker and cinephile. He describes his relationship with film as vital to his growth as an artist and citizen of the world: "Fue mi manera de entender el mundo" (136; "Rebobinando"; "It was

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<sup>10</sup> The film's title is alternatively listed as *2 hermanos en un lugar de la noche*.

<sup>11</sup> In *Cinémeta*, Fuguet calls *Rumble Fish* "mi cinta favorita, aunque me consta que ya no lo es, pero lo es y lo será porque fue una película decisiva, que me marcó, descarriló y me hizo tomar otro rumbo" (28; "my favorite film, although I'm sure that it isn't anymore, but it is and it will be because it was a decisive film, which left a mark on me, derailed me, and made me take another path"). Also see *Apuntes autistas* (123-26).

my way of understanding the world”). In his book *Cinépata*, the author and filmmaker describes cinephilia as a way of life. He calls it “una enfermedad, un vicio, un escape, un raye, una obsesión (20; “a sickness, a vice, an escape, a madness, an obsession”). Fuguet is candid about his desire for his films to reach a pan-Latin American audience: “Me parece que yo hago cine latinoamericano y esa es la gente que deseo que me vea” (“Alberto Fuguet: ‘Mi cinta’”; “It seems to me that I make Latin American cinema and those are the people who I want to watch my work”). To make his films accessible to a global audience, Fuguet created the online distribution and exhibition platform Cinépata.com in 2009. In addition to hosting films, the website featured essays, and functioned as an online community for cinema that embodied the McOndo ethos of free and rapid exchange and the transnational strategies employed by Chilean filmmakers in the post-Transition period. Although the site converted to an archive in 2014, Fuguet continues to post his films on the platform.

Like Fuguet, Pablo Larraín is a cosmopolitan filmmaker, producer, and screenwriter. Larraín was born in Santiago in 1976 to a politically prominent family.<sup>12</sup> He studied audiovisual communication and journalism at the Universidad de Artes, Ciencias y Comunicación (Uniac) in Santiago, where one of his instructors was the Chilean filmmaker Cristián Sánchez. In 2004, Pablo Larraín and his brother Juan de Dios Larraín founded Fabula, a transnational film and media production company. Fabula produced all of Larraín’s films, as well as films by contemporaries like Sebastián Lelio, Marialy Rivas, and Silva. Larraín directed five feature-length films between 2005 and 2015: *Fuga* (Chile/Argentina, 2006), which he co-wrote with

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<sup>12</sup> Larraín’s mother, Magdalena Matte is a member of the far-right Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) Party and was minister of Housing and Urban Development between 2009-2010 under President Sebastián Piñera. Larraín’s father, Hernán Larraín, has served as a Senator since 1994, representing the provinces of Linares and Cauquenes in the Maule Region. He was president of the Senate from 2004 to 2005 and twice served as President of UDI, from 2006 to 2008 and again from 2015-2017. In 2018, he assumed the position of Minister of Justice and Human Rights under President Piñera.

Mateo Iribarren and Hernán Rodríguez; *Tony Manero* (Chile/Brazil, 2008), which he co-wrote with Iribarren and the film's lead actor Alfredo Castro; *Post Mortem* (Chile/Mexico/Germany, 2010), which Larraín co-wrote with Iribarren; *No* (Chile/USA/France/Mexico, 2012), written by Pedro Peirano and based on a play by the Chilean author and filmmaker Antonio Skármeta; and *El Club* (Chile, 2015), which Larraín co-wrote with Guillermo Calderón and Daniel Villalobos. Larraín also directed the short film *Resurrección* (Chile, 2009) in collaboration with students from Universidad Católica (Catholic University) in Santiago. Larraín has also ventured into advertising and television. Larraín directed advertisements for Canada Dry, the department store chain and financial services company Falabella, Mastercard, and Televisión Nacional de Chile. He also worked as a producer and directed the first episode of the narco-trafficking-action-series *Prófugos* (2011-2013), which was co-produced by Fabula and the Chilean production company Efe3 and distributed by the U.S.-based HBO Latino.

The varied subjects and themes of Larraín's films reflect his cosmopolitan identity. In a 2013 interview he describes how he prefers to create and explore characters from backgrounds different from his own: "Prefiero meterme dentro de la cabeza de una persona como el protagonista de *Tony Manero* o de *Post Mortem* o de *No*, que en la de una persona de quien pude haber estado más cerca. Por ahora, me ha interesado explorar lugares que para mí son más desconocidos que conocidos" ("Entendiendo a Pablo Larraín"; "I prefer to put myself inside of the head of someone like the protagonist of *Tony Manero* or *Post Mortem* or *No*, than that of someone with whom I could be closer. For now, I have been interested in exploring places that for me are more unknown than known"). Together with his desire to represent a variety of characters, situations, and historical periods in his films, Larraín distances himself from ideological filmmaking:

I don't make these movies to change anything or to create a process. The left-wing movies that were made in Latin America during the Seventies expressed a certain ideology. They wanted to change things and create conscience. I'm not after any of that stuff; I'm not trying to create a pamphlet. I'm just trying to understand something and to show some things that did happen that I believe are very important for all of us.

(“Projecting and Excavating the Past”)

Echoing Borges in “The Argentine Writer and Tradition,” Larraín asserts his right to make films how he wants and depict characters who lead lives that are different from his own.

Since the release of *No* in 2012, Larraín's career has increasingly gravitated towards Hollywood. He is among the most prominent Latin American directors operating in the United States, a circumstance underscored by his inclusion with Sebastián Silva in the 2013 *New York Times* article “20 Directors to Watch” by Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott. The two Chileans are featured alongside Maren Ade, Mia Hansen-Løve, Yorgos Lanthimos, Barry Jenkins, and Corneliu Porumboiu. Larraín's ability to bridge art cinema and Hollywood is exemplified by his work with the actor, director, and producer Gael García Bernal, who stars in *No* and Larraín's 2016 idiosyncratic and self-reflexive *Neruda* (Chile/Canada/France/Spain/USA). Like Larraín, García Bernal straddles these two cinematic fields.<sup>13</sup> Larraín's film *Jackie* (USA/Chile/France, 2016), an unconventional biopic of Jackie Kennedy Onassis starring Natalie Portman, marks a watershed moment in Larraín's career. The film is his first English-language film and features well-known Hollywood stars, including Portman, Peter Sarsgaard, Greta Gerwig, and Billy Crudup.<sup>14</sup> The prominence of Larraín in Hollywood is also confirmed by the nominations and

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<sup>13</sup> García Bernal is a partner in the production company Canana which co-produced *Post Mortem* and *No*.

<sup>14</sup> *Jackie* was co-produced by the American filmmaker Darren Aranofosky's Protozoa Pictures, the Shanghai-based Bliss Media, and Fabula.

awards his films have received at the Academy Awards and Golden Globes: *No* garnered a short-list Oscar nomination in the category of Best Foreign Language Film in 2013; *El Club* was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2016 Golden Globe Awards; *Neruda* was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2017 Golden Globe Awards; and Jackie received a nomination for Best Actress at the 2017 Golden Globe Awards and nominations in the categories of Best Actress, Costume Design, and Original Score at the 2017 Academy Awards.<sup>15</sup>

Alicia Scherson's life and career span the globe. In addition to her work as a director, Scherson is a producer, screenwriter, and professor in the Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen (Institute of Communication and the Image) at the University of Chile. Scherson was born in Santiago in 1974 and studied biology at Universidad Católica. She later pursued studies in cinema at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión (International School of Cinema and Television) in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba, where she received the title of "Telecineasta" ("Television-Filmmaker").<sup>16</sup> She obtained a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from the University of Illinois at Chicago, which she attended on a Fulbright scholarship.

Scherson first directorial effort is the 2002 short *Crying Underwater* (USA/Chile, 2002). She also directed the short films *Baño de mujeres* (Chile, 2005), *La promesa* (Chile, 2007), and *Manos libres* (Chile, 2010). Scherson wrote and directed three feature-length fiction films between 2005 and 2015: *Play* (Chile/Argentina/France, 2005); *Turistas* (Chile/France, 2009); and *Il Futuro* (Chile/Germany/Italy/Spain, 2013), in which she shares a screenplay credit with the late Chilean author Roberto Bolaño. She also co-directed and co-wrote the film *Vida de*

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<sup>15</sup> Portman was nominated for Best Actress, Madeline Fontaine for Costume Design, and Mica Levi for Original Score.

<sup>16</sup> The school was founded by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez, Argentine filmmaker Fernando Birri, and Cuban filmmaker Julio García Espinosa. García Márquez described the school's mission as "nothing less than managing the integration of Latin American cinema. As simple as that, as excessive as that" (Diestro-Dópidio 105). Scherson's diploma was signed by Birri and García Márquez (Scherson, email communication, "La Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión," 16 April 2018).

*familia* (Chile 2017) with Cristián Jiménez. Scherson has worked as a screenwriter with several Chilean filmmakers. She co-wrote Cristián Jiménez's *Ilusiones ópticas* (2009), Matías Lira's *El Bosque de Karadima* (2015), and Pepa San Martín's *Rara* (2016). Scherson's production company, La Ventura, which she operates with Macarena López, co-produced all of her feature-length films between 2005 and 2015, as well as José Luis Torres Leiva's *Verano* (2011), Sebastián Brahm's *El circuito de Román* (2011), and Roberto Doveris's *Plantas* (2016). Her forthcoming film, *1989*, is an adaptation of Roberto Bolaño's posthumously-published novel *El Tercer Reich* (*The Third Reich*).<sup>17</sup>

Scherson presents herself as a fundamentally cosmopolitan and Latin American filmmaker. In a 2005 interview she remarks that Chilean filmmakers are not bound by a single way of making cinema: "No tenemos cinematografía, tenemos gente que hace cine" ("La ciudad y las alcachofas"; We don't have cinematography, we have people who make cinema").<sup>18</sup> In the same interview she situates *Play*, her debut feature about an indigenous domestic worker in Santiago, within a continental panorama: "Yo creo que la película propone una reflexión sobre la identidad latinoamericana" ("I believe that the movie proposes a reflection on Latin American identity"). In a 2013 interview she challenges the view of critics who contend that filmmakers from countries with small film industries are only concerned with local issues: "No one asks Olivier Assayas or Nobuhiro Suwa what nationality is their film, but relatively more peripheral filmmakers are required to do something 'local' and I find that that's out of place" ("Alicia Scherson 'The idea of a national cinema is in crisis'"). Scherson's comments reflect Leah

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<sup>17</sup> Bolaño's novel was published in English as *The Third Reich* in 2011 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

<sup>18</sup> In a 1969 interview Raúl Ruiz reflects on the lack of a unified style or approach to filmmaking among Chilean directors who participated in the 1967 Viña del Mar film festival: "Recordarás que la delegación chilena fue el gran espectáculo, había como siete tendencias peleadas a muerte, es decir, no teníamos cine, pero sí cineastas" (qtd. Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* 111; "You will remember that the Chilean delegation was the great spectacle, there were like seven tendencies fighting to the death, that is, we don't have cinema, but we do have filmmakers").



Kemp's argument that post-Transition filmmakers "share with the McOndo ethos an aversion to categorization" (*Citizenship* 318).

Sebastián Silva is an actor, musician, producer, screenwriter, and visual artist. Silva was born in Santiago in 1979 and briefly studied cinema at the Escuela de Cine de Chile, although he left before graduating. Silva later moved to Montreal where he studied film animation and English. Silva's credits as a musician include contributions as a composer, vocalist, and guitarist to the music projects CHC (Congregación de Hermanos Contemplativos), Yaia, and Los Mono. In 2005 Silva released a solo album titled *Iwannawin & Friends*. He currently resides in New York City.

Silva directed or co-directed six feature-length films between 2007 and 2015: his debut *La vida me mata* (Chile, 2007), which he co-wrote with Pedro Peirano; *La nana* (Chile/Mexico, 2009), which he co-wrote with Peirano; *Gatos viejos* (Chile/USA, 2011), which he co-wrote and co-directed with Peirano; *Crystal Fairy & the Magical Cactus and 2012* (Chile, 2013), which he wrote and in which he appears in a small role; *Magic Magic* (Chile/USA, 2013), which he wrote; and *Nasty Baby* (USA/Chile/France, 2015), which he wrote and in which he stars. Post-2015, Silva directed the short films *Dolfun* (USA, 2016) and "Dance Dance Dance," which is featured in the film anthology *Madly* (USA, 2016). He also wrote and directed the feature-length film *Tyrel* (USA, 2018).<sup>19</sup> In addition to his work in film, Silva directed the music video for Chilean musician Pedro Piedra's song "Al vacío" (2010).<sup>20</sup> He also wrote and directed the web series *The Boring Life of Jacqueline* (2012), which was distributed by HBO. Additionally, Silva is the

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<sup>19</sup> In the English-language trailer for *Madly*, Silva's name is listed alongside "USA." *Madly* also includes short films by Gael García Bernal and Mía Wasikowska.

<sup>20</sup> Piedra (born Pedro Subercaseaux) was a member of CHC and Yaia alongside Silva. He contributed to the soundtracks of *La nana*, *Crystal Fairy*, and *Magic Magic*.

founder of the production company Diroriro, which produced his films *La nana*, *Gatos viejos*, *Crystal Fairy & the Magical Cactus*, and *Nasty Baby*.

Like Larraín, Silva has worked in Chile and the United States. In press and scholarly accounts, he is often linked with the “independent” or “indie” film scene, whose epicenter is the Sundance Film Festival.<sup>21</sup> Analogous to Larraín’s work with Gael García Bernal, Silva has cast well-known non-Chilean actors like Michael Cera (*Magic Magic*, *Crystal Fairy*, *Tyrel*), Gaby Hoffmann (*Crystal Fairy*), and Kristen Wiig (*Nasty Baby*). He has also achieved recognition in Hollywood: *La nana* was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2010 Golden Globes. Silva’s cosmopolitan life and career informs his films. In an interview about *Nasty Baby*, Silva remarks that his identity as an expatriate filmmaker enables him to explore thorny and taboo social issues in the United States in ways that American-born filmmaker could not:

Me he dado cuenta [de] que ser un extranjero en Nueva York me da cierta libertad o distancia para abordar temas que los gringos generalmente toman con pinzas. Para ellos es muy importante decir en una película quién es blanco y quién es negro, explicar porqu[é] tal persona es gay y porqu[é] la otra no. Todo es tan políticamente correcto. Por el contrario, yo trato de evitar los prejuicios y en ese sentido soy un poco más irresponsable. Mezclo todo: razas, preferencias sexuales, locos. No lo sé. Quizás me aprovecho un poco inconscientemente por el hecho de ser un extranjero en Brooklyn, un chileno caucásico en Nueva York. (González, “Sebastián Silva: una guagua cochina en Brooklyn”; I have realized that being a foreigner in New York gives me certain freedom or distance to tackle themes that gringos generally tip toe around. For them it is very important to say in a movie who is white and who is black, explain why that person is

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<sup>21</sup> For an early account of the Sundance Film Festival see Dayan, “Looking for Sundance: The Social Construction of a Film Festival.”

gay and why the other one isn't. Everything is so politically correct. On the contrary, I try to avoid prejudices and in that sense I am a little more irresponsible. I mix everything: races, sexual preferences, crazy people. I don't know. Maybe I take advantage a little unconsciously because I am a foreigner in Brooklyn, a Caucasian Chilean in New York) Complementing his resistance of "politically correct" filmmaking, Silva expresses disdain for those who would label him a gay or Latin American filmmaker:

Why do they want to define me as a gay director? Is the fact that I like dick so important to everyone that they need to say that before anything else? Is the fact that I was born in South America so important to everyone that they need to say that before anything else? There are aspects of myself that are way more articulate and make me way more of who I am than being a homosexual who was born in Latin America. Those things were not my decision, so why are they such a big part of my personality? There are parts of my personality that I find way more particular and interesting than just being a homosexual. ("Nasty Baby Director/Star")

Silva's comments echo Fuguet's insistence on individual experience and reflect Scherson and Larraín's desires to challenge the expectations of audiences and critics.

The second element that unites these four filmmakers and their films is their use of transnational filmmaking practices.<sup>22</sup> Drawing on the work of Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and Robert O. Keohane, I define transnational cinema as strategies of production, distribution, and exhibition of cinema across national borders that involve at least one non-state entity.<sup>23</sup> The four films are all

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<sup>22</sup> For an overview of transnational cinema theory and its relationship to Spanish-language cinema, see Lie, "Lo transnacional en el cine hispánico: deslindes de un concepto" (17-35).

<sup>23</sup> The term transnational originates from international relations studies, but it also applies to art cinema. Just as cosmopolitanism centers on a concern for individuals and communities, Patricia Clavin observes that transnationalism "is first and foremost about people: the social space that they inhabit, the networks they form and the ideas they exchange" (422). Nye, Jr. and Keohane place a similar emphasis on exchange in their definition of "transnational interactions," which they describe as "the movement of tangible or intangible items across state

transnational productions or co-productions.<sup>24</sup> I define a transnational production as a production that involves a production company or companies that operate across national borders. This may entail shooting locations in multiple countries, the employment of a multi-national cast or crew, and financial or technical support from cultural organizations like film festivals and supranational cultural funds. Mette Hjort (2010) notes that transnational production is a scalar phenomenon, with the production of certain films being more transnationally oriented or “marked” than others (13). Among these four films, *Il Futuro* is the most markedly transnational.

Alongside transnational strategies of production, these four filmmakers employ transnational strategies of distribution and exhibition. These strategies include the use of distribution financing and support from international cultural funds and film festivals, online distribution platforms like Netflix, and the circulation of films on the international film festival network. Fuguet’s Cinémeta.com platform epitomizes these transnational distribution and exhibition practices. As we shall see, the Chilean government’s cultural policies, like its bilateral and multilateral co-production agreements and financing initiatives play an important role in facilitating these transnational practices of production, distribution, and exhibition.

The third element that these four films and filmmakers share is their affiliation with the genre of art cinema.<sup>25</sup> Art cinema is a genre, that is, a “broadly recognized public categor[y],”

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boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organization” (xii). See Clavin (433) and Waldinger and Fitzgerald (1181).

<sup>24</sup> Transnational practices or strategies of production are closely related and frequently overlap with co-productions. Chris Berry defines a co-production as a production “between two or more nationally separated companies in two or more nation states” (121). Berry makes a distinction between co-productions, which are conceived of within the framework of an international logic, and transnational productions, which he defines as instances “where a production company operates across borders” (121). Implicit in Berry’s definition of both co-productions and transnational productions is the notion that co-productions are always transnational in nature, although a transnational production does not necessarily have to be a co-production (Fuguet’s *Se arrienda*, which was shot in Chile and Argentina and produced by the director’s Cinémeta production company, is one example of this phenomenon).

<sup>25</sup> Art cinema took shape as a cultural field in the years following the Second World War. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith observes that the development of art cinema in the immediate post-war period was shaped by government support for their national cinemas: “After 1945, government policy in many countries specifically favoured the making of

whose defining feature is its porosity (Altman, *Film/Genre* 15). Like a sponge, art films soak up genres and cultural references and incorporate a range of filmmaking practices. The porous nature of art cinema encompasses intertextual references across mediums as well as its self-reflexive qualities. In these four films, this porosity is manifest in a diverse range of intertexts including the McOndo sensibility (*Se arrienda*), John Badham's *Saturday Night Fever* (*Tony Manero*), the peplum film (*Il Futuro*), and Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (*Nasty Baby*). The porosity of art cinema extends to active spectatorship. Art films encourage viewers to make connections between the film and other intertexts and among elements within the work. In these four films, the porous qualities of the genre accentuate and undergird their cosmopolitan themes.

In Chile, art cinema can be traced to the cinema clubs of the 1950s and the University of Chile's Centro de Cine Experimental (Center of Experimental Cinema), founded by the visionary documentary filmmaker Sergio Bravo in 1957.<sup>26</sup> Verónica Cortínez and Manfred Engelbert observe that the Centro is where “se concentran los esfuerzos para la creación de un cine chileno de arte” (*Evolución en libertad* 84; “efforts to create a Chilean art cinema are concentrated”).<sup>27</sup>

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films that would serve as vehicles of national cultural expression. Though these policies were often ambiguous, both in intention and in effect, they opened up spaces in which non-mainstream film-making could be financially viable, if not a reliable source of profit” (“Art Cinema” 567). For an overview of the development of pre-war European art cinema see Neale and Tudor, “The Rise and Fall of the Art (House) Movie” (127-32). For a history of early art cinema in the United States see Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema*.

<sup>26</sup> The precursor organizations to the Center of Experimental Cinema include the Academia de Cine y Fotografía (Academy of Cinema and Photography), founded in 1953 by Universidad Católica de Chile and directed by Giorgio Vomiero; the Instituto Fílmico (Film Institute), founded in 1955 by Father Rafael Sánchez, at Universidad Católica; and, at the University of Chile, the Cine Club de la Federación de Estudiantes (Cinema Club of the Student Federation), which was founded in 1954 and directed by the filmmaker Pedro Chaskel and which counted Bravo among its members (Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* 83).

<sup>27</sup> Bravo, a trained architect and graduate of the Instituto Fílmico, founded the Center in 1957. In 1958 the Center moved to the University of Chile, although it maintained its autonomy. In June 1963, the filmmaker Pedro Chaskel replaced Bravo as leader of the Center and the institution was incorporated into the University of Chile as the Sección Cine Experimental within the Departamento Audiovisual (Audiovisual Department). In 1977, Bravo resuscitated the Center, which produced his 1979 film *No eran nadie* and produced the inaugural Film Festival of Mapuche Cinema (KINE TRAWUN KINE MAPUCHE) in 2000. In a 1962 article in *Ecran*, Bravo underscores the open nature of the Center: “Cine Experimental no trabaja tan solo con sus nueve componentes. Así cualquier persona que tenga interés en filmar y presente un buen tema, obtiene el apoyo necesario para desarrollarlo” (qtd. Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* 84-85; “Experimental Cinema does not only work with its nine members. So, any person that has an interest in filming and who presents a good subject, obtains the support

Although Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva are not linked to a single institution, they nonetheless participate in the wider network of art cinema.

As a critical concept, art cinema continues to generate debate among scholars, audiences, and critics. They highlight its complex and multifaceted relationship to genre, its close association with the nation and the figure of the auteur, and its sites of exhibition. The diversity and longevity of these debates reflect the heterogeneity of art cinema as a cultural field in the post-war period. Critics describe art cinema as a type of cinema that privileges the auteur and incorporates a unique set of formal and thematic devices, distinct from those of Hollywood films. Critics also describe it as a genre, albeit an “impure” one (Galt and Schoonover 6); an institution (Neale 13 and Tweedie 22); a “cultural mode of production” (Elsaesser, *New German Cinema* 41), and a mode of spectatorship (Galt and Schoonover 8-9; Lev 5; and Wilinsky 3-5). Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover observe that art cinema’s ambiguity is its most distinctive quality: “the lack of strict parameters for art cinema is not just an ambiguity of its critical history, but a central part of its specificity, a positive way of delineating its discursive space” (6). Underlining the mutability of the genre, Galt and Schoonover maintain “that art cinema can be defined by its impurity; a difficulty of categorization that is as productive to film culture as it is frustrating to taxonomy” (6). In a similar vein, James Tweedie calls art cinema “a hybrid, mutually

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necessary to develop it”). Many prominent figures of the Chilean cinema in the 1960s and 1970s produced their first films under the auspices of the Center. Among the most well-known filmmakers associated with the Center are Raúl Ruiz, Miguel Littin, Helvio Soto, Héctor Ríos, and Carlos Flores, who later founded the Escuela de Cine de Chile. The author of the article “Nació como hobby: Cine experimental,” published in the magazine *Revista Ercilla* on May 14, 1958, puts the spotlight on the motley group of cineastes at the Center. The author underscores the group’s intimate engagement with the history of the medium, which is reflected in their diligent and eclectic approaches to filmmaking: “Su labor es un hobby, pero encarado con sentido totalmente profesional, y los miembros del [Centro de Cine Experimental] se consideran actualmente en la ‘fase experimental de su experimento’” (“Their work is a hobby, but viewed in a totally professional sense, and the members of the [Center of Experimental Cinema] at present consider themselves in the ‘experimental phase of their experiment’”). The short documentary was the predominant cinematic mode of filmmakers associated with the Center.

contaminated cultural category . . . that lies at the border of mass communication and art” (3).<sup>28</sup> Galt and Schoonover observe that far from being a narrow generic label, “art cinema troubles notions of genre” (8).<sup>29</sup> While Bordwell calls the art film’s “open-ended narrative” as one of its defining characteristics (“The Art Cinema” 156).

Critics highlight the porous qualities of the films of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, Silva and their contemporaries. The founder of the Escuela de Cine de Chile, Carlos Flores del Pino (2006) emphasizes the diversity of Chilean films produced between 1998 and 2006: “Contrariamente al modelo de creación cuyo eje es el realismo, la alegoría y la unidad de estilo, este cine opta por hibridar, es decir por organizar estructuras que combinen lo ya hecho con lo propio, lo universal con lo local, lo ambicionado con lo posible, la tradición con la experimentación” (73; “Contrary to the model of creation whose axis is realism, allegory, and the unity of style, this cinema opts to hybridize, namely to organize structures that combine the preexisting with the personal, the universal with the local, ambition with the possible, tradition with experimentation”).<sup>30</sup> In their prologue to *El novísimo cine chileno* (2011), Ascanio Cavallo and Gonzalo Maza observe that early-21st-century Chilean filmmakers “muestra[n] una extraordinaria diversidad con un mismo centro: defender su autonomía creativa” (14; “sho[w] an extraordinary diversity with the same center: defending their creative autonomy”). Carolina Urrutia (2013) calls contemporary Chilean art films “expresivamente ambiguas” (*Un cine centrífugo* 16; “expressively ambiguous”) (16),

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<sup>28</sup> Barbara Wilinsky observes that the generic ambiguity of art cinema is also manifest in its close relationship with Hollywood: “Operating within the capitalist commercial film industry, art cinema is in constant negotiation with the mainstream cinema, a process that has ultimately shaped both cultures” (4). This relationship between art and mainstream cinema has been increasingly blurred since the 1990s, when Hollywood studios began establishing art film-centric subsidiaries.

<sup>29</sup> Film genre is itself a fluid category. Andrew Tudor notes that “Genre notions . . . are not critics’ classifications made for special purposes; they are sets of cultural conventions. Genre is what we collectively believe it to be” (“Genre” 7).

<sup>30</sup> Kemp notes that Flores draws on Néstor García Canclini’s formulation of hybrid culture (*Citizenship* 269). See García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas* (15).

while Joanna Page (2017) observes that these works comprise “an ambivalent set of narratives” (269).

Critics, filmmakers, and cultural brokers link the porous nature of Chilean art cinema to its auteur qualities.<sup>31</sup> Ian Cameron offers a concise and enduring definition of the auteur in his essay “Films, Directors and Critics” (1962), published in the British film magazine *Movie*: “The assumption which underlies all the writing in *Movie* is that the director is the author of a film, the person who gives it any distinctive quality it may have” (31). Cameron’s conception of the filmmaker as a singular author continues to inform critical and popular notions of art cinema. Miguel Ángel Vidaurre, who was named Academic Director of the Escuela de Cine de Chile in 2010, describes the “deambular del nómada” (“Nómades y Caníbales”; “the wandering of the nomad”) as the symbol of the contemporary Chilean filmmaker. In the foreword to *El novísimo cine chileno* (2011), the producer Bruno Bettati celebrates the auteur qualities of Chilean cinema, albeit in less poetic terms. He points to the “verdadera polifonía de autores” (15; “true polyphony of authors”) in Chilean cinema. In the same volume, Cavallo and Maza observe that the *novísimo* filmmakers are so intent on realizing their visions that they do not even try to appeal to their audiences: “sin el ánimo declarado de dar la espalda al público, estaban más interesados en apostar por un lenguaje y preocupaciones propias” (15; “without the stated interest of turning their backs on audiences, they were more interested in betting on their own language and preoccupations”). Cortínez and Engelbert criticize Cavallo and Maza for their “negligencia” (“El cine chileno de los sesenta” 20; “negligence”) in omitting of a connection between the diverse

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<sup>31</sup> Many critics trace the concept of the auteur to François Truffaut’s 1954 essay “A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema.” In the essay Truffaut juxtaposes the then dominant “psychological realism” (10) mode of filmmaking—which the author calls the “Tradition of Quality” (9)—with the work of filmmakers like Jean Renoir, Jean Cocteau, Jacques Becker, Jacques Tati, etc., whose personal vision and “audacities” established them as “*men of cinema*” (16; author’s emphasis).



filmmakers Transition-period like Cristián Galaz, Andrés Wood, Boris Quercia, and Marcelo Ferrari and those that emerged around 2005.

Cavallo and Maza describe a connection between the filmmakers of the New Chilean Cinema of the 1960s, who they characterize as the progenitors of Chilean art cinema. They contend that the filmmakers of the “novísimo” are “conectados íntimamente con el Nuevo Cine Chileno de los sesenta” (14; “intimately connected with the New Chilean Cinema of the sixties”). They claim that these filmmakers “se educaron en la obra de Sergio Bravo, Miguel Littin, Pedro Chaskel, Patricio Guzmán y, muy especialmente, Raúl Ruiz, el gran faro del cine chileno en la porfiada determinación de hacer cine por encima de todos los obstáculos” (14; “educated themselves on the work of Sergio Bravo, Miguel Littin, Pedro Chaskel, Patricio Guzmán, and, especially, Raúl Ruiz, the great torchbearer of Chilean Cinema in its stubborn determination to make cinema above all obstacles”). In tracing a direct lineage between contemporary Chilean art filmmakers and a limited group of all male Chilean directors from the 1960s, Cavallo and Maza circumscribe the contemporary Chilean auteur to a model of filmmaking defined by the heroic male director.

Leah Kemp pushes back against the focus on the singular figure of the auteur. She highlights the prominent role of director-producer teams in the production of Scherson’s *Play* (2005), Fuguet’s *Se arrienda* (2005), and Alex Bize’s *En la cama* (2005):

none of these directors could be considered total authors. All three films were made by producer-director teams: Alicia Scherson’s film was produced by Sergio Gándara and Macarena López, Alberto Fuguet worked with producer Diego Valenzuela and Bize with producer Adrián Solís. The professionalization of the role of producer has increased in recent years in Chile. (*Citizenship* 266)

As we shall see, producers like Bruno Bettati and Juan de Dios Larraín are key figures in Chile's film industry. However, Kemp, like Cavallo and Maza, also draws connections between early-21st-century Chilean art cinema filmmakers and filmmakers of the New Chilean Cinema. She maintains that both of them are the products of auteurs who overcome structural obstacles to make films: "Hence, it seems to me that the common denominator between the New Chilean Cinema of the late 1960s and early 1970s and the New New Chilean Cinema of 2005 is that both are examples of the cinema of the possible. By this I mean that both take a practical view of the local production conditions and adjust their stories accordingly to make production possible, if not profitable" (*Citizenship* 312). In characterizing both the "New Chilean" and "New New Chilean" cinemas as "the cinema of the possible," Kemp—like Cavallo and Maza—emphasizes the personal visions of filmmakers from both periods. However, this cross-generational conception of the "cinema of the possible," understates the distinct industrial, political, and cultural contexts of these two eras.<sup>32</sup>

Critics also highlight art cinema's "ambivalent relationship to location," and, in particular, to the nation (Galt and Schoonover 7). Art cinema's porosity is, on its face, resistant to the concept of national cinema, especially one that is limited to the notion of "cinema as the mobiliser of the nation's myths and of the myth of the nation" (Hayward, *French National Cinema* 9). However, art cinema remains connected to the nation—what Benedict Anderson calls the "imagined political community"—even as its creators employ transnational filmmaking practices and the genre embraces the crossing of boundaries and dialogues across cultures and traditions (15). The portrayal of the Pinochet regime in *Tony Manero* and *Se arrienda's*

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<sup>32</sup> For an overview of the industrial contexts of Chilean cinema in the 1960s see Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* (53-133).

representation of the Transition to Democracy exemplify the coexistence of representations of the nation within their “rough-hewn” and “open narratives” (Nowell-Smith 567-70).

Leopoldo Muñoz and Leah Kemp consider the complex relationship between Chilean art cinema and the nation. In his 2013 article “El triunfo del cine sin sonrisas” (“The triumph of a cinema without smiles”), Muñoz describes these films as self-serious, allegorical representations of the nation: “nos distinguen la densidad y pocas sonrisas de los personajes: una representación autoflagelante en sintonía con nuestra idiosincrasia” (38; “the density and lack of smiles of the characters distinguish us: a self-flagellating representation in harmony with our idiosyncrasy”). Muñoz links these films to the category of art cinema (a smile-less, serious type of film in his view), while simultaneously stressing the ways in which they depict and reflect the nation. He highlights the introverted *costumbrismo* of these films, “esta inquietud por buscar nuestro reflejo en el cine” (“this impatience to search for our reflection in cinema”), exemplified by the use of “silencio y los planos largos, escenas de poca acción y mucho de meditabundo” (“silence and long shots, scenes of little action and much meditation”). Muñoz describes this cinematic asceticism as “una apuesta fructífera para nuestro aislado carácter andino/pacífico” (“a fructiferous bet for our isolated Andean/Pacific character”) in films like *Anónimo* (Pérez, 2010), *Bonsái* (Jiménez, 2011), *Lucía* (Attallah, 2010), and *Mi último round* (Jorquera, 2011). Muñoz’s allegorical readings of these films center on the long-standing myth of Chile’s isolation in which the narrow country is portrayed as a veritable island isolated by its geography. We should note however, that his analysis overlooks the cosmopolitan and metacinematic qualities of these films, like the ways in which *Mi último round* dialogues with the boxing movie genre.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Writing about Chilean films released in 2014, Antonella Estévez emphasizes their elements of national allegory: “Estar atentos a esos discursos puede ayudarnos a considerar, celebrar y agradecer las particularidades de nuestra idiosincrasia, aquella que nos hace únicos y nos permite tener algo que ofrecer al resto del planeta” (“Cine Chileno

Kemp offers a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between Chilean art cinema and the nation. In distinguishing between cinema released in 2005 and the cinema made during the Transition to Democracy, Kemp argues “that the perception of a distinction between the ‘new generation’ and its predecessors is attributable in large part to the younger filmmakers’ effort to modify the national allegory, or excise national allegory entirely from their products in an effort to redefine the role of filmmakers in Chile, avoiding the stigma of the ‘low art’ of political or social cinema in favor of the high form of ‘art for art’s sake’” (*Citizenship* 271). She observes that Matías Bize’s *En la cama* and Sebastián Lelio’s *La sagrada familia*, both released in 2005, are national allegories presented through “representations of the upper-middle class” (312).<sup>34</sup> She remarks that the shift from a focus on marginal characters and move away from national allegory represents a “renegotiation of the relationship to the national” (336). The incorporation on national allegory continues in films released after 2005. However, these works are not all focused on characters from privileged socio-economic backgrounds. As we shall see, *Se arrienda* and *Tony Manero* feature elements of national allegory, while depicting characters from opposite ends of the socio-economic spectrum.

Another facet of art cinema and its heterogeneous qualities are the places where it is exhibited and consumed. These sites establish the genre within a “field of cultural production” (Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production” 29)<sup>35</sup> In her study of the emergence of art houses and art cinema in the United States during the 1940s, Wilinsky observes: “As the exhibition sites

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2014”; “Paying attention to these discourses can help us to consider, celebrate and appreciate the peculiarities of our idiosyncrasy, that which makes us unique and which allows us to have something to offer to the rest of the planet).

<sup>34</sup> At the time of the release of *La sagrada familia*, Lelio was known and credited as Sebastián Campos. He changed his name shortly after the film’s release.

<sup>35</sup> Bourdieu calls the field of cultural productions a “field of positions and a field of position-takings” that are unified by struggle (34).

for art films, art houses helped to establish art cinema's image as well as its qualities" (39).<sup>36</sup> In Chile, art-house cinemas like Santiago's Cine Arte Normandie (founded in 1982), cinematheques, and alternative exhibition circuits constitute the physical homes of early-21st-century art cinema in Chile. Online streaming sites like Cinépatá.com and Netflix have also emerged as venues for the art cinema. These platforms have transformed the way art films are consumed by more easily facilitating its crossing of borders and its availability to audiences.<sup>37</sup>

Film festivals are the other primary sites of exhibition for art cinema. Neale observes that art cinema's "appeal to the 'universal' values of culture and art . . . is very much reflected in the existence of international film festivals, where international distribution is sought for these films, and where their status as 'Art' is confirmed and re-stated through the existence of prizes and awards, themselves neatly balancing the criteria of artistic merit and commercial potential" (35). Galt and Schoonover observe that art cinema is often only defined as such when exhibited at film festivals and across borders: "many films that are understood as popular in their domestic market become art films when exhibited abroad. In these cases, it is the fact of traveling internationally that constitutes a film as an example of art cinema" (7).

The fourth element that these four filmmakers and their films share is their circulation at film festivals. Cindy Wong describes film festivals as multifaceted cultural events:

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<sup>36</sup> Wilinsky notes that art cinema exhibitors seek to appeal to and cultivate a discerning audience: "To reach all these potential filmgoers, art film exhibitors created a theater environment projecting an image of art and high culture. This alternative filmgoing experience allowed viewers to separate themselves from the supposedly passive middle-class audiences of mainstream films and helped art film-goers find their place in the shifting cultural hierarchy" (105). In a similar vein, Dudley Andrew maintains that "the art film . . . sought to differentiate itself from [the audience's] common experience" (5) while, Peter Lev emphasizes the "cosmopolitan, non-chauvinist spectator who can empathize with characters from many nations" (5).

<sup>37</sup> Sites like the "curated online cinema" MUBI, founded in 2007, and FilmStruck, a joint venture between The Criterion Collection and Turner Classic Movies, founded in 2016, are emblematic of the online art house. On its website, MUBI describes itself as "a passport to the world of cinema." MUBI draws on the highbrow appeal of brick and mortar art houses and film festivals and employs many of the same exhibition strategies in its rotating library of "cult, classic, independent, and award-winning movies" ("What is MUBI"). According to its website, FilmStruck "offers film aficionados a comprehensive library of films including an eclectic mix of contemporary and classic art house, indie, foreign and cult films" (FilmStruck, "About Us").

Festivals provide places in which multiple agents negotiate local, national, and supranational relations of culture, power, and identity. Ultimately, they are crucial centers for the development of film knowledge and film practices: festivals and the people who create and re-create them thus shape what films we as audiences and scholars will see, what films we respect or neglect, and often, how we read such cinematic works. (1)

Film festivals in Chile and abroad have played an important role in the development of Chilean film since the late 1960s. The 1967 and 1969 Viña del Mar Film Festivals in the seaside city in Chile were seminal events in the development of Chilean and Latin American cinema.<sup>38</sup>

Contemporaneous with these two festivals in Chile, Patricio Kaulen and Raúl Ruiz received two significant awards at European festivals. Kaulen garnered the Extraordinary Prize at the 1968 Karlovy Vary Film Festival for *Largo viaje* (1967) and Ruiz won the Golden Leopard at the 1969 Locarno Film Festival for *Tres tristes tigres* (1968).<sup>39</sup> The year after Ruiz's win at Locarno, three Chilean films shared the top prize at the Leipzig Film Festival: Pedro Chaskel and Héctor Ríos's *Venceremos* (1970); Álvaro Ramírez, Samuel Carvajal, and Leonard Céspedes's *Brigada Ramona Parra* (1970); and Diego Bonacina and José Román's *Reportaje a Lota* (1970) (Villarroel and Mardones 42).<sup>40</sup>

Film festivals are central to the cosmopolitan identities and practices of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva. These festivals are the principal arenas where their films contest cultural and symbolic capital and accrue prestige. Moreover, these festivals also play an equally significant role as producers of art cinema through festival-affiliated initiatives like International

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<sup>38</sup> For more on these two festivals see Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* (101-16).

<sup>39</sup> For more on Ruiz and the 1969 Locarno Film Festival see Engelbert, "El cine chileno en el contexto mundial: Raúl Ruiz en Locarno."

<sup>40</sup> In 1983, the Leipzig Film Festival hosted a retrospective dedicated to Chilean cinema titled *Film im Freiheits-Kampf der Völker: Chile (Cinema in the Fight for the People's Liberation: Chile)*. See Villarroel and Mardones (122-28).

Film Festival Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund. The success of Chilean art films at festivals has not only imbued the Chilean cinema brand with prestige, but also plays a key role the process of the "discovery" of national cinemas that remains one of the core attributes of the film festival (Wong 91). Consequently, these art films are not "relegated" to film festivals, as James Tweedie suggests (5); rather, they inhabit and thrive at these events. I maintain that we should not view film festivals as a marginalized institutional structure that subordinate Hollywood; rather they comprise an "alternative network" where the cultural prestige of art cinema is contested and distributed (De Valck 58). Dina Iordanova contends that film festivals are the main arenas of exhibition for many filmmakers and films. She maintains that: "Screening the film at festivals is not a means of getting the film to real exhibition; it *is* the real exhibition" (25; author's emphasis). Notwithstanding the polemical nature of Iordanova's statement, she is right to insist on the significance film festivals as sites of exhibition for art films.

The fifth quality that these four films share is their incorporation of the theme of cosmopolitanism via the intertwined practices of cinephilia, and filmmaking. The origin of cosmopolitanism is often attributed to the 4th century B.C.E. Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope,<sup>41</sup> who, according to his biographer Diogenes Laertius, declared himself a *kosmopolites*, or "citizen of the cosmos" (Heater 7). The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) points out that Diogenes' "formulation was meant to be paradoxical, and reflected the general Cynic skepticism toward custom and tradition (xiv)." Appiah notes that the use of the phrase cosmos, rather than earth (*gaia* or *ge* in Ancient Greek), reflects this incredulity: "The cosmos referred to the world, not in the sense of the earth, but in the sense of the universe. Talk of cosmopolitanism originally signaled then, a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person

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<sup>41</sup> Long notes that Diogenes, who at one point resided in a bathtub in the center of Athens, "sought to present himself as a living icon of counter-culturalism" (54).

belonged to a community among communities” (xiv). Despite the initial association of cosmopolitanism with the Cynics, Gerard Delanty and David Inglis observe that its “modern appropriation has been more closely associated with the later Stoic use of the term” (2).<sup>42</sup> Whereas the Cynic formulation of cosmopolitanism was rooted in “an individualist ethic of attachment to the wider human community,” the Stoics that succeeded them in the 3rd century B.C.E. “stood for a social conception of human beings whose social nature can only be fulfilled in a universal human community” (Delanty and Inglis 2).<sup>43</sup> This Stoic conception of cosmopolitanism continues to undergird the conception of cosmopolitanism in the West.<sup>44</sup>

Scholarship and philosophy on cosmopolitanism since the late-20th century remains rooted in Stoicism’s emphasis on civic duty, virtue, fraternity, and self-reflection, as well as the Enlightenment’s defense of the autonomy and dignity of the individual citizen (Skrbis and Woodward 2-3). Scholars define cosmopolitanism as “a disposition” (Skrbis et al., “Locating Cosmopolitanism” 117); “a mode of managing meaning” (Hannerz 238); “a mode of managing cultural and political multiplicities” (Vertovec and Cohen 4); “a multiplicity of tensions,” (Corpus Ong 463); “a progressive humanistic ideal” (Skrbis et al., “Locating Cosmopolitanism” 116); an “orientation” (Hannerz 239); and “a virtue” (Turner 47). In popular culture, cosmopolitanism is defined against provincialism and narrow-mindedness. Samuel Scheffler notes that cosmopolitanism “suggests a posture of worldly sophistication which is naturally contrasted with more provincial or parochial outlooks” (56). Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande argue that for cosmopolitans “the *recognition of difference* becomes the maxim of thought” (13;

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<sup>42</sup> Early Christian thought also featured a strongly cosmopolitan element. In Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians (3:26), he declares all men and women equal before Christ: “There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (cited in Long 57).

<sup>43</sup> Zeno of Citium (334-262 B.C.E.) is generally regarded as the founder of Stoicism (Appiah 2005, 217).

<sup>44</sup> Cicero’s *De Officiis* (*On Obligations*), Seneca’s *De Tranquillitate Animi* (*On Tranquility of Mind*), and Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* are emblematic of Roman-period Stoic thought.



authors' emphasis). Yet, as Appiah notes, this difference is only significant if individuals interact with each other: "Cosmopolitanism imagines a world in which people and novels and music and films and philosophies travel between places where they are understood differently, because people are different and welcome to their difference. Cosmopolitanism can work because there can be common conversations about these shared ideas and objects" (*The Ethics of Identity* 258). These "common conversations" are the core of cosmopolitanism in the early-21st century.

Drawing on the work of Ulf Hannerz and Appiah, I define cosmopolitanism as "an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity" (Hannerz 29) that is put into practice through "common conversations" (Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* 258) across boundaries, and between and among cultural, economic, political, and social groups in a globalized world. In my exploration of cosmopolitanism in these four films, I am also cognizant of Stuart Hall's observation that cosmopolitanism requires that individuals position themselves outside the limits of a single community or approach to art: "[Cosmopolitanism] means the ability to stand outside of having one's life written and scripted by any one community, whether that is a faith or tradition or religion or culture—whatever it might be—and to draw selectively on a variety of discursive meanings" (26). Hall maintains that cosmopolitanism rejects a static worldview and a monolithic ideology of cultural consumption or taste, while emphasizing choice. Yet, despite this ethos of openness, I recognize that cosmopolitanism frequently exemplifies the privileges of cultural access and exclusivity for a limited, economically privileged class that can circulate within and across a range of cultural, economic, and political fields. However, I maintain that cosmopolitanism is not exclusively the realm of the wealthy; rather it is an orientation and practice employed by people across classes, groups, nations, and ethnicities.

The protagonists of these four films are cosmopolitans, albeit with distinct outlooks, skills, socio-economic backgrounds, and with varying degrees of commitment to openness and engaging with others. They inhabit the contemporary cosmopolitan metropolises of New York, Rome, and Santiago. These films depict these cities as spaces of heterogeneous cultural circulation and consumption. In addition to their cosmopolitan settings, the protagonists of these films exemplify Appiah's observations about the diversity of cosmopolitans: "The well-traveled polyglot is as likely to be among the best off-as likely to be found in a shantytown as at the Sorbonne. So cosmopolitanism shouldn't be seen as some exalted attainment: it begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association" (*Cosmopolitanism* xviii-xix). Whereas Gastón and Freddy are economically well-off artists who have lived or live abroad in New York, the orphan Bianca and the working-class Raúl are marginalized characters who live a precarious existence. Notwithstanding their distinct circumstances and class affiliations, these characters are united by their practice of cosmopolitanism through cinephilia and filmmaking.

In her essay "The Decay of Cinema" (1996), Susan Sontag defines cinephilia as "the name of the very specific kind of love that cinema inspired." Lamenting what she perceives as the decline of cinema, Sontag observes that "cinema had apostles" and that "for cinephiles, the movies encapsulated everything." Cinephilia and filmmaking are often intimately bound up with one another. In *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby* they are connected to the porous nature of the films themselves. Cinephilia and filmmaking are manifest in a variety of forms, ranging from the film within a film in *Se arrienda*, Raúl Peralta's desire to fashion himself in the image of the protagonist of *Saturday Night Fever* in *Tony Manero*, Bianca's

interactions with Maciste in *Il Futuro*, and Freddy's creation of the self-reflexive experimental video in *Nasty Baby*. These films present cinephilia and filmmaking as quintessentially cosmopolitan practices which facilitate common conversations.

My emphasis on cosmopolitanism and the representations of cinephilia and filmmaking in these four films challenges the prevailing critical consensus on Chilean art cinema released between 2005 and 2015. Critics describe Chilean cinema from this period as hermetic, inward-looking, and focused on the upper and upper-middle classes. In *Intimidades desencantadas: La poética cinematográfica del dos mil* (2013), Carlos Saavedra describes the art films *Play* (2005), *En la cama* (2005), *Se arrienda* (2005), *El cielo, la tierra y la lluvia* (2008), *La buena vida* (2008), *Navidad* (2009), and *La vida de los peces* (2010) as inward-looking, middle-class films: “En los últimos años la visión cinematográfica dominante ha sido establecida por los gustos y patrones simbólicos de una *clase media* que ha convertido al cine en un espacio de globalización, autoafirmación cultural y exhibicionismo psicoanalítico” (31, author's emphasis; “In recent years the dominant cinematographic vision has been established by symbolic tastes and patterns of a *middle class* that has converted cinema into a space of globalization, cultural self-affirmation and psychoanalytic exhibitionism”). Saavedra maintains that these films comprise a “cine íntimo” (32; “intimate cinema”) that reflects a distinctly anti-cosmopolitan worldview: “Las opciones tomadas y la importancia que se asigna al relato de la intimidad, permite afirmar que este cine nos habla de una sociedad dividida por su incapacidad de dialogar con la diferencia” (37; “The options taken and the importance given to the intimacy narrative, allows one to affirm that this cinema speaks to us of a society divided by its incapacity to dialogue with difference”).

In *Retóricas del cine chileno* (2012), Pablo Corro notes that Chilean cinema is insular to a fault: “Advertimos en el desarrollo del cine chileno durante esta última década un interés

progresivo por los argumentos de menudencias, de asuntos insignificantes” (217; “We find in the development of Chilean cinema during this last decade a progressive interest for leftover plots, about insignificant things”). In a similar vein, Cavallo and Maza (2011) observe that Chilean filmmakers working in the years after 2005 “comparten una preocupación por el espacio íntimo como territorio de conflicto” (15; “share a preoccupation with intimate space as the territory of conflict”). In their 2012 essay, “Políticas de la subjetividad en el ‘novísimo’ cine chileno” (“Politics of Subjectivity in the ‘Novísimo’ Chilean Cinema”), Ximena Póo, Claudio Salinas, and Hans Stange contend that “El cine biográfico chileno de la última década realiza un presentación del sujeto como un individuo diluido, ensimismado y descontextualizado de su época y sus condiciones sociales” (6; “The biographical cinema of the last decade presents the subject as a diluted, self-involved, and decontextualized from his era and social conditions”). And Joanna Page (2017) observes that early-21st-century Chilean films “often remain firmly ensconced in the private spaces of the urban middle classes” (269).

In *Un cine centrífugo: ficciones chilenas 2005-2010* (*A Centrifugal Cinema: Chilean Fictions 2005-2010*, 2013), Carolina Urrutia presents many of the same arguments as Saavedra and Corro about the insularity of early-21st-century Chilean cinema, but she also acknowledges its cosmopolitan elements, albeit with qualifications.<sup>45</sup> Urrutia describes a shift towards a “realismo individual” (41; “individual realism”) that eschews the “marginal” and “protagonistas colectivos” (37; “collective protagonists”) of the films of the Transition for works that center on “la relación de un individuo y su forma de percibir el contexto” (42; “the relation of the

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<sup>45</sup> In *Un cine centrífugo*, Urrutia focuses on fourteen films by the following filmmakers: José Luis Sepúlveda (*El pejesapo*), Carolina Adriaola (*Mitómana*), Elisa Eliash (*Mami te amo*), Camilo Becerra (*Perro muerto*), Pablo Larraín (*Tony Manero* and *Post Mortem*), José “Ché” Sandoval (*Te creís la más linda (pero erís la más puta)*), Alejandro Fernández (*Huacho*), Alicia Scherson (*Play* and *Turistas*), Cristián Jiménez (*Ilusiones ópticas*), José Luis Torres Leiva (*El cielo, la tierra y la lluvia*), Sebastián Lelio (*La sagrada familia*), and Christopher Murray and Pablo Carrera (*Manuel de Ribera*).

individual and the way of perceiving context”). Urrutia emphasizes these films’ focus on the interior lives of their protagonists, what she calls the “protagonismo a la cotidianeidad” (44; “protagonism of the quotidian”). She also notes their “narración cosmopolita” (52; “cosmopolitan narration”), which “le otorga un nuevo protagonismo a lo urbano y a lo doméstico, al objeto—como continente de una caracterización identitaria que no es local, más bien internacional, efecto del consumo, el capitalismo y la globalización, los medios de comunicación” (“gives new protagonism to the urban and the domestic, to the object—as containing a characterization of identity which is not local, but rather international, an effect of consumption, capitalism and globalization, the mass media”). For Urrutia, cosmopolitanism is manifest through the protagonists’ material and cultural consumption habits and their aspirations of socio-economic mobility in a globalized world.

In her chapter, “Escaping National Allegory: Cosmopolitan Virtue in the Generation of 2005” (2010), Leah Kemp points to the cosmopolitan qualities of Alex Bize’s *En la cama* and Sebastián Lelio’s *La sagrada familia* (2005). She argues that the “generation of 2005 . . . posits a different model of citizenship: a mode of interaction characterized by ‘cosmopolitan virtue,’ as Bryan S. Turner calls it; this is a mode of casual engagement on an individual level [that] eschews long-term formal commitments of a social or political nature” (*Citizenship* 271). Although Kemp emphasizes “cosmopolitan virtue” in these films, she explores this aspect in relation to the interactions between characters and their identity as citizens, rather than the relationship between cosmopolitanism and cultural consumption.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> According to Turner, examples of cosmopolitan virtue include “care for other cultures, ironic distance from one’s own traditions, concern for the integrity of cultures in a hybrid world, [and] openness to cross-cultural criticism” (60).

Pablo Marín highlights the diversity of Chilean cinema. In *El cine chileno en democracia (2000-2015)* (*Chilean Cinema in Democracy (2000-2015)*, 2016), published on the occasion of Chile's participation as invited country at the 2016 Valladolid Semana Internacional de Cine (Week of International Cinema), Marín describes the country's film industry in the early-twenty-first century as “un panorama diversificado a nivel generacional, temático y productivo”(14; “a diversified panorama at the generational, thematic, and productive level”). He notes that the variety of these filmmakers is on display at film festivals like Valladolid:

Una diversidad que cada tanto golpea en festivales y que opera en un escenario cambiante. Una cinematografía cohabitada por gente empezó su carrera en los 60 y otros que acaban de debutar en el largometraje. Unos que quieren contar historias a la manera clásica, otros que reformulan el esquema narrativo y algunos que más bien pasan de él. Unos que hacen películas como si fueran la última—parafraseando una recurrente expresión de Raúl Ruiz— y otros que con menos de treinta años tienen ya una carrera, que han ido creciendo en oficio junto a sus equipos. (14; A diversity that every once in a while operates in a changing scene. A cinematography cohabitated by people who began their career in the 60s and others that just debuted a feature. Some who want to tell stories in a classical way, others who reformulate the narrative scheme, and others who if anything do without it. Some who make movies as if it were their last one—paraphrasing a recurring expression by Raúl Ruiz—and others under thirty-years-old who already have a career, who have been growing in craft together with their crews)

The twenty-nine Chilean films exhibited in the retrospective at Valladolid, among them films by Larraín, Scherson, and Silva, reflect the range of filmmaking practices and themes within this small national cinema.<sup>47</sup>

In the chapters that follow I contest the principal critical representation of Chilean cinema between 2005 and 2015 as insular and inward-looking. I argue that early-twenty-first-century Chilean film is diverse, porous, and includes a distinctly cosmopolitan strain exemplified by *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby*. These four films depict cosmopolitanism through the everyday practice of cinephilia, a phenomenon which encompasses the production and consumption of cinema, and the interrelated practice of filmmaking. Central to their portrayal of cinephilia and filmmaking as cosmopolitan practices, these four films incorporate a plethora of cinematic intertexts and self-reflexive metacinematic elements.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter, “A Growing Film Industry and Increased State Investment: Chilean Cinema in Context,” presents a contextual overview of Chile’s economy, politics, society, and cinematographic industry. The first section presents an overview of the economic, social, and political transformations of the immediate post-Transition period. The second section explores the production, distribution, and exhibition contexts of Chile’s film industry, as well as the perennial issue of limited audiences for local cinema. The third section examines the principal government and independent entities dedicated to fomenting cinema. I analyze the two seminal cinema laws passed in 2003 and 2004 and the three principal government entities that support the country’s film industry: the National Council of Culture and the Arts, CORFO, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also highlight the variety of not-for-

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<sup>47</sup> *Dos hermanos (en un lugar de la noche)*, which was written by Fuguet, also screened in the retrospective

profit organizations, production companies, and a novel exhibition agreement that play a central role in the country's film industry and film culture.

The second chapter, "And the Award Goes To: Film Festivals and Early-21st-Century Art Film," examines the connections between these four filmmakers' cosmopolitan identities, their filmmaking practices, and their circulation at film festivals. The first half of the chapter highlights film festivals' multifaceted role as exhibitors, curators, producers, and distributors. I examine three film festival-linked initiatives that have supported numerous Chilean films and which exemplify the symbiotic relationship between art cinema and film festivals: the Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress, and the World Cinema Fund. The second half of the chapter presents a comparative case study of two film festivals that bookend the period under study: the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and the 2015 Berlin Film Festival. These festivals loom large in critical narratives of early-21st-century Chilean art cinema and exemplify the prominent role of film festivals in contemporary art film.

The final four chapters of the dissertation offer close analyses of *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby*, respectively. The third chapter, "Selling Out: The Transition to Democracy and McOndo in Alberto Fuguet's *Se arrienda*," analyzes Fuguet's 2005 feature-length debut through the lenses of culture and economics. The first part of the chapter examines the allegorical qualities of the film. I argue that *Se arrienda* presents a split-frame allegory of the Transition to Democracy period and depicts the phenomena of "family capitalism" (Schneider, *Hierarchical Capitalism* 47) and socio-economic inequality. The second part explores the relationship between Fuguet and Sergio Gomez's McOndo ethos and the protagonist Gastón. I maintain that Gastón personifies the McOndo artist and cinephile. The final part considers the relationship between the primary narrative level of *Se arrienda* and the film-within-the-film, *Las*



*hormigas asesinas*. I analyze the dual narrative levels of *Se arrienda*, which function as “communicating vessels” (Vargas Llosa 2002, 121) that self-reflexively underscore the film’s narrative theme of cinephilia and its generic qualities as art cinema.<sup>48</sup>

The fourth chapter, “Night Fever: Myopic Cinephilia in Pablo Larraín’s *Tony Manero*,” explores Larraín’s 2008 film via its representation of the seventeen-year military dictatorship and the protagonist’s obsession with John Travolta’s character in *Saturday Night Fever*. The first half of the chapter highlights the film’s allegorical representation of Chile during the military dictatorship. I examine how Larraín’s film underscores its allegorical qualities via its temporal setting in early 1979 amid the implementation of significant economic reforms, its depiction of the connection between dance and the nation, its allusion to the Beagle Channel Dispute, its representation of the makeshift family within the boardinghouse-cum-restaurant, and Raúl’s myopic cinephilia. In the second half of the chapter, I analyze the ways in which *Tony Manero* dialogues with John Badham’s 1977 film *Saturday Night Fever*. I highlight both films’ ambiguous relationship to the film musical; draw connections between their working-class cinephile protagonists; and examine how Raúl and Tony utilize violence in their relationships with women.

The fifth chapter, “Cinecittà: The Cinematic City in Alicia Scherson’s *Il Futuro*,” examines the ways in which cinephilia shapes the protagonist’s perception and engagement with Rome in Scherson’s 2013 film. As in Roberto Bolaño’s *Una novelita lumpen* (*A Lumpen Novella*, 2002), the novella that the film is based on, cinema plays a central role in Bianca’s perception of and relationship to the city, which she imagines as a veritable Cinecittà, or Cinema City. The first part of the chapter considers the transnational production contexts of the film and

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<sup>48</sup> Vargas Llosa derives the term “communicating vessels” from André Breton’s 1932 book *Les vases communicants* (*Communicating Vessels*).

Bolaño's novella. The second part presents a comparative analysis of Bolaño's novella and Scherson's film with an emphasis on their representations of class, immigration, and cinephilia. The third part focuses on the symbiotic relationship between Bianca's cinephilia and her interaction with five objects and sites of cinema, analogous to Pierre Nora's "*lieux de mémoire*," or sites of memory (7). I examine how the magazine personality quiz, the television in the siblings' apartment, the video store, the Cinecittà film studio, and Maciste's mansion inform Bianca's perception of Rome as a cosmopolitan city of moving images.

The final chapter, "Labor of Love: Satire and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism in Sebastián Silva's *Nasty Baby*," considers the self-reflexive and satiric depiction of cosmopolitanism in Silva's 2015 film. The first part of the chapter explores the parallels between the figure of the expatriate, family, and cosmopolitanism. I argue that the film depicts Freddy's family as a microcosm of cosmopolitan practice and its limits. The second part analyzes the "Nasty Baby" experimental video and performance piece. I maintain that this artwork represents a self-reflexive and satiric portrait of cosmopolitanism, filmmaking, and the film itself. The final part examines the connections between *Nasty Baby* and Roman Polanski's 1968 horror film *Rosemary's Baby*. I see Polanski's film as a fundamental intertext of *Nasty Baby*, and I highlight the multiple cinematic elements these two works share in common.

## 1. A Growing Film Industry and Increased State Investment: Chilean Cinema in Context

Between 2005 and 2015, Chile and its film industry underwent significant transformations. In August 2005, a series of constitutional reforms brought about an end to the Transition to Democracy Period (1988-2005). Between 2005 and 2015, the government implemented economic, political, and social reforms in areas ranging from civil unions and electoral representation. Simultaneous with these reforms, Chile's film industry developed and matured. The state codified and increased its investment in cinema, most notably through the Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes (National Council of Culture and the Arts or CNCA), the Corporación de Fomento de la Producción de Chile (Chilean Economic Development Agency or CORFO), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Alongside these state organs, a variety of not-for-profit and for-profit private organizations emerged as important resources for Chilean film and film culture. These organizations often worked in concert with the state to finance and promote cinema. Finally, a novel 2013 agreement between a range of stakeholders in Chile's film industry provided domestic films increased access to exhibition at local multiplexes.

### 1.1. Chile after the Transition to Democracy: Consolidation and Reform

Chile is represented with varying degrees of intensity in the four films analyzed in this dissertation. These four films cover distinct historical periods, demographic movements, and socio-economic elements that mark recent Chilean history. Although *Il Futuro* and *Nasty Baby* refer to Chile obliquely or not at all, they reflect the experiences of tens of thousands of Chileans living abroad. *Se arrienda* and *Tony Manero* offer more explicit and allegorical representations of the nation. *Se arrienda* presents an allegory of Chile during the Transition to Democracy through the lenses of culture and economics. And *Tony Manero* depicts the recent history and

legacies of political repression of the Pinochet dictatorship through the lens of a working-class artist and cinephile obsessed with *Saturday Night Fever*.

Between 2005 and 2015, Chile's democracy underwent a process of consolidation and reform. The period was marked by a series of political, social, and economic reforms that restored civilian control over the military, broadened the country's social safety net, and expanded civil rights protections. The political scientist Carlos Huneeus describes Chile's political institutions between 1990 and 2014 as a "democracia semisoberana" (54; "semisovereign democracy"), a political system constrained by the institutional legacies of authoritarianism, low political participation, the marginalization of political parties, the incestuous relationship between business and political interests, a politics of consensus, and the prominent role of experts and technocrats.<sup>49</sup> Huneeus maintains that Chile's democracy is semisovereign:

por tener componentes institucionales que limitan la autoridad de los órganos elegidos por el pueblo—el Congreso y el presidente—, reforzados por algunas decisiones de las élites, que toleraron estas limitaciones e impusieron otras. Este tipo de democracia se caracteriza, además, por su escasa disposición a las reformas, ya que su diseño institucional estuvo orientado a asegurar su continuidad. (54; for having institutional components that limit the authority of the organs elected by the people—Congress and the President—, reinforced by some decisions by elites, who tolerate these limits and impose others. This type of democracy is characterized, additionally, by its scant disposition for reforms, given that its institutional design was oriented to ensure its continuity)

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<sup>49</sup> See Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany: The Growth of a Semisovereign State* (371-73).

Huneus points to four “singularidades de la democratización” (43; “singularities of democratization”) that mark this period: the Constitution of 1980; Pinochet’s positions as leader of the army from 1990-1998 and senator-for-life from 1998-2002, after the return to multiparty democracy in 1990; the continuation of the neoliberal economic model imposed by the military dictatorship; and the concentration of power among political elites (43-46). Huneus argues that these institutional elements were reinforced by a series of interrelated “decisiones estratégicas” (46; “strategic decisions”) taken by political elites, namely, the equation of economic growth with political legitimacy; the forging of a politics of consensus, especially in economic matters; and the prominent role of experts in designing and implementing government policy (46-50).

Notwithstanding these elements of continuity and the dominant role of political and economic elites, Huneus maintains that representations of Chile’s democracy as a homogeneous “democracia de consenso” (54; “democracy of consensus”) are inadequate. He points to the investigation and prosecution of human rights abuses by successive governments since 1990 as illustrative of the “aplicación limitada” (53-54; “limited application”) of consensus in Chilean politics during this period.<sup>50</sup> According to Huneus, Chile’s semisovereign democracy has resulted in perpetually anemic political parties, weak civil society organizations, low electoral participation, and profound mistrust of political institutions and politicians (16-17). These elements of semisovereign democracy, particularly in the economic sphere, persisted even after the implementation of a series of landmark constitutional reforms in August 2005 that brought about the end of the Transition.

Between 2005 and 2015, elements of Chile’s semisovereign democratic model gradually

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<sup>50</sup> The investigation and prosecution of human rights violations during the dictatorship initially faced strong opposition. According to the Chilean Ministry of the Interior, as of December 2015, 344 people have been sentenced for human rights violations committed during the seventeen-year military dictatorship. See Human Rights Watch, “Chile Events of 2015.”

moved away from a “modelo consensual” (Ruiz 20; “model of consensus”) and towards a more representative and responsive democracy. This period began with a series of fundamental reforms to the 1980 Constitution, the most enduring institutional legacy of the military government.<sup>51</sup> In August 2005, Congress passed Organic Constitutional Law 20.050, which restored full civilian control over the armed forces and circumscribed the role of the military in the political sphere. Additional reforms reduced the presidential term limit from six to four years and phased out nine appointed seats in the Senate.<sup>52</sup> After the passage of this legislation, President Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) declared that the reforms marked the definitive elimination of authoritarian enclaves: “Ahora podemos decir que la transición en Chile ha concluido. Ahora tenemos un cuerpo constitucional que está acorde con la tradición histórica de Chile y lo más importante, un cuerpo constitucional que fue aceptado por la unanimidad en el Congreso Nacional” (“Presidente Lagos: Reformas constitucionales”; “Now we can say that the transition in Chile has concluded. We now have a constitution that is in keeping with Chile’s historical tradition and most importantly, a constitution that was accepted unanimously in the National Congress”).<sup>53</sup> The center-left Concertación coalition hailed the reforms as a landmark step

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<sup>51</sup> Brian Loveman observes that the 1980 Constitution “enshrined the notion of ‘protected democracy’” (339) and “officially made the armed forces a dominant political force in Chile” (343).

<sup>52</sup> See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional, “Reforma constitucional que introduce diversas modificaciones a la constitución política de la República” and *The Economist*, “Chile: Democratic at last.”

<sup>53</sup> Ricardo Lagos trained as a lawyer and received a Ph.D. in economics from Duke. He was nominated as Allende’s ambassador to the Soviet Union, but his confirmation never took place because of the military coup. He lived in Argentina and the United States after the coup. He returned to Chile in 1978. He has worked as an economist and academic. He briefly served as president of the Alianza Democrática (Democratic Alliance), a coalition of opposition parties. During a television interview on April 25, 1988 on the television program *Cara a cara* Lagos faced the cameras and addressed viewers directly. Referencing the upcoming plebiscite, Lagos denounced Pinochet: “ahora le promete al país otros ocho años con tortura, con asesinato, con violación de derechos humanos. Me parece inadmisibile que un chileno tenga tanta ambición de poder, de pretender estar veinte cinco años en poder” (“Ricardo Lagos y el dedo”; “now he promises the country eight more years of torture, murder, violation of human rights. It is unacceptable that a Chilean would hold so much ambition for power, to want to spend twenty-five years in power”). In 1987, Lagos founded the Partido por la Democracia (Party for Democracy). He served as Minister for Education (1990-1994) under President Patricio Aylwin and Minister of Public Works (1994-2000) under President Eduard Frei Ruiz-Tagle. He was elected to the presidency in 2000 with the support of the center-left Concertación coalition and occupied the office from 2000 to 2006.

towards democracy. In a manifesto published in *La Nación*, the official government newspaper, on July 29, 2005, the coalition affirmed the beginning of a new stage in Chile's democracy: "Se ha cerrado una larga fase de transición a la democracia y, al finalizar el gobierno del Presidente Lagos, se está abriendo una nueva etapa" ("Manifiesto Político Programático de la Concertación"; "The long phase of the transition to democracy has come to a close, and at the end of the government of President Lagos, a new period is opening"). Lagos and the Concertación's self-congratulatory rhetoric aside, these constitutional reforms marked the end of the country's political process of Transition to Democracy and the beginning of a new political phase. Like the Transition, which "siguió un camino de reforma" (Huneus 155; "followed a path of reform"), the immediate post-Transition period was not marked by rupture, but rather by sustained movement towards increased democratic consolidation and reform, as well as the participation of civil society on a scale not seen since the 1980s.<sup>54</sup>

During her first term as President (2006-2010), Michelle Bachelet built on Lagos's constitutional reforms, deepening the transparency and responsiveness of Chile's democracy.<sup>55</sup> Bachelet was elected in 2006 as part of the Concertación coalition.<sup>56</sup> Her election was a historic moment for gender equality, as it marked the first time the traditionally conservative and

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<sup>54</sup> See Huneus (67-110) and Loveman (348-53).

<sup>55</sup> Bachelet is a trained physician. Her father, General Alberto Bachelet, died of a heart attack while under military detention in 1974. In 1975, Bachelet and her mother were detained and tortured by the military government's intelligence services in Villa Grimaldi, an infamous detention center. She went into exile with her family in 1975, living first in Australia and then in East Germany. She studied medicine at Humboldt University in East Berlin. She returned to Chile in 1979, where she completed her medical studies. She served as Minister of Health (2000-2002) and Minister of Defense (2002-2004) under President Lagos. After her first presidential term, Bachelet served as the director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2010-2013).

<sup>56</sup> Bachelet and Lagos's presidencies coincided with a shift towards the left in Latin American politics. Between 2002 and 2007 a number of left-wing presidents were elected, including Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil in 2002; Néstor Kirchner in Argentina in 2003; Evo Morales in Bolivia in 2005; Rafael Correa in Ecuador in 2006; and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina in 2007. These elections occurred as Hugo Chávez (2002-2013) and Fidel Castro (1959-2011), two of the country's longest ruling left-wing authoritarians, remained in power.

majority-Catholic country had elected a female president and single mother.<sup>57</sup> In her first annual presidential address on May 21, 2006, Bachelet reflected on the significance of her election: “Estoy aquí como mujer, representando la derrota a la exclusión de que fuimos objeto tanto tiempo. Hoy es la hora de incluir en nuestro desarrollo a aquellos ciudadanos y ciudadanas que sufren otro tipo de exclusiones” (“Mensaje Presidencial” 1; “I am here as a woman, representing the defeat of exclusion, to which we were subjected for so long. Now is the time to include in our development men and women citizens who suffer other types of exclusions”).

During her first administration, Bachelet and Congress enacted significant political reforms, including universal voter registration in 2009<sup>58</sup> and a Freedom of Information Act in 2010.<sup>59</sup> Congress also passed a series of social and economic reforms including “Chile Crece Contigo” (“Chile Grows with You”), a social policy initiative, established in 2006 and codified into law in 2009, which offers developmental support for children from poor families, encompassing prenatal care, medical care, and financial support for attending day care and early education programs<sup>60</sup>; the Ley de Subvención Escolar Preferencial (Law of Preferential Education Subsidies) in 2008, which grants primary schools additional funding for enrolling low-income students (in 2011 the program was expanded to secondary schools)<sup>61</sup>; a Pension Reform law in 2008, which created a public pension system for low-income elderly Chileans<sup>62</sup>; an equal pay law in 2009<sup>63</sup>; the Ley General de Educación (General Education Law) in 2009,

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<sup>57</sup> According to a 2014 Pew Research Center study, 64 percent of Chileans identify themselves as Catholic. 17 percent identify themselves as Protestants (“Religion in Latin America”).

<sup>58</sup> This law was a political compromise between the left and right. While Congress passed universal voter registration, it simultaneously eliminated the obligatory voting requirement for registered voters. See Huneus 35.

<sup>59</sup> See De Ferrari and Sahuena, “Un año de la Ley de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública” and Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile “Ley Sobre Acceso a la Información Pública.”

<sup>60</sup> See Dolan, “‘Chile Grows with You’ policy promotes early childhood development.”

<sup>61</sup> See OECD, “Education Policy Outlook 2013 Chile” and Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, “Establece Ley de Subvención Escolar Preferencial.”

<sup>62</sup> See Gallardo, “Chile’s private pension system adds public payouts for poor.”

<sup>63</sup> See *El Mercurio*, “Ya hay ley de igualdad salarial.”



which provides increased regulatory oversight, limits discrimination in the admissions process, reforms school curriculum, and reduces the length of primary schooling from eight to six years and increases the length of secondary education from four to six years<sup>64</sup>; and established the Ministry of the Environment in 2010. Additionally, the government created two sovereign wealth funds: the Pension Reserve Fund in 2006<sup>65</sup> and the Economic and Social Stabilization Fund in 2007.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to these reform efforts, Bachelet's first term was marked by a series of political and social conflicts, most notably the 2006 Pingüino Student Protests<sup>67</sup>—which played an important role in pressuring Congress to pass the 2009 education law—and protests over the problem-filled launch of a new public transit system in Santiago in 2007.<sup>68</sup> On February 27, 2010, at the end of Bachelet's first term, a massive earthquake and tsunami struck south-central Chile. The disaster left more than five hundred people dead and displaced tens of thousands.<sup>69</sup> The rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of this natural disaster coincided with the transfer of power between Bachelet and President-elect Piñera, adding strain to the first political shift from the left to the right since the country's return to democracy in 1990.<sup>70</sup>

The election of Sebastián Piñera, the candidate of center-right *Coalición por el Cambio* (Coalition for Change), in 2010 epitomized the stability of Chile's democratic institutions.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> The General Education Law replaced the military government's 1990 *Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza*. See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, "Establece la Ley General de Educación."

<sup>65</sup> See Ministry of Finance, "Pension Reserve Fund."

<sup>66</sup> The Economic and Social Stabilization Fund replaced the Copper Stabilization Fund, which was established in 1985. See Ministry of Finance, "Economic and Social Stabilization Fund."

<sup>67</sup> See Donoso, "Dynamics of Change in Chile: Explaining the Emergence of the 2006 *Pingüino* Movement."

<sup>68</sup> See *BBC News*, "Purge amid Chile transport chaos."

<sup>69</sup> The fallout from this earthquake is the subject of Sebastián Lelio's film *El año del tigre* (2011), which was shot in the areas affected by the quake and tsunami. See Cruz Roja, "Terremoto Chile 2010: Memoria a dos años del inicio de la operación" and USGS, "Earthquake summary."

<sup>70</sup> See Barrionuevo, "Chile Leader Enters Changed Political Landscape."

<sup>71</sup> Piñera is a billionaire academic, businessman, economist, and politician. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard. Piñera's father served as ambassador to Belgium and the United Nations under President Eduardo Frei. Before his election to the presidency, Piñera was the owner of the Chilevisión television channel. He also founded

Piñera was the first right-wing president elected since the return to democracy in 1990. His four-year term was characterized by free market economic policies and trade liberalization. During his presidency, Chile's joined the Pacific Alliance, a regional trade organization co-founded by Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.<sup>72</sup> On the political front, a key change to voting law was passed in 2012, which abolished mandatory voting.<sup>73</sup> Several social reforms were implemented during Piñera's presidency, including the creation of the Ministry of Social Development in 2010<sup>74</sup>; a law of equality for persons with disabilities in 2010<sup>75</sup>; the passage of an anti-human trafficking law in 2011; the passage of the Ley de Calidad y Equidad de la Educación (Quality and Equity Education Law) in 2011, which provided resources to professionalize school leadership, increases the autonomy of principals, and increased financial resources for professional development of school leaders and management<sup>76</sup>; the passage of a tertiary education scholarship program Becas de Educación Superior (Higher Education Scholarships) in 2012, which expanded higher education scholarships<sup>77</sup>; the creation of the Superintendency of Education, which audits and ensures the compliance of schools with laws and regulations in 2012<sup>78</sup>; and the implementation of an anti-discrimination law in 2012.<sup>79</sup>

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Bancard, a company that played a key role in introducing credit cards to Chile. Piñera is a member of the center-right Renovación Nacional (National Renewal) party. He was elected to a second presidential term in 2017 under the Chile Vamos coalition and assumed the Presidency in 2018.

<sup>72</sup> See *The Economist*, "Latin American geoeconomics: A continental divide."

<sup>73</sup> See Bodzin, "Chile drops mandatory vote."

<sup>74</sup> See *La Nación*, "Piñera firma proyecto para nuevo ministerio de Desarrollo Social."

<sup>75</sup> See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, "Establece Normas Sobre Igualdad de Oportunidades e Inclusión Social de Personas con Discapacidad."

<sup>76</sup> See OECD, "Education Policy Outlook 2013 Chile" (11) and Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, "Calidad y Equidad de la Educación."

<sup>77</sup> See OECD, "Education Policy Outlook 2013 Chile" (9) and Ministerio de Educación, "Beneficios Estudiantiles Educación Superior."

<sup>78</sup> See OECD, "Education Policy Outlook 2013 Chile" (15) and Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, "Sistema Nacional de Aseguramiento de la Calidad."

<sup>79</sup> The anti-discrimination law was passed following the murder of Daniel Zamudio, a young gay man from Santiago. For more on the anti-discrimination law see "Chile: Freedom in the World 2014. For context on the death of Zamudio, see Long, "Daniel Zamudio: The homophobic murder that changed Chile."

Despite a surge in popularity following the rescue of thirty-three miners trapped underground at the San José mine for sixty-nine days in 2010, Piñera's administration was confronted by unrest among a variety of civil society groups during the remainder of his term in office.<sup>80</sup> Protests by Mapuche indigenous groups began in 2010 and continued beyond 2015.<sup>81</sup> These indigenous groups demanded land redistribution, constitutional recognition, and an end to abusive practices by the government and large landowners.<sup>82</sup> The eruption of nationwide student protests in 2011 challenged Piñera's political mandate and brought the issues of entrenched economic and social inequalities to the forefront of political debate. Tens of thousands of students, educators, and parents took to the streets, demanding an overhaul of the country's education system beset by structural inequalities, lacking in quality control, and populated with numerous for-profit institutions of higher education.<sup>83</sup> The defining image of these protests was a dance performance on June 24, 2011 opposite the Moneda Presidential Palace, in which hundreds of students, dressed as zombies, moved in sync to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" (1983).

After campaigning on a platform of economic, political and social reform, Bachelet was elected to the Presidency for a second time in 2013 and assumed office in 2014. In the first two years of her second term, the Bachelet administration and Congress implemented a series of significant political, economic, and social reforms. In 2014, Congress passed a law granting the right to vote to Chileans living abroad.<sup>84</sup> The following year, Congress passed a landmark electoral reform law, which overhauled the country's electoral system, abolishing the binomial system established by the 1980 Constitution, and requiring that at least 40 percent of candidates

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<sup>80</sup> For an account of the miners' ordeal see Tobar, "Sixty-Nine Days."

<sup>81</sup> See Barrionuevo, "A Year Out of the Dark in Chile, but Still Trapped."

<sup>82</sup> See Waldstein, "Indigenous Group Plants its Flag in Copa América."

<sup>83</sup> See Barrionuevo, "With Kiss-Ins and Dances, Young Chileans Push for Reform" and Del Campo, "Theatricalities of Dissent: Human Rights, Memory, and the Student Movement in Chile."

<sup>84</sup> See Huneeus (35).

be women.<sup>85</sup> That same year, Congress enacted a tax reform law that raised corporate taxes, and closed tax loopholes.<sup>86</sup> On the social front, Francisco Huenchumilla, the intendente (governor) of the Arucanía region and of Mapuche origin, issued an historic apology on behalf of the government to the Mapuche for the seizure of their lands.<sup>87</sup> And in 2015, amid ongoing student protests and civil society unrest, Congress passed the 2015 Ley de Inclusión Escolar (School Inclusion Law), which progressively phases out state funding for-profit schools, eliminates student co-payments, provides protections against discrimination in the admissions process, and increases subsidies for poor students.<sup>88</sup> That same year civil unions were legalized.<sup>89</sup> And in October 2015, Bachelet announced a multi-year timeline for drafting and enacting a new constitution to replace the 1980 Constitution, one of the enduring legacies of the Pinochet regime.<sup>90</sup> However, after the election of Piñera in 2017, the fate of this initiative is uncertain.

In addition to ongoing unrest among students and indigenous groups, the first two years of Bachelet's second-term were marked by a series of financial and political scandals that implicated members of the country's political elite and stymied her administration's agenda of reform. These scandals stood out in a country where citizens perceive limited corruption in the public sector.<sup>91</sup> In 2014 the "Pentagate" scandal ensnared political and business figures from both the right and left.<sup>92</sup> The following year, another high-profile scandal, referred to in the press

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<sup>85</sup> See *The Economist*, "Electoral reform in Chile: Tie breaker."

<sup>86</sup> See The World Bank, "Chile Overview."

<sup>87</sup> See *El Mundo*, "La primera medida de Bachelet: Pedir perdón a los mapuches."

<sup>88</sup> See Gobierno de Chile, "Inclusion Law: The key changes to come with the new legislation" and Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, "Ley de inclusión escolar."

<sup>89</sup> See *BBC News*, "Chile civil union law comes into force."

<sup>90</sup> See *The Economist*, "Bello: Damage control in Chile" (36).

<sup>91</sup> According to Transparency International, Chile ranked 23rd on its 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, a measure of the perceived levels of public corruption. Among Latin American countries, only Uruguay was seen as less corrupt by its citizens (*Corruption Perceptions Index 2015* 6-7).

<sup>92</sup> This case involved executives of the Penta Group, one of Chile's largest financial holding companies, which has ties to prominent right-wing businessmen and politicians. In addition to Penta executives, members of Chile's Internal Revenue Service and politicians affiliated with the far-right Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) party

as the “Caso Caval” (“Caval Case”) embroiled the Bachelet administration.<sup>93</sup> A third scandal involving payments by the mining conglomerate Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile (SQM) revealed the vast scope of corruption and collusion among political and business elites.<sup>94</sup> In the wake of these and other scandals, Bachelet and the government’s approval ratings plummeted, and she reshuffled her cabinet.<sup>95</sup> However, by 2015, numerous politicians from the left and right were caught up in a growing web of scandals,<sup>96</sup> which added to the profound distrust of Chilean elites among citizens.<sup>97</sup>

These piecemeal political reforms were implemented amid an economic slowdown. Chile experienced moderate economic growth (2005-2008) followed by a brief recession amid the global economic crisis (2008-2009), and a return to mild growth amid weak commodity prices and sluggish global growth (2009-2015). The economist Ben Ross Schneider describes Chile’s current economic model, which took shape under the military government in the early 1980s, as “hierarchical capitalism,” a distinct model of capitalism established in the early 1980s under the Pinochet dictatorship (4). Schneider observes that Chile’s “hierarchical market econom[y]” (21) is structured around the allocative principle of hierarchy; is dominated by family-owned-and-operated conglomerates and multinational corporations; is characterized by low labor skills and atomized labor relations; and is centered on the production of commodities and low-complexity

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were also indicted and jailed as a result of the investigation. See Bonnefoy, “Executives are Jailed in Chile Finance Scandal.”

<sup>93</sup> The Caval Case involved Bachelet’s son, Sebastián Dávalos, and his wife, Natalia Compagnon, co-owner of the small firm Caval, which Compagnon co-owned with the businessman Mauricio Valero. Compagnon and Valero were indicted on charges of tax evasion and influence trafficking related to a ten million dollar loan. See Bonnefoy, “Daughter-in-Law of Chile’s President Faces Corruption Charge.”

<sup>94</sup> SQM is controlled by Pinochet’s former son-in-law.

<sup>95</sup> See Bonnefoy, “President of Chile Removes Five From Cabinet in a Shake-Up.”

<sup>96</sup> See Bonnefoy, “As Graft Cases in Chile Multiply, a ‘Gag Law’ Angers Journalists.”

<sup>97</sup> In a survey released by the polling firm Gfk Adimark, December 2015 registered the lowest approval rating (tied with August 2015) of Bachelet’s two terms, with 24 percent approving of her job as President and 71 percent disapproving. According to the poll, approval of the government stood at 22 percent in December 2015 (“Encuesta: Evaluación Gestión de Gobierno Diciembre 2015” 11-17).

manufacturing (20-40).<sup>98</sup> Between 2005 and 2015, Chile's economy grew moderately, although the distribution of wealth was highly unequal. GDP growth from 2005 to 2015 averaged 4 percent<sup>99</sup>, less than the 5.5 annualized GDP growth from 1990 to 2005 (Ffrench Davis 270). Drawing on fiscal reserves set aside in the Chile's newly created sovereign wealth funds, the country weathered the 2008-2009 global economic crisis, sustaining a contraction of -1.6% GDP growth in 2009, the only year GDP growth was negative during this period. Economic growth returned to moderate levels between 2010 and 2013 but slowed between 2014 and 2015.<sup>100</sup> Chile's stable economic growth since 1990 and its position as a Latin American business and financial hub was confirmed by its accession to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 2010 at the end of Bachelet's first term.<sup>101</sup>

Despite the economic reforms, Chile remained deeply divided between the beneficiaries of a globalized economy and those at its margins. The share of income held by the top 10 and 20 percent of earners reflects the country's high level of socio-economic inequality. The top decile of income earners accounted for 38.4 percent of income in 2006 and 38 percent in 2015 (The World Bank, "Income share held by highest 10%"). In 2011, Chile ranked as the most unequal of

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<sup>98</sup> In the 2000s, the twenty largest firms in Chile accounted for half of GDP (Schneider citing Waissbluth 2011, 37).

<sup>99</sup> My calculation based on data from the World Bank.

<sup>100</sup> This growth was undermined by the decline price of copper during the second-half of this eleven-year period. In 2015, copper accounted for nearly 80 percent of exports to China, Chile's largest trading partner, and about half of Chile's total exports ("OECD Economic Surveys: Chile," 2-12). The price of this mineral commodity peaked in 2011 and declined significantly in the years to 2015 ("Copper and other metals' prices").

<sup>101</sup> In a December 15, 2009 speech to the OECD Council announcing their invitation to Chile to join the organization, the OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría remarked: "We look forward to Chile taking its place among the OECD members. This is a place where Chile belongs, out of sheer merit. For nearly two decades Chile has developed a strong set of policies for democratic consolidation and sound economic growth. Chile is increasingly well connected to the global economy. Chilean GDP has been growing at an average of 5 and a half percent per year for the last twenty years. During the last two decades, successive Chilean governments have combined a strong commitment to sustainable macroeconomic policies with market-oriented structural reforms and hard work to reduce poverty and inequality. Prudent fiscal policies, including putting aside the copper bonanza 'for a rainy day', enabled Chile today to introduce significant stimulus to address the effects of the economic crisis and support aggregate demand and employment. Chile is also engaged in a continuous effort to reform its institutions. Chilean expertise will enrich the OECD on key policy issues" ("Invitation to Chile to join the OECD").

the OECD countries as measured by the Gini coefficient (OECD, *In it Together* 56). In 2015, only Mexico was more unequal than Chile among OECD countries as measured by Gini coefficient (OECD, “Income inequality”). According to estimates by The World Bank, Chile’s Gini coefficient measured 48.2 in 2006 and 47.7 in 2015, making it more unequal than its neighbor Argentina and the United States.<sup>102</sup> Public expenditures on programs with a redistributive effect remained limited. In 2005, Chile spent 8.7 percent of GDP on social expenditures. Although the Chilean government’s spending on social programs grew to 11.2 percent in 2015, it remained well below the OECD average of 21 percent of GDP in 2015 (OECD, “Social spending”).<sup>103</sup>

Human development indicators similarly reflect the upward trend of Chile’s economic growth and the broad improvement in the quality of life of Chilean citizens. While social and economic inequality remained high, poverty decreased substantially. In 2015, 11.7 percent of Chileans were living below the national poverty line, a marked decrease from 2006, when 29.1 percent of the population lived in poverty (The World Bank, “Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines”).<sup>104</sup> Meanwhile, life expectancy at birth increased from 77.8 years in 2005 to 79.3 years in 2015 (The World Bank, “Life expectancy at birth”). The rise in the number of students in higher education was another significant indicator of the country’s development over this period. The gross enrollment ratio for tertiary education, a measure of the percentage of college-age students enrolled in institutions of higher learnings, increased from 48.7 percent in 2005 to

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<sup>102</sup> The Gini coefficient, expressed here in normalized index form, represents the equality of distribution of wealth in a given economy. The higher the coefficient, the more unequally wealth is distributed. Argentina’s Gini coefficient measured 46.6 in 2006 and 41.4 in 2014, and the United States’ Gini coefficient measured 41.1 in 2007 and 41.0 in 2013 (The World Bank, “Gini index”).

<sup>103</sup> The OECD defines social spending as follows “Social expenditure comprises cash benefits, direct in-kind provision of goods and services, and tax breaks with social purposes. Benefits may be targeted at low-income households, the elderly, disabled, sick, unemployed, or young persons. To be considered ‘social’, programmes have to involve either redistribution of resources across households or compulsory participation” (“Social spending”).

<sup>104</sup> In 1990, Chile’s poverty rate stood at 38.6 percent (“Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines”).

88.3 percent in 2015 (The World Bank, “Gross enrolment ratio”). The decrease in poverty, increases in life expectancy, and the growth of tertiary education enrolment point to a sustained improvement in the lives of Chileans.

From 2005 and 2015 Chile’s democracy continued a slow process of consolidation that began during the Transition period. The country sustained moderate economic growth, socio-economic inequality remained high, and human development indicators markedly improved. As we shall see, the tension between the country’s economic growth and inequality are issues explored in *Se arrienda*. And the legacy of the Pinochet dictatorship in post-Transition Chile is a central theme of *Tony Manero*. Parallel with these economic, political, and social developments, the Chilean state codified and increased its support for cinema. In the section that follows, I consider the multifaceted nature of the Chilean government’s cultural policy towards cinema and the development of the country’s film industry.

## 1.2. A Growing Cinematographic Industry

Parallel with this process of reform and democratic consolidation, Chile’s film industry underwent a process of maturation, growth, and diversification. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of new Chilean films—encompassing Chilean productions and co-productions—released in local cinemas increased significantly over the Transition period. Yet even as the number of Chilean films released annually grew, local audiences for Chilean productions and co-productions remained limited and uneven. In this section and the one that follows, I illustrate how the confluence of these internal and external phenomena established fertile conditions for the flourishing of Chile’s cinematographic industry. In this section, I examine the growth in local film production and the limited domestic audiences for Chilean films. Additionally, I consider



the anxiety of critics who lament the disjuncture between production output and audience size for Chilean cinema in the early-21st century and changes in ways in which cinema is consumed in Chile. In the following section, I analyze the legislation, organizations, and initiatives that shaped the development of the country's cinematographic industry between 2005 and 2015.

Chile's film industry—comprised of state and independent organization, as well as filmmakers, cultural bureaucrats, producers, distributors, exhibitors, and others in the business of cinema—is small. The Brazilian critic Paulo Antonio Paranaguá observes that Chile's cinematographic industry is characterized by “producción intermitente” (23; “intermittent production”).<sup>105</sup> Although, being a small cinema is not always an impediment to growth or prestige, countries with a small film industries account for a limited portion of the global film industry, especially in economic terms. Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie observe that in small country like Chile, whose population measured 17.8 million in 2015 (The World Bank, “Population”), the limited size of the domestic cinematographic industry magnifies the push and pull of global and external forces: “In different ways the smallness of small national cinemas has ensured that the effects of the external forces that structure and drive the global system are felt all the more keenly, a constant reminder of the predicament of small nations as actors in the global economy” (17). Connected to this question of size, Hjort and Petrie emphasize the “simultaneous inward/outward impulse” of small national film industries and cultures (16). I believe that the “smallness” and “inward/outward impulse” of Chile's cinematographic industry has had both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, filmmakers and films

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<sup>105</sup> Paranaguá includes Chile in this category with Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia. He notes that these Latin American countries share “brotos productivos más o menos largos” (23; “more or less sustained productive bursts”) and “tentativas o ilusiones industriales” (“industrial attempts or illusions”). Paranaguá's taxonomy is comparative. He observes that Chile's film industry lies between Latin American countries with significant local cinematographic industries, like Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, and peripheral ones like those of Central America, the Caribbean (excluding Cuba), French Guyana, Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay (23-24).

struggle to attract large audiences at home, even as the state has assumed more active role in supporting the film industry. On the other, filmmakers have sought audiences at film festivals across the world, where they also garner awards and critical acclaim.

The film industry comprises a small part of Chile's service sector. Services are the largest single sector of Chile's economy as a portion of gross domestic product.<sup>106</sup> Services accounted for 55.2 percent of GDP in 2005, growing to 63.3 percent of GDP in 2015 (The World Bank, "Services, etc., value added (% of GDP)"). A report published by the National Council of Culture and the Arts titled *Mapeo de las industrias creativas en Chile: caracterización y dimensionamiento* (*Map of Creative Industries in Chile: Character and Dimensions*, 2014), provides a snapshot of the cultural sector and the cinematographic industry between 2005 and 2013. The report analyzes the impact of domestic cultural industries, which include artisanship, visual arts, photography, theater, dance, circus arts, publishing, music, cinema, architecture, design, and news media (32). According to the report, in 2011 there were 31,351 "empresas culturales" ("culture-related businesses") which accounted for 3.3 percent of the total number of businesses in Chile (35). An estimated 409,406 Chileans held "oficios creativos" ("creative jobs") in 2011, representing 6 percent of the country's workforce (36). The audiovisual sector, defined as production, distribution, and exhibition of cinema, is a relatively small part of the cultural industries, representing only 1.2 percent of total sales within the culture sector in 2011 (51-52). Although Chile's cinematographic industry comprises a small part of the culture sector, it is one of the more visible industries within the economy, attracting significant government investment and garnering substantial cultural prestige.

According to the *Mapeo de las industrias creativas en Chile* report, Chile's audiovisual

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<sup>106</sup> Chile's second and third largest economic sectors are agriculture and industry, respectively.

sector is moderately diversified. It is home to variety of not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, including independent art house cinemas, local production companies, and multinational multiplex chains. In 2011, there were 508 companies linked to the audiovisual sector in Chile.<sup>107</sup> 440 of these enterprises were associated with production, forty-eight with distribution, and twenty with exhibition (93).<sup>108</sup> In 2011, the audiovisual sector employed 4,470 workers under formal employment contracts in 2005, a number which decreased to 3,225 in 2011 (60).<sup>109</sup> Although the audiovisual sector employs a relatively small number of workers, film and media studies are popular majors at universities. In 2011, there were twenty-one higher education programs related to the audiovisual sector (film and television). And in 2012, more than six thousand students were enrolled in audiovisual-related programs (202-03).

From 2005 and 2015, the number of Chilean films released in cinema grew substantially over the preceding Transition period.<sup>110</sup> In Chile, “co-production” is a category codified into law. The country’s legal code draws a distinction between national productions and co-productions, and “international” co-productions. Law 19.981, known as the “Ley Sobre Fomento Audiovisual” (“Law of Audiovisual Stimulus,” 2004) defines “obra audiovisual de producción nacional” (“national audiovisual production”) as “Las obras producidas para su exhibición o su explotación comercial por productores o empresas audiovisuales de nacionalidad chilena, como

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<sup>107</sup> In 2011 there were more than three hundred self-employed workers in the field of cinema (*Mapeo* 93).

<sup>108</sup> Total sales for these companies totaled 66,201,918,345 Chilean pesos in 2011 (*Mapeo* 96).

<sup>109</sup> These workers are referred to in the report as “trabajadores dependientes” (*Mapeo* 61; “dependent workers”).

<sup>110</sup> Productions that operate outside of the country’s cultural-legal framework occupy the separate category of a “coproducción internacional” (“Ley de Fomento Audiovisual,” Article 3, Section D; “international co-production”). These are works “realizadas en cualquier medio y formato, de cualquier duración, por dos o más productores de dos o más países, en base a un contrato de coproducción estipulado al efecto entre las empresas co-productoras” (“Ley de Fomento Audiovisual,” Article 3, Section D; “realized in any medium or format, of any duration, by two or more producers from two or more countries, on the basis of a contract of co-production stipulated to that effect between the co-production companies”). International co-productions are often not eligible for funding from state organs like the CNCA, because they operate outside of state-sanctioned co-production agreements. Notwithstanding the legal distinctions between the two, both types of co-productions feature the same underlying element: the participation of at least one foreign organization in the production process.

las realizadas en régimen de coproducción con empresas extranjeras, en el marco de acuerdos o convenios bilaterales o multilaterales de coproducción suscritos por el Estado de Chile” (Chapter 1, Article 3, Section C; “Works produced for exhibition or commercial use by producers or audiovisual companies of Chilean origin, including those realized in co-productions with foreign companies, in the framework of bilateral or multilateral agreements or covenants of co-production endorsed by the State of Chile”). This legal definition of national productions underscores centrality of the state, which is responsible for enacting these bilateral and multilateral agreements.

According to Leah Kemp, ninety-five Chilean productions and co-productions by sixty-five different directors premiered in local cinemas from 1990 and 2005 (*Citizenship* 51).

According to the multiplex exhibitor industry group CAEM, in the seven years from 1998 to 2004, sixty Chilean fiction and documentary films premiered in theaters, an average of 8.6 films per year (“El estado del cine chileno” 16). However, the production rates varied widely: in 1998 and 1999 only four Chilean films premiered in theaters, while in 2001 fifteen Chilean movies premiered in local cinemas (“El estado de cine chileno” 12-13). According to data from CAEM, 225 Chilean productions and co-productions by 189 directors<sup>111</sup> were released in domestic theaters between 2005 and 2015.<sup>112</sup> Since 2005, the number of Chilean films premiering in local cinemas grew, albeit unevenly, from fifteen films (both fiction and nonfiction) in 2005, to a low

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<sup>111</sup> Some films featured multiple directors and many filmmakers released multiple films during this period. I exclude the Spanish-Chilean film *El regalo de Silvia* (2003), because its domestic release in Chile (2010) occurred seven years after its international release. I also exclude “co-directors” for films with a designated primary director, as is the case with *La invención de la patria* (2014). According to data from the Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 242 Chilean productions and co-productions were released between 2005 and 2015. See Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, “Películas ‘estrenadas’ por año.”

<sup>112</sup> Argentina’s national cinematographic output was substantially larger than Chile’s over this period. According to CAEM, 1,372 Argentine films were released between 2005 and 2015 (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 28).

of ten films in 2007, reaching a high of forty films in 2014.<sup>113</sup> The increase in releases was sustained over this eleven-year period, with an average of 20.5 films released annually between 2005 and 2015. Although these figures encompass only part of the exhibition venues for Chilean film—they exclude films exhibited solely at festivals and online—, they offer a good proxy for the production rate of Chilean cinema. The data from CAEM reflects a trend of sustained increase in the number of Chilean productions and co-productions relative to previous years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Chilean Productions and Co-Productions Premiering in Local Cinemas</b>	<b>Audiences for Chilean Films in Local Cinemas (Number of Admissions)</b>	<b>Audiences for All Films in Local Cinemas (Number of Admissions)</b>
2005	15	391,637	10,722,860
2006	12	749,299	10,524,251
2007	10	914,539	11,455,550
2008	22	939,835	11,886,801
2009	14	547,511	14,442,596
2010	14	351,066	14,713,854
2011	23	900,341	17,320,697
2012	23	2,552,079	20,122,604
2013	26	1,702,552	21,200,044
2014	40	586,677	22,015,883
2015	26	932,054	26,036,426
<b>Total (2005-2015)</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>10,567,590</b>	<b>180,441,566</b>

Source: CAEM

Along with this increase in the number of Chilean films premiering in local cinemas, there is a growing recognition of the diversity of Chile’s film industry. The filmmakers Sebastián Lelio, Alejandro Fernández Almendras, and Roberto Doveris highlight the variety of the country’s film industry. In a 2005 essay titled “Un balance al cine chileno” (“A balance of

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<sup>113</sup> I use statistics from the Cámara de Exhibidores Multisalas de Chile (CAEM), an industry group representing multiplex cinema chains in Chile for my statistics on box office viewership. CAEM has issued annual reports since 2009. These reports include information on the production, distribution, and exhibition of Chilean cinema since 2000. My counts of Chilean productions and co-productions are based on CAEM statistics, which are more reliable than those generated by the CNCA. Although the reports from CAEM omit statistics from a limited number of independent and government-run cinemas, their reports published from 2015 onwards include data from the Market Chile and MiraDoc distribution circuits.

Chilean cinema”), published in the online cinema journal *laFuga*, Lelio observes that the films released that year “no tiene una unidad clara en términos estéticos, éticos o de contenidos” (“do not have a clear unity in terms of aesthetics, ethics or content”). In his essay “Crecer duele: De la artesanía a la industria” (“Growing hurts: From artisanship to industry”), published in the online cinema journal *Mabuse* in 2009, Fernández Almendras observes that the increase in local film production coincides with the emergence of a more heterogeneous national cinema: “Al aumentar la oferta, la diferenciación de los tipos de cine chileno se ha hecho más clara, y de allí surge la necesidad, a mi juicio, de dejar de hablar del ‘cine chileno’ como un bloque homogéneo, lo que hasta cierto punto sólo era posible cuando existían películas bastante parecidas y un volumen de producción muy bajo” (“Upon increasing the offer, the differentiation of the types of Chilean cinema has been made clearer, and there emerges the necessity, in my opinion, to stop speaking of ‘Chilean cinema’ as a homogenous block, which was only possible to a certain extent when there existed very similar films and a low volume of production”). For his part, the filmmaker and critic Roberto Doveris points to the “multiplicidad estructural” (“Un cine de la multiplicidad”; “structural multiplicity”) of Chilean cinema since 2000.

Notwithstanding the diversity and increase in the number of Chilean productions and co-productions, distribution and exhibition was dominated by a small group of companies, many of them American-based multinationals or their subsidiaries. In 2015, five distribution companies accounted for 85 percent of admissions at local cinemas: Universal International, Walt Disney International, Fox International, BF Distribution (also known as Bazuca Films), and Warner Brothers International. Of these five, only BF Distribution (founded in 2004) is based in Chile. On the exhibition side, theater ownership was consolidated among the commercial cinema chains Hoyts, Cinemark, Cineplanet, Pavilion Entertainment, and Cinema Star. According to CAEM, in

2015 there were fifty-eight cinemas and multiplexes across the country, with 379 screens between them. However, the three largest chains, Cinemark, Hoyts, and Cineplanet operated 343 screens, or more than 90 percent of the total (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 10).

In addition to these multiplex operators, there are also a small number of dedicated art-house cinemas, the plurality of which are in the capital. These Santiago-based art cinemas include the Cine Arte Normandie (founded in 1982), Centro Arte Alameda (established in 1992), the Centro Cultural Matucana 100 (founded in 2001), Sala BF Huérfanos (which operated from 2011 to 2012), Cine Radical (founded in 2013), and the Cineteca Nacional de Chile (National Cinematheque of Chile) (founded in 2006). Additionally, Universidad Católica and the University of Chile operate cinemas in Santiago. In 2015, a minority, but nonetheless significant number of viewers watched Chilean films in independent cinemas—theaters not affiliated with multiplex chains—and state-funded cinemas. According to CAEM, the twenty-two venues in the alternative MiraDoc circuit attracted 51,713 admissions for eight Chilean documentaries that premiered in 2015 (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 19-20). Meanwhile, in 2015, the Market Chile circuit, which includes seven non-chain theaters across the country (including the Cineteca Nacional, Cine Radical, Cine Arte Alameda, and Cine Arte Normandie), premiered twelve Chilean films, accounting for 20,097 admissions (21). Together, the MiraDoc and Market Chile circuits attracted 7.7 percent of viewers for Chilean cinema in 2015.<sup>114</sup>

Between 2005 and 2015, there was an upward trend in the number of spectators for both Chilean and non-Chilean films at local movie theaters. Gross audiences at Chilean cinemas grew from 10,722,860 admissions in 2005 to a high of 26,036,426 admissions in 2015 (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 4), the most since 1974, when 29,950,879 admissions were recorded

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<sup>114</sup> My calculation based on CAEM data.

(“Histórico: En 2015”). The number of admissions at local cinemas increased 179 percent between 2000 and 2015, and 127 percent between 2007 and 2015, following a decline in attendance in 2005 and 2006 (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 4).<sup>115</sup> The average annual per-capita movie-theater attendance rate of Chileans also increased, growing from an average of .66 annual visits per person in 2005 to 1.45 visits in 2015 (5).<sup>116</sup> Parallel with the growth in audience and the frequency of visits to the theater, the number of screens increased from 292 in 2005 to 379 in 2015.<sup>117</sup> Cinemas also underwent a rapid transition from celluloid to digital projection technology. By 2015, 99 percent of total viewers watched digital projections in cinemas, and only 1 percent of spectators attended 35mm projections. That same year, 1.5 percent of total audiences attended 4D projections, which were first introduced to Chilean theaters in 2013 (12).<sup>118</sup>

The year 2012 was a high watermark for Chilean cinema in terms of audiences. That year, a total of 2,552,079 admissions were recorded for Chilean productions or co-productions in local theaters. A majority of these filmgoers bought tickets for Stefan Kramer, Sebastián Freund, and Leonardo Prieto’s *costumbrista* comedy *Stefan v/s Kramer*, which attracted 2,088,375 spectators, the most of any local film in Chile’s box-office history.<sup>119</sup> Notwithstanding the record success of *Stefan v/s Kramer*, which accounted for 81 percent of spectators for Chilean cinema in

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<sup>115</sup> My calculation based on CAEM data.

<sup>116</sup> In the United States and Canada, the average number of cinema admissions per person measured 3.8 in 2015 (MPAA, “Theatrical Market Statistics 2015” 2).

<sup>117</sup> See CAEM, “El estado del cine chileno” (8) and CAEM, “El cine en Chile en el 2015” (10).

<sup>118</sup> For more on the introduction of 4D technology in Chile see González, “Llega el 4D: Debuta en Chile la primera sala de cine con olores y movimientos.”

<sup>119</sup> The Chilean film with the largest domestic audience prior to *Stefan v/s Kramer* was Boris Quercia’s 2003 sex comedy *Sexo con amor*, which attracted 990,696 viewers. Since 1999, only six films—*Stefan v/s Kramer*, *Sexo con amor*, *El chacotero sentimental* (Galaz, 1999), *Machuca* (Wood, 2004), the sequel *El ciudadano Kramer* (Kramer and Estévez, 2013), and *Sin filtro* (López, 2016) have attracted more than 500,000 domestic viewers. (“El cine en Chile en el 2014” 13). Germán Becker’s 1968 musical film *Ayúdame compadre* held the box-office record for the most viewed Chilean film for thirty-one years, until the release of *El chacotero sentimental*. Becker’s film attracted 375,000 spectators at local cinemas. See Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* (293-94).



domestic theaters the year of its release, Chilean films attracted only 12.68 percent of total audiences at local theaters in 2012 (“El cine en Chile en el 2012” 14).

Chilean films were routinely eclipsed at the local box office by Hollywood productions. In 2015, for instance, the top ten films at the box office were all Hollywood productions (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 7). And although Chilean films accounted for 11.8 percent of the total number of films that premiered in local cinemas in 2015 (8-10), the audiences for Chilean films comprised only 3.6 percent of the audience for all films that year (15). Audience figures underscore the limited foothold of Chilean films at the local box office. Between 2005 and 2015, audiences for Chilean films comprised 5.86 percent of the total audiences for all films. Over this period, audiences for Chilean films averaged 960,690 viewers per year, although we should note that annual audience figures oscillate significantly, with viewership for local films dipping below 500,000 spectators in 2005 and 2010.

The moderate box-office success of art films like Sebastián Silva’s *La nana* (91,512 admissions), Pablo Larraín’s *No* (211,958 admissions), Sebastián Lelio’s *Gloria* (144,717 admissions), and Matías Lira’s *El bosque de Karadima* (307,695 admissions), are the exception rather than the rule. Only twenty-five Chilean films released between 2005 and 2015, many of them *costumbrista* comedies like José Miguel Zúñiga’s *Fuerzas especiales* (*Special Forces*, 2014), attracted over 100,000 spectators at the domestic box office (“El cine en Chile en el 2015” 33-34). In 2014, 80 percent of Chilean films attracted less than ten thousand admissions at local cinemas (“El cine en Chile en el 2016” 18). The four films studied here garnered moderate or small domestic audiences. *Se arrienda* attracted 93,153 viewers, *Tony Manero* drew 86,193 viewers, *Il Futuro* captured 4,774 viewers, and *Nasty Baby* recorded 1,027 viewers.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Data from CAEM.

The relatively anemic audience figures of Chilean art films like *Il Futuro* and *Nasty Baby* at local cinemas are the topic of discussion and a source of anxiety among Chilean critics, cultural brokers, government officials, and filmmakers. Rodrigo González's 2015 article in *La Tercera*, "El cine chileno: un éxito de exportación sin espectadores" ("Chilean cinema: successful export without spectators"), exemplifies the debates over the limited domestic audiences for Chilean cinema. González contrasts the dearth of domestic audiences for Chilean films with the success of many of these films at festivals. His article is part of a trend in local press coverage which focuses on the small size of domestic audiences for Chilean cinema in the years since 2005.<sup>121</sup> González begins his piece by highlighting the success of Argentine cinema industry in creating cross-over box-office successes like Damián Szifron *Relatos salvajes* (*Wild Tales*, 2014), before lamenting the failure to produce similar films in Chile: "hay un tipo de cine relativamente ausente en nuestro medio: aquel que corta boletos, pero que a la vez no renuncia a la mirada personal y la propuesta artística" ("there is a type of cinema relatively absent from our milieu: that which sells tickets, but which at the same time does not renounce a personal gaze and artistic initiative"). According to González, Chilean art films primarily appeal to audiences at film festivals abroad: "El éxito del cine chileno en los festivales más importantes del mundo es una realidad que poco a poco se ha ido construyendo y que en el mediano plazo comienza con los éxitos de *Tony Manero* en Cannes 2008 y *La nana* en Sundance 2009" ("The success of Chilean cinema in the world's most important festivals is a reality that has slowly been building and which in the medium term begins with the success of *Tony Manero* in Cannes 2008 and *La*

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<sup>121</sup> For more examples of local media's concern over audiences for Chilean films since 2005 see Fernández Almendras's "Crece duele: De la artesanía a la industria"; the 2011 article "Cine Chileno exhibe sus peores cifras"; Antonella Estévez's 2012 article "Cine Chileno: Logros y tareas pendientes"; Víctor Hugo Ortega's 2012 article "El cine chileno y su público: una relación compleja"; Jorge Letelier and Francisco Zúñiga's 2012 article "Cine chileno y su esquivo taquilla: razones de su divorcio del público"; Antonella Estévez and Marcelo Morales's article "Cine Chileno 2014: películas, audiencias y encuestas"; Evelyn Erlj's 2014 article "Cine chileno vs. audiencias: El entusiasmo"; and Rodrigo González's 2014 article "El año en que el cine local estrenó 45 películas."

*nana* in Sundance 2009”). The author mentions Pablo Larraín’s Silver Bear Jury Grand Prix for *El Club*, Patricio Guzmán’s Silver Bear for Best Screenplay for *El botón de nácar* (*The Pearl Button*), and Sebastián Silva’s Teddy Award for Best Queer Film for *Nasty Baby* at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, which he calls the “último capítulo de esta saga” (“most recent chapter of this saga”). For González and other critics, the sparse domestic audiences for these award-laden films is an alarming phenomenon because it is indicative of a faulty conversion rate between prestige, box-office success, and the sustained growth in local film production. He suggests that underlying this troubled relationship between cultural and economic capital are more entrenched and culturally fraught dilemmas: the failure of state cultural policy to effectively promote and to distribute these films, the orientation of filmmakers towards an international market, and an unsophisticated public.

Journalists outside of Chile also comment on the limited audiences for Chilean cinema at home. In her 2011 *Variety* article “Chile pics heat up abroad,” Anna Marie de la Fuente highlights many of the same discrepancies between the acclaim these films receive at festivals and their limited domestic box-office returns: “Recent years have seen a surge in production and worldwide kudos for Chilean cinema. Helmers led by Andres Wood, Pablo Larraín, Matias Bize and Sebastian Silva have been stamping their imprint on foreign soil. Unfortunately, soaring international acclaim has not necessarily translated into boffo box office returns back home.” In their article, “Latin America’s Film Industry Paradox,” published in *The Hollywood Reporter*, John Hecht and Agustin Mango observe that the Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico’s film industries were eclipsed by North American films at the box office in 2015:

The state of Latin American cinema is something of a paradox: overall film production and box-office numbers seem to break records every year, and there is certainly plenty of

talent, with local auteurs regularly making the jump to Hollywood (think *Narcos* co-creator Jose Padilha or *Hateful Eight* co-star Demián Bichir). But while the festival circuit consistently honors the region's best with top awards, only a handful of local films—mostly comedies featuring TV stars—make a dent at the local box office. And when they do succeed, they take most of an already reduced share of the market, which is heavily concentrated and dominated by Hollywood blockbusters.

Chilean filmmakers and cultural brokers also address the subject of small audiences for Chilean films. Nicolás López, a prominent genre filmmaker and producer, contends that Chilean moviegoers are not interested in cultural prestige, but in the accessibility of a film's plot: "Al público no le interesa si gano o no premios, le interesa la premisa . . . Las películas de festivales no son destinadas para grandes públicos. Se habla de dos tipos de cine, el cine de esquinas claras y el de esquinas difusas, y en este último es mucho más complejo describir la trama" ("Cine chileno y su esquivia taquilla"; "The public is not interested in whether I win or don't win prizes, they are interested in the premise . . . Festival films are not destined for large audiences: They speak of two types of cinema, the cinema of clear corners and of dark corners, and in the latter it is much more difficult to describe the plot"). Marialy Rivas, whose film *Joven y alocada* (2012) won the Screenwriting Award in the "World Cinema – Dramatic" category at Sundance, maintains that films which circulate at festivals do not appeal to local audiences: "El cine de festivales es por esencia cine de autor, no cine de entretenimiento. Entonces, este supuesto divorcio no es el problema de los autores, es el problema de una sociedad que tiende al entretenimiento y no a la cultura" ("Cine chileno y su esquivia taquilla"; "Festival cinema is essentially auteur cinema, not entertainment cinema. Therefore, this supposed divorce is not the problem of the creators, it's the problem of a society that leans towards entertainment and not

culture”). Like López, Rivas characterizes the tastes of domestic audiences as conservative and unsophisticated.

Government officials and film industry professionals also remark on the limited audience for Chilean films, and, in particular, art films. Claudia Barattini, who served as President Minister of the CNCA between 2014 and 2015, expresses concern about the small domestic audiences for Chilean cinema. She notes that Chilean films, like other cultural productions, “en general compiten en condiciones desiguales con los productos extranjeros” (“Redes de exhibición y apoyo” 4; “in general compete in unequal conditions with foreign products”). Notwithstanding these “unequal conditions,” Barattini observes that “en Chile hay diversidad de películas y estilos, y eso da cuenta de la riqueza de la producción” (4; “in Chile there is a diversity of movies and styles, and this reveals the richness of production”). Carlos Hanson, the director of BF Distribution, one of the most prominent distributors in Chile, echoes Rivas’s comments about Chilean audiences and highlights the challenges of distributing art films in Chile: “Las películas de arte en general no venden en Chile . . . Falta especialización en los distribuidores, hay poca cultura del público, y en estas salas te mueres de frío” (“Cine chileno y su esquiva taquilla”; “In general art films don’t sell in Chile . . . There is a lack of specialization on the part of distributors, there’s little culture among the public, and you die of cold in those theaters”).<sup>122</sup> The producer Bruno Bettati presents a similarly bleak analysis of the commercial prospects of local films: “The fact of the matter is Chilean cinema is not wanted in local multiplexes and needs to be exported in order to grow” (“Chile pics heat up”).<sup>123</sup> These critics, cultural brokers, and journalists share a concern over the limited domestic audiences for Chilean

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<sup>122</sup> BF Distribution is also known as Bazuca Films. BF has distributed films by Fuguet, Larraín, Lelio, and Scherson.

<sup>123</sup> The critic Antonella Estévez argues that the “principal” reason for the small domestic audiences for these films “tiene que ver con los prejuicios que existen de un lado y de otro respecto a las cintas nacionales” (“Cine Chileno 2014”; “has to do with the prejudices that exist on both sides with respect to national films”).

art film between 2005 and 2015. They grapple with the existential question posed by the British film critic Andrew Higson in 1989: “For what is a national cinema if it doesn’t have a national audience?” (46).

Audiences and consumers abroad represent a significant market for Chile’s audiovisual industries. According to ProChile, exports from Chile’s audiovisual industry in 2015 totaled more than twenty-seven million dollars. The United States was the largest market (57.5 percent), followed by France (9.4 percent), Uruguay (5.1 percent), and Germany (5 percent) (“Tres películas en competencia”). A 2015 bilingual study by CinemaChile highlights the importance of the international market for Chilean film.<sup>124</sup> According to the report, *Audiencias globales del cine chileno 2013 (Global Audiences of Chilean Cinema 2013)*, audiences from abroad comprised the majority of viewers for the seven Chilean films that were released commercially in cinemas outside of Chile in 2013: Fernando Guzzoni’s *Carne de Perro*, Dominga Sotomayor’s *De Jueves a Domingo*, Sebastián Lelio’s *Gloria*, Jairo Boisier’s *La jubilada*, Esteban Larraín’s *La pasión de Michelangelo*, Scherson’s *Il Futuro*, and Nicolás López’s *Qué pena tu familia*. 74 percent of audiences for these seven films were from outside of Chile (985,633 foreign spectators versus 354,908 Chilean spectators) (30-31). The two most-viewed of these films are emblematic of the varying appeal of different genres of Chilean films. 84 percent of the audience for López’s *Qué pena tu familia* was Chilean (192,350 out of a total of 228,350 spectators). In contrast, 86 percent of the audience for Lelio’s *Gloria*, an art film that centers on the romantic travails of a middle-aged office-worker in Santiago, was non-Chilean (or 869,665 out of a total of 1,014,382 viewers).<sup>125</sup> Whereas *Qué pena tu familia*, with its references to local popular

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<sup>124</sup> The report received financing from the Audiovisual Fund in 2015 and was presented at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival. See Hopewell, “For Chile’s Arthouse Auteurs, the Foreign Market Reigns Supreme.”

<sup>125</sup> *Gloria* was also notable for its success among non-Spanish speaking audiences. According to the report, 89 percent of viewers outside of Chile did not speak Spanish (*Audiencias globales* 87-89).

culture, is distinctly oriented towards Chilean audiences; *Gloria* arrived in cinemas abroad with considerable cultural cachet after lead actor Paulina García won the Silver Bear award for Best Actress at the 2013 Berlin Film Festival for her role in the film.<sup>126</sup> In total *Gloria* grossed 2,107,925 U.S. dollars during its sixteen week run at 110 theaters in the United States (Box Office Mojo, “Gloria”).

In addition to *Gloria*, Sebastián Silva’s *La nana* and Pablo Larraín’s *No* attracted significant box-office receipts in the United States, garnering 576,608 and 2,343,664 U.S. dollars, respectively.<sup>127</sup> *Gloria*, *La nana*, and *No* are outliers in terms of attracting foreign audiences. The performance of the handful of Chilean films that are released commercially abroad each year is modest. Of the four films analyzed, only *Se arrienda* did not receive a commercial theatrical release in the United States. According to Box Office Mojo, *Tony Manero* grossed 20,677 U.S. dollars during its eight-week run in five theaters; *Il Futuro* grossed 14,001 U.S. dollars at three theaters in the United States during its eleven-week run; and *Nasty Baby* grossed 79,800 U.S. dollars at eighteen theaters during its roughly three-and-a-half-week run.

National and international box-office statistics provide a valuable, if imperfect picture of the state of the Chilean cinema. However, relying solely on these figures excludes the increasingly diverse ways in which audiences consume film. In the years since 2005, cinema in Chile and elsewhere is increasingly consumed online, a reality facilitated by the expansion of internet access.<sup>128</sup> In Chile, online piracy of film is commonplace.<sup>129</sup> And online streaming

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<sup>126</sup> Reviews of *Gloria* in *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, emphasize the film’s frank depiction of a middle-aged woman over its qualities of national allegory and its setting during the 2011 student movement. See Scott, “With No Regrets, Living Her Life as a Bossa Nova.” and Sharkey, “‘Gloria’s’ portrait of older singles brims with authenticity.”

<sup>127</sup> Statistics from Box Office Mojo.

<sup>128</sup> In 2005, 31.2 out of every 100 Chileans were Internet users (defined as people with access to the worldwide network). By 2015, the number of Chilean internet users had increased to 64.3 out of 100 (The World Bank, “Internet Users (per 100 people)”).

<sup>129</sup> See *La Tercera*, “Chile se mantiene por noveno año en la lista negra de piratería.”

services have significantly altered the distribution, exhibition, and consumption of cinema. Netflix, which entered Chile in 2011 and has since grown rapidly. In 2011, there were 27,000 paying Netflix subscribers, a number which grew to 230,000 paying subscribers in 2014 (“Number of Netflix”).<sup>130</sup> Netflix’s estimated revenues from its Chilean operations increased from 650,000 U.S. dollars in 2011 to just under 23,000,000 U.S. dollars in 2015 (“Estimated streaming revenues”). In addition to streaming Chilean films on its digital platform, Netflix has worked with Nicolás López and his production company Sobras.<sup>131</sup> The advent of online distribution and exhibition like Netflix represents a sea-change in for the Chilean and global film industries. As we shall see, filmmakers like Fuguet have embraced online distribution and exhibition as a means of making their films more readily available to a larger audience.

### 1.3. New Ways of Making Movies: State Cultural Policy, Public-Private Partnerships, and Private Enterprise

The producer and critic Roberto Trejo observes that economic growth, favorable government policies towards arts and culture by successive governments since 1990, the growth of national television production, the development of independent production companies, the increased training of audiovisual professionals at private universities, and changes in the global film industry all contributed to the expansion and development of Chile’s cinema industry (118). However, Trejo singles out the state’s cultural policy towards cinema as the key motor of growth: “Pero, sin lugar a dudas, lo más relevante ha sido el cambio de enfoque del Estado en el diseño y formulación de sus políticas públicas” (118; “But, without a doubt, the most relevant

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<sup>130</sup> Netflix does not release viewership numbers.

<sup>131</sup> See Hopewell, “Chile’s Sobras, Netflix build alliance” and “Nicolas Lopez’s Netflix Movie ‘No Filter’ Beats ‘Force Awakens’ in Chile.”



factor has been the state's change of focus in the design and formulation of its public policies"). The growth of Chilean productions and co-productions coincided with and was stimulated by the expansion of the state's investment in the country's cinematographic industry.

The Chilean government's cultural policy towards cinema comprises a multifaceted approach towards fomenting production, distribution, and exhibition. Toby Miller and George Yúdice define cultural policy as "the institutional supports that channel both aesthetic creativity and collective ways of life—a bridge between the two registers" (1). They observe that cultural policy is fundamentally bureaucratic in nature: "Cultural policy is embodied in systematic, regulatory guides to action that are adopted by organizations to achieve their goals. In short, it is bureaucratic rather than creative or organic: organizations solicit, train, distribute, finance, describe and reject actors and activities that go under the signs of artist or artwork through the implementation of policies" (1). As we shall see, a diverse set of state and state-supported organizations aimed at financing, promoting, and exhibiting local cinema operated between 2005 and 2015.

Randal Johnson observes that state support for cinema in Latin America has historically been marked by tensions between commercial and cultural interests:

Rationales for state cultural policies are often cast in terms of the notion that culture is an integral part of development and that as the ultimate guarantor of a nation's cultural unity and identity, the state has a legitimate responsibility to protect society's cultural memory and heritage, to defend its cultural values, to stimulate cultural production, and to ensure that culture is not defined exclusively by market criteria. In other words, cultural policies are frequently designed to preserve the nation's cultural, artistic and historical patrimony and to mitigate what many see as the deleterious effects of the commercial mass media

and the privately owned culture industry. To say that the state has a legitimate role to play in relation to culture, however, is a far cry from reaching a consensus about the nature and goals of that role. (134)

The motivations behind the Chilean government's cultural policy towards cinema are both economic and symbolic. Leah Kemp notes that during the Transition, the government "hizo un esfuerzo tremendo para llegar a un punto de equilibrio en su política cultural entre la necesidad de participación del Estado en el fomento de las artes y la percepción de un Estado que impone su perspectiva sobre el mundo cultural" ("La amoralidad del individualismo" 207; "made a tremendous effort to arrive at a point of equilibrium in their cultural policy between the necessity of state participation in the development of the arts and the perception of a state that imposes its perspective on the cultural sphere"). After the Transition, stakeholders in the country's film industry continued to debate both the nature and desirability of state intervention.

Beginning in 2003, the Chilean government codified and expanded its institutional framework for cultural policy towards policy. The principal levers for the state's cultural policy towards cinema were the 2003 and 2004 audiovisual laws and three state organs: the National Council of Culture and the Arts, CORFO, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The state-owned bank BancoEstado, the Consejo Nacional de Televisión (the National Television Council or CNTV), the Ley de Donaciones con Fines Culturales (Law of Cultural Donations), and bilateral and multilateral co-production agreements provided additional support for the development of Chile's cinematographic industry. According to Miriam Ross, "the state's legal intervention in cinema practice" in Chile and its neighbors Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru during the first decade of the 21st century represents "a desire to constitute a wide framework in which cultural activity and the nation-state can coexist as interdependent partners" (*South American Cinematic Culture*

24). As we shall see, the Chilean government's cinematographic policies are designed to incorporate a range of organizations as interdependent partners. These public organs, not-for-profit organizations, film schools, for-profit private companies, and public-private partnerships often work in tandem to foment Chilean productions and co-productions. The close relationship between government, not-for-profit organizations, and private businesses exemplify Carlos Huneeus's observation that in the early-21st-century Chilean democracy "No existe una separación clara en el orden institucional entre los intereses públicos y privados" (18; "There is not a clear separation in the institutional order between public and private interests").

In Chile, the state provides support for all stages of the filmmaking process, including pre-production, production, distribution, and exhibition. In addition to its financing mechanisms, the state offers resources for the training of industry professionals, marketing, support for their participation in film festivals, and promotional activities and incentives to attract filmmakers to shoot in the country. Prior to 2003, the most significant program supporting Chilean cinema was the Fondo del Desarrollo de las Artes y la Cultura (Development Fund for the Arts or FONDART). FONDART was founded in 1992 within the Ministry of Education's Cultural Division. Leah Kemp notes that FONDART served as the primary source of funding for Chilean films during its eleven-year existence, supporting 233 audiovisual projects between 1992 and 1996, and supporting twenty-six of the Chilean films that premiered between 1993 and 2003 (*Citizenship* 47). In 1997, President Eduardo Frei established a commission to explore increasing the state's investment in culture as a means of shielding the industry against the forces of globalization. The commission produced a report of its findings titled *Chile está en deuda con la cultura* (*Chile is Indebted to Culture*, 1997). The authors of the study wrote of the need to protect the integrity of Chile's culture from the forces of globalization: "Dejar nuestro desarrollo cultural

artístico a merced de la internacionalización económica del mundo contemporáneo, es dejar indefenso nuestro territorio espiritual” (*Chile está en deuda* 9, Kemp’s translation; “Leaving our cultural-artistic development at the mercy of economic internationalization is to leave our spiritual territory defenseless”).<sup>132</sup> That same year, a group of audiovisual professional organizations established the Plataforma Audiovisual (Audiovisual Platform), which advocated for the establishment of a comprehensive system of state support.

With the passage of a landmark audiovisual law in 2003, the government embarked on an ambitious program dedicated to expanding the resources available to filmmakers, producers, distributors, and exhibitors of Chilean cinema, with an emphasis on the capacity for cinema to generate economic, symbolic, and political capital. A report published by the National Council of Culture and the Arts titled *Chile quiere más cultura: definiciones de política cultural 2005-2010* (*Chile wants more culture: definitions of cultural politics 2005-2010*, 2005), underscores the government’s shift from an attitude of protectionism towards an emphasis on the public-private partnerships and the export of cultural productions. The authors of the report recognize Chile’s place within the globalized world economy and instead of calling for protectionism, describe the cultural industries as linchpins of national identity and economic engines:

La mirada respecto de la cultura de este documento implica que ella sea puesta efectivamente en el centro del desarrollo de Chile. Esto significa que la cultura no sea sólo un aderezo que se considere ocasional y episódicamente, sino que pase a ser reconocida como parte de la esencia de lo que constituye nuestra identidad nacional. Y es preciso, además, que se reconozca que es justamente esta identidad la que sustenta la integración de Chile en este mundo globalizado. Igualmente, es necesario que la cultura

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<sup>132</sup> Kemp underscores the report’s “tone of anti-mercantilism protectionism” (48).

sea aceptada ya no sólo como generadora de valores estéticos y de sentido, sino también en tanto industria, generadora de riqueza y empleo e impulsora de nuevos horizontes para la economía del país. (*Chile quiere más cultura* 3; The view of this document with respect to culture is that it be effectively placed in the center of the development of Chile. This means that culture is not only a dressing that should be considered occasionally and episodically, but rather that it be recognized as part of the essence of what constitutes our national identity. And it is essential, furthermore, that it be recognized that it is precisely this identity that supports Chile's integration in this globalized world. Likewise, it is necessary that culture be accepted not only as a producer of aesthetic and meaningful values, but also as an industry, a generator of wealth and employment, and driver of new horizons for the country's economy)

As we shall see, concerns about national patrimony, symbolic capital, and the economics underlie the audiovisual legislation of 2003 and 2004, as well as the government and independent organizations that operate within Chile's film industry between 2005 and 2015.

State support for Chilean productions and co-productions was codified through the 2003 Ley Crea el Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes y el Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes (Law Creating the National Council of Culture and the Arts and the National Development Fund for Culture and the Arts), or Law 19.891, and the 2004 Ley Sobre Fomento Audiovisual (Audiovisual Stimulus Law), or Law 19.981. The 2003 law codified and expanded state investment in culture through the creation of the National Council of Culture and the Arts or CNCA. It established the CNCA as a “servicio público autónomo, descentralizado y territorialmente desconcentrado” (“Crea el Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes” Article 1; “autonomous, decentralized, and territorially dispersed public agency”). The Council, which was

replaced in 2017 by the Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio (Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Patrimony), had an in-between status as an autonomous public agency. The CNCA's President, known as the President Minister, had the legal status of a Minister, but the Council lacked the full powers of a ministry. The power of the President Minister was further diluted by the inclusion of representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as five cultural personalities (three appointed by the President and two by the Senate), two academics, and one National Prize Winner on the council's board (Kemp 50). Agustín Squella, the legal scholar who wrote Law 19.891, describes the Council as “una composición algo frondosa” (Squella qtd. Kemp 50; “a somewhat convoluted structure”), while noting that the purpose of the law was “asegurar un valor fundamental: la participación” (“to ensure a fundamental value: participation”).

In addition to creating the CNCA, Law 19.891 established the body's discretionary control of the Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes (National Development Fund of Culture and the Arts), an updated version of the FONDART funding mechanism created in 1992. Article 28 of the law establishes the scope of the fund, which is designed “con el objeto de financiar, total o parcialmente, proyectos, programas, actividades y medidas de fomento, ejecución, difusión y conservación de las artes y el patrimonio cultural en sus diversas modalidades y manifestaciones” (“with the object of financing, wholly or partially, projects, programs, activities and mediums of development, execution, diffusion and conversation of arts and cultural patrimony in its diverse modalities and manifestations”). In keeping with its broad purview and participatory impetus, FONDART supports a range of artistic and cultural productions, including cinema, dance, literature, music, theater, and visual art through nationally (FONDART Nacional) and regionally-sponsored (FONDART Regional) competitions. In 2005,

the national and regional FONDART funds had a combined budget of 3,395,944,000 Chilean Pesos and supported 627 projects (“Cultura y tiempo libre: informe anual 2005” 87). In 2015, the combined FONDART budget grew to over 10 billion Chilean pesos and the funds supported 1,113 projects (*Estadísticas culturales: informe anual 2015* 371). In 2017, Law 19.891 was modified and funding for audiovisual projects was restricted to the Audiovisual Fund (“Crea el Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes” Article 28).

The 2004 Audiovisual Stimulus Law, also known as Law 19.981, established the Fondo de Fomento Audiovisual (Audiovisual Fund).<sup>133</sup> The Audiovisual Fund is exclusively dedicated to supporting audiovisual productions and the audiovisual sector. The Fund offers resources for the education and training of audiovisual professionals; supports programs designed to protect Chile’s audiovisual patrimony; underwrites national film festivals and other cultural organizations; sponsors the Pedro Sienna Awards for Chilean cinema<sup>134</sup>; and finances projects by filmmakers from outside of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago. Law 19.981 also created the Consejo del Arte y la Industria Audiovisual (Council of Art and the Audiovisual Industry or CAIA), which is tasked with administering the Audiovisual Fund. CAIA is housed within the CNCA and is headed by the Undersecretary of Culture and the Arts.<sup>135</sup> Since 2017, CAIA operates within the Ministry of Cultures, Arts, and Patrimony. CAIA and the Audiovisual Fund finance the promotion, distribution, and exhibition of locally produced films and Chilean co-productions through open competitions.

The first and second articles of the Audiovisual Stimulus Law offer a blueprint to the

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<sup>133</sup> See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, “Ley Sobre Fomento Audiovisual” and Kemp, *Citizenship in Chilean Post-Dictatorship Film* (50-51).

<sup>134</sup> The Pedro Sienna Awards, named after the silent-era filmmaker, were established by CAIA with resources from the Audiovisual Fund. They were held for the first time in 2006. See *El Mercurio*, “Cine: Nuevos premios Pedro Sienna entregaron sus primeros nominados.”

<sup>135</sup> The board of CAIA also includes representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and CORFO.

government's cultural policy towards cinema. The first article of the law establishes the government's commitment to the national cinematographic industry and links national cinema and patrimony: "El Estado de Chile apoya, promueve y fomenta la creación y producción audiovisual, así como la difusión y la conservación de las obras audiovisuales como patrimonio de la Nación, para la preservación de la identidad nacional y el desarrollo de la cultura y la educación" ("The State of Chile supports, promotes, and foments audiovisual creation and production, like the diffusion and conservation of audiovisual works as patrimony of the Nation, for the preservation of national identity and the development of culture and education"). The second article establishes the broad scope of the state's participation in the audiovisual sector: "La presente ley tiene por objetivo el desarrollo, fomento, difusión, protección y preservación de las obras audiovisuales nacionales y de la industria audiovisual, así como la investigación y el desarrollo de nuevos lenguajes audiovisuales" ("The current law has the objective of the development, development, diffusion, protection and preservation of national audiovisual works and the audiovisual industry, including the investigation and development of new audiovisual languages"). These articles establish the framework for the state's multifaceted cultural policy towards the audiovisual sector and underscore the importance the Chilean government affords the audiovisual industry.

In 2005, the first year the Audiovisual Fund was administered, there were four lines of competitive funding: creation and production; professional development; investigation and training; and diffusion and exhibition.<sup>136</sup> In 2005, the fund dispersed 996,000,000 Chilean pesos in funding for 110 projects ("Resultados Concurso Público de Proyectos 2005" 16). In the 2015 competition, the number of lines of funding had expanded to six: professional and audience

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<sup>136</sup> See CNCA, "Fondo de Fomento Audiovisual: Bases de Concurso Público 2005" (3).



development; research; script writing; production; diffusion and implementation; and exhibition. In addition to production funding for various stages of the films, there was also financing for fellowships for post-graduate studies and funding for competitive and non-competitive film festivals. This expansion in lines of funding coincided with a significant increase in the fund's size. In 2015, the fund awarded 4,812,160,250 Chilean pesos in funding for 300 projects (*Estadísticas culturales: informe anual 2015*, 371).<sup>137</sup> In its 2015 edition, the Audiovisual Fund accounted for 23 percent of the funds distributed for cultural projects among the CNCA's five principal lines of financing.<sup>138</sup>

Between 2005 and 2015, the Audiovisual Fund was the single largest single source of funding for Chilean cinema. Projects by Larraín, Scherson, and Silva garnered support from the fund. Larraín obtained a production grant for *Post Mortem* in 2008, a production grant for *No* in 2011, and a production grant for *Neruda* in 2014. Alicia Scherson received grants for the production and post-production of *Turistas* in 2006 and 2008, the production and post-production of *Il Futuro* in 2009, and in 2016 she received funding for the development of the screenplay for *El Tercer Reich*. She also obtained a script-writing grant in 2014. Additionally, Jirafa, the producer of *Il Futuro*, received a grant for promotion and marketing of the film in 2013. And Silva's film *La vida me mata* was awarded a post-production grant in 2007.

In addition to the Audiovisual Fund, the CNCA supports the audiovisual sector through La Comisión Fílmica de Chile, which is also known as Film Commission Chile. The organization was founded in 2011 under the auspices of the CNCA. It facilitates cooperation within the local film industry and promoting Chile as a destination for film production.

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<sup>137</sup> The process and funds available for projects soliciting funding from the Audiovisual Fund changes from year to year. See CNCA, "Información de interés: Bases y ganadores de concursos."

<sup>138</sup> See CNCA, "Resultados Fondos 2015" (215-41).

According to its website, the Commission “is a specialized office that seeks to increase the economic impact of the audiovisual industry in Chile and Latin America, offering leadership and national coordination among state organisms, service providers, businesses, and other sectors of the Chilean audiovisual industry” (“Why shoot in Chile”). In 2012, the Commission published a guide titled *Shoot in Chile* designed to attract foreign filmmakers and producers. The guide features full-color photographs highlighting the country’s distinctive geographic regions, from the Atacama Desert to Patagonia. It also includes information on Chile’s film industry and a general overview of the country’s history and demographics. In the guide’s introduction, then President Minister of the CNCA and protagonist of *Se arrienda* Luciano Cruz-Coke emphasizes Chile’s economic development and points to the appeal of its film industry for foreign filmmakers and production companies due to its low taxes, talented audiovisual professionals, “modern infrastructure,” and varied geography (11). The Commission published a second manual titled *Shoot in Chile: Guía Práctica para un Chile Film Friendly (Shoot in Chile: Practical Guide for a Film Friendly Chile, 2014)*. The manual purports to be “un instrumento para instalar y desarrollar buenas prácticas de trabajo y colaboración entre la industria audiovisual, las administraciones municipales y la sociedad en general” (9; “an instrument to install and develop good work practices and collaboration between the audiovisual industry, municipalities, and society in general”).

In addition to these guides, Film Commission Chile creates short videos designed to promote Chile’s film industry. The six-minute *Around Two Hours* (2012), produced with Tantor Films, includes clips from advertisements and television series like HBO’s *Prófugos* (produced by Pablo Larraín’s production company Fabula). The video highlights the availability of professional audiovisual services and crews, “the broad range of ethnicities for casting,” the

diversities of locations in the Santiago-Valparaíso region ranging from the “Clean City Streets” of Santiago to the “Rocky Mountain Look-Alike” terrain of Farellones. The short video ends with the on-screen title, “Film Commission Chile invites filmmakers from around the world to realize their creative visions in Chile.” This direct pitch for foreign investment in Chile’s film industry exemplifies the economic emphasis of the government’s cultural policy towards cinema.

CORFO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the other primary government entities that support the country’s film industry. CORFO was founded in 1939 under the Popular Front government of President Pedro Aguirre Cerda. The organization was a cornerstone of Aguirre Cerda’s economic policy of import substitution industrialization. In the early 1940s, CORFO played a key role in fomenting the country’s film industry. In 1942, the corporation created the production company Chile Films, which built and operated a modern film studio facility in Santiago. Chile Films went defunct in 1955. It was revitalized in 1964 under the Christian Democratic Government of Eduardo Frei Montalva, before it was again shut down following the 1973 military coup.<sup>139</sup> During the Transition to Democracy, CORFO reentered the film industry (Kemp 51). Since 1998, CORFO provides funding for the production and distribution of Chilean films. Eduardo Bitran, the executive vice president of CORFO, characterizes his organization’s support for the audiovisual sector as a strategic investment:

La industria creativa es un sector estratégico para el desarrollo del país, ya que tiene un gran potencial de mercado tanto a nivel nacional como regional. Esta industria genera una externalidad positiva, crea valor y aporta al desarrollo de la cultura de nuestro país; constituyéndose en factor de mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de las personas. Pero además influye positivamente en variados sectores económicos como el turismo, los

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<sup>139</sup> For more on CORFO and Chile Films see Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* (72-101).

servicios y el desarrollo de aplicaciones tecnológicas, entre otros. (“Abiertas postulaciones para Concurso CORFO Cine 2015”); The creative industry is a strategic sector for the country’s development, because it has great market potential at a national and regional level. This industry generates a positive outward image, creates value and contributes to the development of our country’s culture; it constitutes a factor of improvement in people’s quality of life. But it also positively influences various economic sectors like tourism, services, and the development of technological application, among other things)

Bitran emphasizes the patrimonial, economic, and symbolic value of culture. He characterizes the cultural sector as a vibrant industry, which is closely connected to the larger economy.

Between 2001 and 2015, CORFO supported 714 audiovisual productions via its open competitions for cinema, television, and audiovisual distribution, with funding totaling 7,958,000,000 pesos (“Historia de un Oso’ recibe apoyo CORFO”). Over this period, CORFO Cine, the competitive line of funding dedicated to the production of Chilean films, provided support for 417 projects. Through its CORFO Cine initiative, the organization financed 70 percent of these projects, with a maximum funding, in the 2015 competition, of 18,000,000 Chilean pesos per project which could be applied to a maximum of 70 percent of its budget. This funding for production could be used for screenplay development, formulating business plans, creating a production budget, research for documentaries, casting, location scouting, and other tasks (“Concurso CORFO Cine premia 30 nuevos proyectos”). Between 2001 and 2015, the Distribución Audiovisual (Audiovisual Distribution) line of funding, which supports the promotion and distribution of Chilean films and co-productions, provided 2,600,000,000 Chilean pesos for 240 projects (“Historia de un Oso’ recibe apoyo CORFO”). In 2011, for instance,

CORFO supported twenty-one projects through CORFO Cine and twenty-seven through their Audiovisual Distribution lines of support,(*Mapeo* 270-71).<sup>140</sup> CORFO provided funding for Larraín’s films *No* and *Post mortem*, Scherson’s *Play*, *Turistas* and *Il Futuro*, and Silva’s *La vida me mata*, *Gatos viejos*, and *Nasty Baby*. Like the CNCA, CORFO’s multiple lines of financing for audiovisual productions are emblematic of the government’s comprehensive approach to the film industry.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the third of these major governmental bodies that support Chilean cinema. The two principal organizations through which the Ministry promotes and finances Chilean cinema are the Dirección de Asuntos Culturales (Cultural Affairs Administration or DIRAC) and ProChile. DIRAC is housed within the Subsecretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Undersecretariat of Foreign Relations). According to its website, “DIRAC es el organismo responsable de difundir, promover y potenciar la presencia cultural de Chile en el exterior” (“DIRAC”; “DIRAC is the organ responsible for spreading, promoting, and strengthening the culture presence of Chile abroad”). DIRAC supports cultural projects through an open competition called Proyectos DIRAC (DIRAC Projects) with two lines of financing: one for artists, cultural ambassadors, and Chilean government entities, the other for Chilean embassies, consuls, and missions abroad. DIRAC also fosters “alianzas estratégicas” (“strategic alliances”) between public and private not-for-profit organizations in Chile. In 2011, DIRAC funded 193 cultural projects, 43 of which were awarded a total of 373,000 U.S. dollars via its open competitions. The cinema sector received or 24 percent of the funds, second only to the plastic arts (*Mapeo* 274-75).

Like DIRAC, ProChile promotes Chilean cinema abroad. ProChile was established under

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<sup>140</sup> In 2015, the budget for CORFO Cine and the Audiovisual Distribution programs grew to 400,641,000 and 403,181,000 Chilean pesos, respectively (“Estadísticas Culturales: Informe Anual 2015” 408).

the military regime in 1974. The organization is part of the Dirección General de Relaciones Económicas (International Economic Relations Administration or DIRECON) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The DIRECON website describes ProChile as “la institución encargada de promover las exportaciones de productos y servicios del país, además de contribuir a la difusión de la inversión extranjera y al fomento del turismo” (“¿Qué es ProChile?”; “the institution charged with promoting the export of the country’s products and services, in addition to contributing to the promotion of foreign investment and development of tourism”). Unlike DIRAC, ProChile is not limited to cultural activities; it fomenta a wide range of Chilean exports from wine to salmon. As of 2016, the organization had fifty-five commercial offices outside of Chile. In 2011, ProChile funded nine film and television projects, distributing a total of 84,888,000 Chilean Pesos (*Mapeo* 276). These projects included support for film industry professional to attend the American Film Market in California and film markets at the Berlin, Cannes, and the Guadalajara film festivals. That same year, the organization also provided funding for the AUSTRALAB co-production market and industry development event at the Valdivia Film Festival. ProChile’s support for cinema is also funneled through its Marcas Sectoriales (Sector Brands) program, which fomenta public-private partnerships within a variety of industries and provides funding for cinema-centric organizations like CinemaChile and Shoot in Chile.

In addition to the CNCA, CORFO, and DIRAC, the government utilizes four additional institutional organizations and mechanisms to facilitate its support for the country’s audiovisual industry: BancoEstado, the National Television Council, private donations via the Ley de Donaciones con Fines Culturales (Cultural Donations Law), and co-production agreements. The independent, state-owned bank BancoEstado began directly financing cinema in 2004. From

2004 through 2014, the bank implemented a promotion-based financing program: films that showed a short spot for the bank and appended the BancoEstado logo to the film's credits and promotional material were compensated via a formula tied to the number of spectators the film attracted at local cinemas (Alonso "El complejo modelo"). *Se arrienda* was one of the beneficiaries of this program. In 2007, the bank codified this initiative under the title "Programa de Apoyo al Cine Chileno" ("Program for the Support for Chilean Cinema"). *La vida me mata*, *Tony Manero*, *Turistas*, *La nana*, *Post mortem*, *No*, and *Il Futuro* were among the more than eighty films financed through this program between 2007 and 2014. In 2015, the bank revamped its support for Chilean cinema under the initiative Programa de Fomento al Cine Chileno (Program for the Development of Chilean Cinema). There are two lines of competitive funding in this program: "Cine de Industria" ("Industrial Cinema")<sup>141</sup> and "Cine Independiente" ("Independent Cinema").<sup>142</sup> Only films which are in the post-production stage of development are eligible to compete. The winners of the competition are determined by a jury comprised of bank executives, the Ministry of Culture, audiovisual professional groups, and an invited cultural figure.<sup>143</sup> In the 2015 and 2016 editions, the jury awarded funding to six films, one in the category of Industrial Cinema, which received fifty million Chilean pesos, and five films (three fiction feature-length films, one documentary, and another feature-length animated film) in the

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<sup>141</sup> The program defines industrial productions as "producciones cinematográficas orientadas a audiencias masivas cuya duración es superior a 60 minutos, con un elenco reconocido por la audiencia chilena, en el caso de los largometrajes de ficción, cuyo director tenga una experiencia relevante en al menos 1 largometraje y que su presupuesto sea cercano a los \$ 400 millones [de pesos]" ("Programa de Fomento al Cine Chileno"; "cinematographic productions oriented towards a mass audience whose duration is longer than 60 minutes, with a cast recognizable to Chilean audiences, in the case of feature-length fiction films, whose director has relevant experience in at least one feature-length film and whose budget is around \$ 400 million [pesos]").

<sup>142</sup> The BancoEstado website defines Independent Cinema as "producciones o proyectos cinematográficos de más de 60 minutos de duración y que no superan los \$ 400 millones [de pesos] en costo de producción, cuyos directores podrán o no tener experiencia previa" ("Programa de Fomento al Cine Chileno"; "productions or cinematographic projects of sixty minutes or longer whose production costs are not more than \$ 400 million [pesos], whose directors may or may not have previous experience").

<sup>143</sup> In 2015, the filmmaker and author Antonio Skármeta served as the invited cultural figure and president of the jury.

category of Independent Cinema, each of which received ten million Chilean pesos. In the 2016 iteration of the competition, Cristián Jiménez and Alicia Scherson's *Vida de familia* and Pablo Larraín's *Neruda* were winners in the Independent and Industrial categories, respectively. BancoEstado's long-standing support for cinema exemplifies the close relationship between the cinematographic industry and the state. The bank's support for cinema is also tied to its public image as a public bank "que trabaja por el desarrollo del país y de todos los chilenos" ("La expresión de nuestra esencia"; "that works for the development of the country and all Chileans"). Announcing the winners of the 2016 competition, BancoEstado president Jorge Rodríguez Grossi highlighted the connection between the bank's cultural outreach and its public image as a state-owned bank: "tenemos una larga tradición de apoyo a iniciativas que promueven nuestra cultura, precisamente porque somos un banco que está donde otros no están y que ve lo que otros no ven. Esto nos ha situado como la única empresa chilena que ha aportado sistemáticamente al cine nacional" ("Película 'Neruda' premiada"; "we have a long tradition of supporting initiatives that promote our culture, precisely because we are a bank that is present where others aren't and sees what others don't see. This has positioned us as the only Chilean company that has systematically contributed to national cinema"). Hyperbole aside, BancoEstado's longstanding support for national cinema underscores the complementary relationship between the country's film industry, government, and business community.

The National Television Council's CNTV Fund, founded in 1993, provides support for the production of audiovisual productions exhibited on television, including made-for-TV films and miniseries.<sup>144</sup> Although the CNTV Fund primarily supports television projects, it has provided support for Chilean art cinema filmmakers, most notably Matías Lira. In 2013, the

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<sup>144</sup> The CNTV was founded in 1989. See Consejo Nacional de Televisión, "Fondo CNTV."



CNTV Fund provided 129,875,487 Chilean pesos in production financing for Lira's film and miniseries *El bosque de Karadima* (2015) ("Fondo CNTV entregó recursos").<sup>145</sup> Although smaller in scale than these other sources of funding, the CNTV Fund provides an important bridge between cinema and television.

The Law of Cultural Donations was enacted in 1990 (Law 18.985) as part of a tax reform law, and revised in 2001 (Law 19.721) and 2014 (Law 20.675). According to World CP's International Database of Cultural Policies: "The Cultural Donations Law has the objective of stimulating private investment in cultural and artistic projects and activities by providing tax rebates of up to fifty percent of the donation by private parties. Specifically, for each project funded under this law, the State provides a tax credit of half the value of the donation, relinquishing its right to charge tax for the corresponding amount" (World CP, "Chile"). In 2001 and 2014, amendments to the law were passed that expanded the types of organizations covered under the law.<sup>146</sup> Among the organizations and projects eligible for donations are museums, universities, professional institutes, non-governmental organizations, libraries, and individual artistic projects, including films. In 2006, the 727 donors under the law contributed 7,669,616,000 Chilean pesos. In 2013, 818 donors under the law contributed 25,594,548,000 Chilean pesos (*Mapeo* 293). The law exemplifies the diversification of the state's cultural policy and the emphasis the government places on facilitating private-sector investment.

Co-production agreements are another cornerstone of the Chilean government's cultural policy. Since 1999, Chile has been a member of the Programa Ibermedia (Ibermedia Program), a Spain-based co-production fund founded in 1997 and housed under the auspices of the

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<sup>145</sup> *El bosque de Karadima* aired on the channel Chilevisión (CHV) in an extended miniseries format. It was also released as a stand-alone film.

<sup>146</sup> See "Establece Normas Sobre Reforma Tributaria" (Article 8).

Conferencia de Autoridades Cinematográficas de Iberoamérica (Conference of Ibero-American Film and Audiovisual Authorities). As of 2018, the program counted twenty-one member states, including Italy, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and Spain. Tamara Falicov calls Ibermedia “the most successful film finance pool in Latin America” (“Ibero-Latin American Co-Productions” 87). Since the program began dispersing grants in 1998, it has supported hundreds of fiction and documentary films in various stages of the filmmaking process, from production to exhibition. The program offers support in three main areas: formation, development, co-production, and exhibition through the Ibermedia TV Program.<sup>147</sup> Since 2003, the Ibermedia has operated a course in Madrid for selected filmmakers to develop their projects.<sup>148</sup> In 2018, the organization expanded its support for the formation of audiovisual professionals and increased funding for animated films.<sup>149</sup> Ibermedia awarded co-production funds to Larraín’s *Fuga* in 2004, *Post Mortem* in 2009, and *No* in 2010. Scherson’s *Il Futuro* received a production grant in 2007 and participated in the Ibermedia TV program. Other Chilean beneficiaries of Ibermedia include Cristián Jiménez (*Ilusiones ópticas*, 2011) and Andrés Wood (*Machuca*, 2004, *La buena vida*, 2008, and *Violeta se fue a los cielos*, 2011). Lelio’s *Una mujer fantástica* was a recipient of co-production funds in 2015. In addition to the country’s participation in the Ibermedia, Chile also has bilateral co-production agreements with a number of Latin American and European countries, including Argentina (2003), Belgium (2017), Brazil (1996), Canada (1994), France (1990), Italy (2013), and Venezuela (1994). In 2016, Chile launched a co-production initiative with Argentina and Brazil, in which Chile is a minority partner.<sup>150</sup> And in 2017, an updated

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<sup>147</sup> See Hecht, “Ibermedia pivotal in South American market” and Programa Ibermedia, “¿Qué es Ibermedia TV?”

<sup>148</sup> See Programa Ibermedia, “Curso de Desarrollo de Proyectos Cinematográficos Iberoamericanos.”

<sup>149</sup> See Programa Ibermedia, “Ibermedia presenta su nueva modalidad de Apoyo a Programas de Formación orientado a profesionales de la industria audiovisual iberoamericana e italiana” and Mayorga, “Ibermedia Boosts Animation Support.”

<sup>150</sup> See Hopewell, “Cannes: Argentina, Chile Launch Bilateral Co-Prod Fund.”

multilateral co-production agreement went into effect between members of Ibermedia's parent body, the Conferencia de Autoridades Cinematográficas de Iberoamérica.<sup>151</sup> Chile's audiovisual co-production agreements, together with state organs like the National Council of Culture and the Arts, CORFO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Television Council, exemplify the government's multifaceted approach towards the country's film industry.

Since 2005, when the Audiovisual Fund first began distributing grants, a variety of state-supported, autonomously-operated not-for-profit organizations emerged as significant actors in Chile's audiovisual sector. Although these organizations are nominally independent of the state, they rely on government financing, incorporate government officials on their boards, and often act in concert with state organizations like the CNCA and ProChile. These state-supported organizations that support Chilean film include the Cineteca Nacional de Chile (founded in 2006), the website and digital database Cinechile (founded in 2009), Fundación Imagen de Chile (The Image Foundation of Chile) (founded in 2009), CinemaChile (founded in 2009), Shoot in Chile (founded in 2014), ChileDoc (founded in 2010), and Market Chile (founded 2013). These organizations are focused on distinct aspects of the film industry and film culture in Chile. Below I examine four of these organizations—the Cineteca Nacional, Cinechile, CinemaChile, and Market Chile—which play an important role in the development of art film.

Founded in 2006, the Cineteca Nacional is an autonomous, not-for profit organization dedicated to “la restauración, conservación y difusión del patrimonio filmico nacional y mundial” (“Acerca de”; “the conservation and diffusion of national and global audiovisual patrimony”). The Cineteca forms part of the Fundación Centro Cultural Palacio La Moneda (Moneda Palace Cultural Center Foundation), a not-for-profit, autonomous organization that

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<sup>151</sup> See Conferencia de Autoridades Cinematográficas de Iberoamérica, “Entra en vigor el Acuerdo Iberoamericano de Coproducción Cinematográfica.”

oversees the Centro Cultural Palacio La Moneda (Moneda Palace Cultural Center). However, like other not-for-profit cultural organizations in Chile that are dedicated in whole or part to supporting Chilean cinema, the foundation's autonomy is constrained by the predominance of cultural bureaucrats on its executive board. Additionally, the foundation depends on the National Council of Culture and the Arts (and since 2017 the Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Patrimony) for a significant portion of its resources.

The Cineteca is housed in La Moneda Cultural Center, which is located in a subterranean space underneath the grounds of the Presidential Palace. The symbolic location of the cinematheque beneath the seat of the chief executive reflects the centrality of cinema within the country's post-Transition cultural policy. The Cineteca features two theaters, two storage vaults, and a digital restoration laboratory. Like the Cineteca of the University of Chile (founded in 1961), the Cineteca Nacional carries out restorations and operates an archive for physical and digital films.<sup>152</sup> Both the Cineteca Nacional and the Cineteca of the University of Chile host online archives with works available to view online for free. Another mission of the Cineteca Nacional is the collection and preservation of lost or missing Chilean films and other cinematographic artifacts.<sup>153</sup> In addition to its functions as an archive and exhibition site, the Cineteca also aims to cultivate an audience for Chilean cinema through initiatives like its annual film festival; an annual conference with critics of Chilean and Latin American cinema; workshops with critics and filmmakers; forums on cinema; and the Red Cine Club Escolar (Cinema Club Scholar Network), a country-wide program designed to educate students about

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<sup>152</sup> Between 2006 and 2015, the Cineteca acquired a total of 4,882 different film titles and 11,839 rolls of film. See "Acerca de."

<sup>153</sup> In 2006, the Cineteca launched the program "Chile Tiene Memoria" ("Chile Has Memory"), which encouraged Chileans to contribute historically and culturally films and videos from their private collections. See Ross, *South American Cinematic Culture* (40).

film and expose them to national film.<sup>154</sup>

Like the Cineteca, the not-for-profit organization Cinechile (also known as Cinechile.cl) aims to make Chilean cinema accessible to local audiences. Cinechile was created by a group of journalists and researchers in 2009 with a grant from the CNCA. The organization briefly ceased operation in January 2018 due to a lack of funding, before resuming operations in March 2018 after receiving support from the Audiovisual Fund.<sup>155</sup> On its website, Cinechile describes itself as an “Enciclopedia de Cine Chileno” (“Encyclopedia of Chilean Cinema”) (“Qué es”). Its website features an online repository of information about Chilean cinema, including technical and production data on national films, as well as a cache of related newspaper articles and other archival material. The organization also publishes criticism, interviews, and studies on Chilean cinema, encompassing silent-era to contemporary productions. The creation of Cinechile coincided with the emergence of Chile-based online publications about national and international cinema like *Mabuse* (founded in 2002), *laFuga* (founded in 2005), *El Otro Cine* (founded in 2006), *Galaxia UP* (2012-2017), and *Bitácora de Cine* (founded in 2018). The emergence of these film-centric websites parallels fundamental shifts in the way in which cinema is distributed and consumed in early-21st-century Chile.

Another significant state-supported not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting Chilean art cinema is CinemaChile. This organization was founded in 2009 as a public-private partnership between the Asociación Gremial de Productores de Cine y Televisión (Trade Association of Cinema and Television Producers or APCT) and ProChile under its Sectorial

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<sup>154</sup> Red Cine Club Escolar grew out of a 2008 workshop sponsored by the Cineteca. The program was established in 2014 with support from the Audiovisual Fund. See Machuca, *Programa de formación docente* (9).

<sup>155</sup> Cinechile received financing from the Audiovisual Fund shortly after *Una mujer fantástica*'s Oscar win for Best Foreign Language Film. See Estévez and Morales, “Cinechile.cl cierra el 31 de enero por falta de financiamiento” and *Cinechile*, “Tras casi dos meses, Cinechile.cl vuelve a estar en línea.”

Brands program. CinemaChile has a broad mandate to promote Chilean cinema at home and abroad. According to its website: “CinemaChile apunta a ser una plataforma activa que facilite la exportación del cine y la diversidad de la producción audiovisual nacional tanto para las empresas consolidadas en el circuito internacional, como para aquellas que recién abren su ruta de exportación al mundo” (“Acerca de CinemaChile”; “CinemaChile aims to be a platform that facilitates the exportation of cinema and the diversity of national audiovisual production for companies consolidated in the international circuit, as well as for those that recently opened a path to global export”).

CinemaChile performs a variety of roles within Chile’s film industry. The organization publishes articles and reports in Spanish and English on Chilean cinema and television; maintains links between the public and private sectors; sponsors travel and events for Chilean filmmakers, producers, and other industry professionals at film festivals; and organizes workshops and presentations directed at Chilean audiovisual industry professionals. In 2014, CinemaChile launched a short-lived distribution program under the name Chile Territorio de Cine (Chile Territory of Cinema) with a 179,994,833 Chilean Peso grant from the Audiovisual Fund.<sup>156</sup> Under this program, the organization distributed nine Chilean films, including Sebastián Silva’s *Crystal Fairy & The Magical Cactus*. Notwithstanding this brief experiment with distribution, CinemaChile most visible initiatives are the promotion of Chilean cinema at film festivals. In 2015, CinemaChile sponsored booths for Chilean filmmakers and audiovisual professionals at the Berlin Film Festival’s European Film Market and at the Cannes Film Festival’s Marché du Film (Film Market).<sup>157</sup> As a public-private partnership, CinemaChile is

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<sup>156</sup> See CinemaChile, “Chile Territorio de Cine” and CNCA, “Resultados 2014 Fondos Cultura” (147).

<sup>157</sup> Remarking on CinemaChile’s participation at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, Executive Director Constanza Arenas observed: “es sencillamente la misión más importante del año para nuestro país y vamos muy preparados”

emblematic of the interdependent relationship between the private sector and the state.

Market Chile is an innovative distribution and exhibition program for Chilean cinema. Market Chile is a subsidiary of the prominent Chilean distribution company BF Distribution in 2013 with support from the CNCA. In addition to being one of the major film distributors in Chile, BF Distribution also operated the BF Huérfanos cinema in Santiago between 2011 and 2012. This movie theater was dedicated to the projection of local films, and its creation was supported with a grant from the Audiovisual Fund.<sup>158</sup> The Market Chile initiative was launched with the purpose of promoting Chilean films within local commercial cinemas. In practice, Market Chile functions as a subsidized distribution and exhibition program, with state-support underwriting part of the costs of exhibition. According to a press release from the CNCA, Market Chile “destinará espacios a las películas chilenas que necesitan un subsidio en la exhibición para tener una presencia garantizada en el circuito comercial y ganar mayor visibilidad” (“Market Chile inicia actividades”; “will provide spaces for Chilean films that need an exhibition subsidy to have guaranteed presence in the commercial circuit and to obtain greater visibility”). The initiative is a public-private partnership, that draws on support from the CNCA; the Audiovisual Fund (which provided substantial funding for Market Chile in 2014 and 2015); private corporations like the telecommunications firm VTR and the French beverage company Pernod Ricard; as well as the exhibitors Cine Hoyts, Cinemundo, Cinemark, and Cineplanet.

Whereas its sister program, the documentary-focused MiraDoc, constitutes a parallel network of distribution and exhibition centered around art cinemas and non-standard venues, Market Chile aims to insert Chilean films directly into the country’s multiplexes and independent

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(Yáñez “Producciones nacionales salen al mundo”; “it is easily the most important mission of the year for our country and we are very prepared”).

<sup>158</sup> See Letelier, “Cierre de sala BF Huérfanos.”

theaters.<sup>159</sup> In 2015, four theaters in Santiago, and one each in La Serena, Puerto Montt, and Valparaíso served as Market Chile venues. As noted above, Market Chile has provided an important outlet for Chilean films in commercial cinemas, and represents an alternative model to screen quota systems like the one implemented in Brazil in the 1930s under the regime of Getúlio Vargas.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, Chile's state-private model of distribution and exhibition provided the background for the formal codification of a more expansive distribution and exhibition model for local films under a 2013 agreement between filmmakers, trade groups, not-for-profit organizations, and the government.

Alongside and in conjunction with state initiatives and state-supported not-for-profit organizations and initiatives, university film schools and private production, distribution, and exhibition companies play significant roles in the development and consolidation of Chile's film industry during this period. Critics point to local film schools as a driving force behind Chilean cinema in the Transition and post-Transition periods.<sup>161</sup> Since the foundation of the independent Escuela de Cine de Chile in 1995, numerous film schools have proliferated in Chile at both public and private universities, including Universidad del Desarrollo, University of Chile, Universidad Mayor, Universidad Arcis, Uniacc, Universidad de Viña del Mar, Universidad de Valparaíso, Universidad del Mar, and Universidad Católica (Kemp, "La amoralidad del individualismo" 208). These film schools and programs are dedicated to the study of various aspects of film and media studies, including criticism, direction, and production. Many Chilean filmmakers working in the Transition and post-Transition periods studied at these institutions,

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<sup>159</sup> The MiraDoc distribution and exhibition initiative is run by the not-for-profit ChileDoc. See ChileDoc, "Quiénes somos."

<sup>160</sup> For an overview of the Brazilian government's cinematographic policies in the 20th century see Johnson, "Film Policy in Latin America" (139-45).

<sup>161</sup> See Flores (71-73); Cavallo and Maza (15-16); Urrutia, "Hacia una política en tránsito" (36-37); Urrutia, *Un cine centrifugo* (34); and Kemp, "La amoralidad del individualismo" (207-08).



including Elisa Eliash (a graduate of the Escuela de Cine de Chile), Sebastián Lelio (also an alumni of the Escuela de Cine de Chile), Larraín (a graduate of Uniacc), and Silva (who studied briefly at the Escuela de Cine de Chile). Chilean filmmakers have also attended film school outside of the country's borders. Scherson and Silva studied at film schools outside of Chile, in Cuba and Canada, respectively. The growth of Chile-based film schools and the prominent careers of many former students of these institutions are among the most significant manifestations of the maturation of the country's film industry.

The Chilean production companies Fabula, Jirafa, and Cinépata play prominent roles in the country's film industry. These companies not only finance films; they serve as bridges between local and transnational sources of financing and support. They are linchpins of the "kinship network in which like-minded cineastes, whether actors, directors, or producers, join forces to ensure the continuity of their projects" (Kemp, "Stardom in Spanish America" 49). Although they adopt distinct approaches to making movies, they work with many of the same directors and talent.

The multimedia production company Fabula was founded by Pablo and Juan de Dios Larraín in 2004. Between 2006 and 2015, Fabula produced nineteen films, including all of Larraín's films and Silva's *La vida me mata*, *Crystal Fairy*, and *Nasty Baby*. In addition to state funding, many of these films received financing from not-for-profit cultural organizations and film festivals. Sebastián Lelio's *Gloria* (2013, Chile/Spain), a Fabula production, exemplifies this multifaceted, transnational financing and distribution model of Fabula films. In addition to funding from BancoEstado, *Gloria* received a post-production grant as winner of the Films in Progress initiative. *Gloria* premiered at the 2013 Berlin Film Festival, where actress Paulina

García received the Silver Bear award for Best Actress.<sup>162</sup> In addition to its work in film, Fabula has a partnership with Santiago-based La Casa Films to produce advertisements. The Larraín brothers' firm also works with Spanish production company Secuoya to produce television content under the Fabula TV brand.

Minerva Campos observes that the visibility and cachet of Fabula, particularly at film festivals, plays a key role in the success of Fabula-produced films in obtaining funding abroad. Writing about the Chilean company and the Uruguayan production house Control Z Films, Campos maintains that both companies “have established themselves as brands of reference for their respective national cinemas, an issue closely connected with the success of . . . [their] films at festivals all over the world” (103). Fabula's accession to a novel co-financing partnership with the Hollywood production company Participant Media epitomizes its global reach and influence. This venture, dubbed Participant PanAmerica, is a multi-year, multi-film partnership between Participant, Fabula, Mexico's Canana Films, and Colombia's Dynamo Producciones.<sup>163</sup> Under the Agreement, Fabula and Participant Media co-financed Larraín's *No* and *Neruda*, as well as Sebastián Lelio's *Una mujer fantástica* (*A Fantastic Woman*, 2017), the winner of the 2018 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. In 2017, Fabula opened an office in Los Angeles.<sup>164</sup> In an article in *Variety* announcing the new office, John Hopewell describes the transnational, Latin American-centric focus of the company's expansion: “Fabula will, however, produce not only titles from Larraín, [Sebastián] Lelio and other Chilean directors but also offer itself as a production base for other non-American directors who are seeking to move into

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<sup>162</sup> In addition to its work with Chilean filmmakers, Fabula co-produced American filmmaker Abel Ferrara's film *4:44 Last Day on Earth* (France/Chile, 2011).

<sup>163</sup> See Hopewell, “Participant PanAmerica Launches.”

<sup>164</sup> In March 2018, former Paramount Pictures executive Geoff Stier was appointed CEO of Fabula's North American operations. See Hopewell, “Larraín Brothers Appoint Geoff Stier as GEO of Fabula in North America.”

English-language filmmaking but wary of losing total control of their projects in the U.S.” (Pablo and Juan de Dios Larrain’s Fabula”). The article quotes Pablo Larrain describing the move as a means of connecting Spanish American filmmakers with financing without sacrificing ownership of their films: “For multiple reasons, there is a lot of talent that has trouble connecting in the U.S. with the production system . . . We would look to find a path for a filmmaker and his company coming to the U.S. to make a movie where he or she will also be owners of what they do.” (Pablo and Juan de Dios Larrain’s Fabula”). In 2017, Fabula also expanded its partnership with Spain’s Secuoya, establishing Secuoya Films, a production company, which “aims to make international co-productions, principally films between Spain-Latin American, and comedies targeting Spain’s local market” (Hopewell, “Secuoya, Pablo and Juan Larrain’s”). Fabula’s expansions in Los Angeles and Spain augments the company’s transnational reach and deepens its role as a producer of Spanish-language cinema.

The Valdivia-based production company Jirafa, founded in 2001, also pursues a transnational production model. Bruno Bettati, the company’s founder, is enmeshed in Chile’s cultural industries and personifies the blurry dividing line between the private and public sectors. Bettati served as Executive Director of CinemaChile (2009-2011), president of the Association of Cinema and Television Producers (2009-2012), director of the Valdivia Film Festival (2010-2013), and from 2014 to 2016 he held positions at the CNCA, CORFO, and the Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno (General Secretariat of Government Ministry). Bettati is also the author of *Why Not? Política industrial para el audiovisual chileno* (2012), in which he offers analysis of and policy suggestions.<sup>165</sup> Bettati describes his career as “singular” and maintains that

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<sup>165</sup> In *Why Not?*, Bettati remarks that it is “fundamental combinar diferentes políticas públicas para estabilizar a la industria nacional audiovisual en forma definitiva y reducir su dependencia del fomento estatal” (15; “necessary to combine different public policies to stabilize the national audiovisual industry in a definitive way and reduce its dependence on state aid”).

his company has played a crucial role in the development of Chile's cinema industry: "Creo que nuestro trabajo contribuye significativamente al acervo cultural de la nación, dinamiza las economías locales y potencia la marca del país en el extranjero" (Udenio "El largo cuello de la jirafa"; "I believe that our work contributes significantly to the cultural archive of the nation, invigorates local economies, and strengthens the country's brand abroad"). Jirafa has produced and co-produced films by Scherson (*Il Futuro*), Silva (*Magic Magic*), Alejandro Fernández Almendras (*Huacho* (2009) and *Aquí no ha pasado nada* (2016)), and Cristián Jiménez (*Ilusiones Ópticas* (2009), *Bonsái* (2011), and *La voz en off* (2014)). In an article published in *Variety* in 2013, John Hopewell calls Jirafa "a driving force behind the surge of new Chilean films" ("Jirafa Sets Co-Prod Partners"). Hopewell points to Jirafa's co-production partnership with Canadian and French production companies to co-produce *La voz en off* as an example of the production company's global reach and positive reputation.

Like Fabula, Jirafa relies on complex financing and distribution models that incorporate a range of private and public entities. The financing of *Huacho*, Fernández Almendras's debut feature film, exemplifies the transnational production strategies of the production house and its associated filmmakers. *Huacho* was produced by Jirafa and Charivari Films in co-production with France's Arte France Cinema and Germany's Pandora Filmproduktion. *Huacho* also received financing from the Audiovisual Fund, BancoEstado, and the regional government of the Bío Bío Region, as well as France's Fonds Sud Cinéma, France's Ministry of Culture and Communication, France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the France-based Fondation Groupama Gan pour le Cinéma, the Région Île-de-France, the Berlin Film Festival's World Cinema Fund, the San Francisco-based not-for-profit The Global Film Initiative, and the Sundance

Institute/NHK award.<sup>166</sup> As we shall see in the chapter on Alicia Scherson's *Il Futuro*—another Jirafa production—, this model of transnational production which draws on a variety of state, private, and not-for-profit organizations is the norm for Jirafa.

Like Fabula and Jirafa, Alberto Fuguet's Cinémeta and Cinémeta.com occupy a central place within Chile's film industry in the post-Transition period.<sup>167</sup> Cinémeta and Cinémeta.com are distinct but interconnected initiatives. The production house Cinémeta produced all of Fuguet's feature films, beginning with his debut film *Se arrienda* (2005). The company also co-produced Cristóbal Valderrama's 2007 film *Malta con huevo* (*Scrambled Beer*) and Pablo Cerda's 2010 film *Educación física* (*P.E.*). In 2009, Fuguet founded the online distribution and exhibition venture Cinémeta.com. The creation of Cinémeta.com coincides with the emergence of online streaming services globally, most notably the U.S. based Netflix, which began its streaming-on-demand service in 2007 and entered Chile in 2011. Cinémeta hosts an extensive archive of Chilean and Latin American cinema, including short films and documentaries from the first decade-and-a-half of the 21st century.<sup>168</sup> In addition to films, the site also features film reviews and essays from numerous contributors, including Fuguet.

Fuguet describes Cinémeta.com as the product of his own cinephile impulses. In an editorial announcing the end of regular operation of the Cinémeta.com in 2014, he writes: "Cinémeta surgió de esa unión: la psicopatía por el cine" ("Editorial de despedida"; "Cinémeta emerged from that union: psychopathy for cinema").<sup>169</sup> In an earlier post on the site, titled

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<sup>166</sup> The Sundance Institute/NHK Award is sponsored by the Sundance Film Festival and the Japanese state broadcaster NHK "to contribute to the world's visual culture and to promote cultural exchanges through finding and supporting emerging filmmakers" ("What Is 'Sundance Institute/NHK Award'?").

<sup>167</sup> Cinémeta was the name of Alberto Fuguet's column in *El Mercurio*'s "Wikén" supplement from 2001-2002. See *Apuntes autistas* (83-84).

<sup>168</sup> The site hosts films by numerous Chilean filmmakers including Nayra Ilic, Sebastián Lelio, José "Ché" Sandoval, and Alicia Scherson.

<sup>169</sup> For more on Cinémeta, see *El Mercurio de Valparaíso*, "Alberto Fuguet desafía a las multisalas de cine."

“Ahora, aquí, en tu pantalla favorita, gratis” (“Now, here, on your favorite screen, free,” 2010), Fuguet describes another impetus behind the creation of the site: the insufficiency of existing distribution and exhibition models. He conceives of Cinéyata.com as a legal, free, and alternative platform for Latin American cinema:

*Cinéyata* hace películas pensadas para la red porque es vía la red como podemos llegar a muchos cinéyatas sin tener que ser una mega distribuidora con sede en Hollywood. *Cinéyata* cree en *Creative Commons*, en el cine barato e independiente, pero no por eso pobre en ideas y dependiente de las modas. *Cinéyata* cree en el cine que quiere a sus personajes, y cree que la emoción es acaso el ingrediente clave y que en todos los países hispanos hay creadores y espectadores potenciales que no les basta—que ya no pueden— depender de la cartelera local para tener una sana alimentación cinéfila. (“Ahora, aquí, en tu pantalla favorita, gratis,” author’s emphasis; *Cinéyata* makes movies designed for the web because it is through the web that we can reach many cinéyatas without having to be a mega distributor with headquarters in Hollywood. *Cinéyata* believes in *Creative Commons*, in cheap and independent cinema, but not for that lacking in ideas and dependent on trends. *Cinéyata* believes in cinema that loves its characters, and believes that emotion is perhaps the key ingredient, and that in all Hispanic countries there are creators and spectators for whom it is not enough—who can no longer—depend on the local marquee for a healthy cinephile diet)

Fuguet’s emphasis on the outsider character of Cinéyata.com echoes Fuguet and Sergio Gómez’s short story anthology *McOndo* (1996) which contains “cuentos distintos” (17; “different kinds of stories”) by a group of “nuevos escritores hispanoamericanos” (“new Hispanic American writers”). Like *McOndo*, Cinéyata also aims to establish practical and symbolic connections

between Latin American filmmakers. Fuguet states that the inclusion of cinema from countries across Latin America functions as a remedy to the fragmentation of Latin American cinema: “Muchas [de la películas] son latinoamericanas porque nosotros lo somos, y sabemos y lamentamos que a pesar de todo lo que tenemos en común, en muchas cosas estamos tan separados” (“Ahora, aquí, en tu pantalla favorita, gratis”; Many [of the films] are Latin American because we are, and we know and lament that despite everything that we share in common, in many things we are so separate”). The site’s curatorial practices reflect Fuguet’s conception of Cinémeta as a pan-continental online art house, in which Chilean films are featured alongside Argentine and Peruvian productions. The site’s regional focus is similarly reflected in its publication of critical reviews and essays on Latin American cinema.

Fuguet and Cinémeta.com’s emphasis on curation is intertwined with its function as a place to consume and discuss cinema. Fuguet describes the site as an online art-house community, where cinephiles can engage with films that did not receive wide theatrical releases:

Acá en *Cinémeta* queremos hacer una suerte de sala de cine-arte o cine-alternativo virtual gratis, donde puedas encontrar películas y cortos que muchas veces nacen o mueren en festivales, o que apenas pasan por una pantalla sucia y deshilachada de una ciudad grande. *Cinémeta* quiere también ser una comunidad de cinéfilos que se intercambian información y que confían en sus gustos. En *Cinémeta* creemos que la pantalla ancha es un privilegio y un evento, y que aquellos autores cuyas películas se proyectan más-grande-que-la-vida deben celebrar su suerte. Pero también creemos que, al final, buena parte de las cintas que nos han hecho quienes somos, que nos han exaltado y protegido, salvado y potenciado, las hemos visto en pantalla chica: en VHS o DVD, en Blue Ray o en el cable, en la tele abierta o en tu computador vía descargas. Creemos que el cine dura

para siempre pero no hay nada como ver una película nueva ahora, en tu pantalla favorita. Si esa pantalla no está cerca tuya, pues ya es hora que llegue a ti. Que tú elijas el cuándo, el cómo, con quién, todo. (“Ahora, aquí, en tu pantalla favorita, gratis”; Here at *Cinépata* we want to create a kind of art-house theater or free virtual alternative-cinema, where you can find feature and short films that often are born and die in festivals, or that barely move from a dirty and frayed screen in a big city. *Cinépata* also wants to be a community of cinephiles that exchange information and trust their tastes. In *Cinépata* we believe that the big screen is a privilege and an event, and that those filmmakers whose films are projected larger-than-life should celebrate their luck. But we also believe that, in the end, we have seen a good part of the films that have made us who we are, that have excited and protected, saved and strengthened us, on the small screen: VHS or DVD, on Blue Ray or on cable, or on over-the-air TV or downloaded on your computer. We believe that cinema lasts forever but there is nothing like seeing a new film right now, on your favorite screen. If that screen is not near your, it is time that it comes to you. You should choose when, how, and with whom, everything)

Fuguet’s emphasis on the consumption of cinema on one’s own terms echoes the individual-centric McOndo sensibility. And just as Fuguet and Gómez’s *McOndo* prologue and the short-story collection emphasize the creation of a community of writers and readers, Cinépata.com is an initiative by and for the cinephile. In his “Editorial de despedida” (“Goodbye Editorial”) Fuguet underscores the site’s focus on its cinephile users: “Cinépata.com fue un sitio vivo, un medio de comunicación, una comunidad algo psicopática pero llena de vida y energía” (“Editorial de despedida”; “Cinépata was a living site, a means of communication, a somewhat psychopathic community, but full of life and energy”). Cinépata.com, and its sister production



house, are emblematic of the diverse strategies Chilean filmmakers and audiovisual industry professionals employ in an era of increased state-funding and the rapid evolution of digital technologies.

Cinépata.com is part of the growth of online distribution and exhibition platforms, a phenomenon which represents the most significant shift in the business of cinema in the early-21st century. The Cineteca Nacional, the Cineteca of the University of Chile, and the Film School of the University of Valparaíso operate digital archives of Chilean cinema. MAFI, a not-for-profit foundation founded by a group of Chilean filmmakers, created “Mapa filmico de un país” (“Filmic Map of a Country”). This filmic map is comprised of short films by different filmmakers from regions across the country. The earliest films in the series dates back to 2011.<sup>170</sup> And, as noted above, Netflix’s subscription streaming service, which includes Chilean films, has operated in Chile since 2011. However, the service most similar to Cinépata.com is the Chile-based Ojocorto, a subscription streaming service launched in 2013. Ojocorto features Chilean shorts, features, and documentaries as well as a selection of films from Latin America and elsewhere. In a 2015 interview Catalina Rojas, a filmmaker and the founder of Ojocorto, describes the site as a “plataforma pensada con la idea de generar retribución para los productores y directores de películas independientes y cortometrajes que no encuentran espacios de exhibición en los circuitos formales de comercialización, como salas de cine o televisión” (“Entrevista a Catalina Rojas”; “platform conceived of with the idea of generating revenue for producers and directors of independent films and shorts that don’t have exhibition spaces in established commercial exhibition circuits, like movie theaters or television”). Like

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<sup>170</sup> MAFI also operates a film school for young filmmakers. The Escuela MAFI has been in operation since 2013. See “Sobre MAFI” and “Escuela MAFI.”

Cinépata.com, Ojocorto utilizes digital technology to facilitate viewers' access to Chilean cinema outside of traditional venues.

Although online exhibition represents a sea change in the global marketplace for cinema, box office figures remain an economically and politically significant measure of the success of Chilean cinema for both Chile's film industry and the state. The collaborative efforts by the state, state-sponsored organizations, and private companies to foment audiences reached an apotheosis in 2013 when a range of stakeholders in Chile's cinematographic industry signed on to a novel private-public exhibition partnership. The impulse behind this deal was twofold. On the one hand, it was a response to longstanding concern about limited local audiences for Chilean films. On the other, this partnership was a response to political pressure for a screen quota. This public-private initiative reflects the interdependence of stakeholders in Chile's film industry. The partnership was codified in the 2013 "Convenio de colaboración para el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de la industria cinematográfica chilena" ("Agreement of Collaboration for the Development and Strengthening of the Chilean Cinematographic Industry"). Like Market Chile, this public-private partnership expands exhibition opportunities for national films at local multiplexes. The Agreement went into effect in 2014 for a year-long period and was renewed in modified form in 2015. The Agreement was signed by the following industry trade groups, and cinema-related organizations: the multiplex chains Cine Hoyts, Cinemark Chile, and Cineplex (the operators of Cineplanet theaters); the Association of Producers of Film and Television (APCT); the Association of Chilean Documentary Filmmakers (ADOC); the Chilean Association of Professionals and Producers of Animation (ANIMACHI); the Association of Directors and Screenwriters of Chile (ADG); the distributor Market Chile; and CinemaChile. The Agreement states that this initiative "será un complemento a las líneas públicas de apoyo al audiovisual

chileno” (2; “will complement the public lines of support for Chilean audiovisual productions”).

The goals enumerated in the Agreement are similar to many of the objectives of the other organizations described earlier in this chapter:

- Contribuir al fortalecimiento de la industria cinematográfica chilena (Contribute to the strengthening of the Chilean cinematographic industry).
- Potenciar el resultado comercial de las películas chilenas en los circuitos de las cadenas multisalas firmantes (Strengthen the commercial outcome of Chilean films in the circuits of the signatory multiplex chains).
- Apoyar a la descentralización de la exhibición de las películas chilenas mediante la realización de estrenos en regiones que contribuyan a formar audiencias en estos territorios (Support the decentralization of the exhibition of Chilean films through screenings in regions that contribute to forming audiences in these territories).
- Impulsar la profesionalización de la labor de promoción del cine chileno (2; Stimulate the professionalization of the work of promoting Chilean cinema).

In practice, the initiative opens limited exhibition space for a small number of Chilean films at the three largest domestic multiplex chains: Cine Hoyts, Cinemark Chile, and Cineplanet.

The terms of the Agreement apply to both Chilean fiction and documentary films on a voluntary basis.<sup>171</sup> In its original incarnation, the Agreement guarantees thirty spots annually for Chilean films to be exhibited at the three participating multiplex chains. Participating films are eligible to premiere at any time, pending available screen space, albeit with a limit of two premieres during the months of May and June, and no films in July—the height of the country’s winter holiday season. A minimum of six and a maximum of ten copies of each film may be

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<sup>171</sup> The original Agreement does not explicitly define what comprises a “Chilean” film, however, Chilean co-productions are also eligible to participate.

exhibited as part of the program.<sup>172</sup> The enactment of the Agreement was motivated by a number of factors and represents a compromise between filmmakers, cultural brokers, producers, distributors, and exhibitors. The signatories promoted the Agreement as a way of expanding audiences for Chilean cinema by guaranteeing space for Chilean cinema within multiplex chains. However, the Agreement was also the result of a political compromise, stimulated in part by the introduction of a bill to Congress in 2013 that would have established a screen quota via amendments to the 2004 Audiovisual Fund Law.<sup>173</sup> CAEM, the trade group representing exhibitors, was particularly vocal in their opposition to this or any other screen quota law.<sup>174</sup> The head of the exhibitors' trade group, Alejandro Caloguerea, argued that any such bill would be “unconstitutional” and “arbitrary discrimination towards one [economic] sector.” The passage of the Agreement was motivated by two factors: the political pressure exerted on exhibitors by Congress, and the favorable disposition of producers, distributors, and the government to reach a deal within the framework of a public-private partnership model.

Negotiations on the Agreement lasted three years and were led by Juan de Dios Larraín, who at the time served as the vice-president of the Association of Film and Television Producers. Commenting shortly after the passage of the agreement, Larraín pointed to the challenges

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<sup>172</sup> During their first week, films are exhibited during every function and in the second week during the two primetime slots. The film's continuation in theaters is contingent upon a copy of the film attracting a minimum of three hundred spectators between Thursday and Sunday. Producers and/or distributors may present Chilean films to participate in the initiative, but in doing so they must specify a premiere date; indicate which of the two fourteen-theater exhibition circuits they wish to screen their film in and in which cinemas within said circuit; and provide promotional materials for the film (3-5). Additionally, the Agreement does not preclude producers and distributors operating outside of the agreement from making exhibition deals with these three exhibitors.

<sup>173</sup> The 2013 screen quota bill was introduced by the Congressman Marcelo Díaz. The bill called for a screen quota for multiplex exhibitors. The bill specified that national and Latin American films would have to make up at least one-third of the total films shown at multiplexes. The proposal also included a mechanism for allowing a film to continue in theaters, based on the percent of seats sold during the film's first week in cinemas. See Díaz, “Proyecto de ley” (1-4)

<sup>174</sup> In 2007 and 2013, CAEM published reports in which the trade group argues that the audiovisual law was an illegal infringement on the business interests of exhibitors and an ineffective response to larger structural deficits within the Chilean film industry. See CAEM, “Opinión de CAEM sobre los Sistemas de Cuotas de Pantalla” and CAEM, “Opinión sobre el Proyecto de ley de cuota de pantalla.”

Chilean films face at the local box office as the main motivating factor behind the accord: “Había muchas películas que no tenían posibilidad de estar en estas salas compitiendo. Y con las mismas reglas de películas de estudios americanos, era imposible de sostenerse” (“Cine Chileno: el convenio que intentó reemplazar”; “There were many films that did not have the possibility of being in these theaters competing. And with the same rules as American studio films, it was impossible to sustain”). Announcing the Agreement, Roberto Ampuero, the Minister of Culture and a noted author, also expressed concern about the limited audiences for Chilean cinema. He described the Agreement as an important tool for making local films more accessible:

Hemos llegado a un feliz momento, en que el sector audiovisual ha consolidado volúmenes relevantes de producción de calidad, estando presentes y siendo reconocido en los más prestigiosos circuitos internacionales. Sin embargo, paralelamente, nos vemos enfrentados al desafío de generar una mayor audiencia a nivel local, y es por ello que hoy nuestro foco debe centrarse en mejorar el acceso y las condiciones de exhibición a lo largo de todo Chile, así como también lograr un plan integral de formación de audiencias que incentive el consumo de obras nacionales. (“Inédito convenio”; We have arrived at a happy moment, in which the audiovisual sector has consolidated relevant volumes of quality production, being present and recognized in the most prestigious international circuits. However, parallel to this, we are faced with the challenge of generating a larger audience at the local level, and for that reason our focus today should be on improving access and exhibition conditions throughout Chile, as well as achieving a comprehensive plan for the formation of audiences that incentivizes the consumption of national films)

Ampuero’s emphasis on international prestige, the growth in the number of local productions, and the low audience numbers is consistent with the larger pattern of official rhetoric towards the

country's cinematographic industry. However, not all industry stakeholders were optimistic about the deal. The filmmaker José "Ché" Sandoval maintained the quota was implemented as a compromise so that exhibitors could avoid a quota law. Sandoval argued for more robust government intervention in the cinema sector: "Los exhibidores deberían estar obligados a ayudar a las cintas chilenas y la televisión pública obligada a promocionarlas . . . El convenio no es la mejor manera, hay que darle una vuelta. La ley de cuota de pantalla es más realista como opción" ("Cine Chileno: el convenio que intentó reemplazar"; "Exhibitors should be obligated to support Chilean films and public television obligated to promote them . . . The Agreement is not the best way, you have to shake it up. The screen quota law is a more realistic option"). The debate around the first iteration of this Agreement reflects the range of actors and interests who have a stake in Chile's cinematographic industry. Although exhibitors exerted outsized pressure on the Agreement, its passage represented a compromise among the various trade groups and industry actors to expand Chilean films' access to multiplexes without imposing a formal screen quota.

Shortly after the expiration of the initial version of the Agreement at the end of 2014, it was renewed with significant modifications.<sup>175</sup> One of the most significant changes concerned eligibility restrictions. Under the revised Agreement, only films that received financing from the Audiovisual Fund or the Ibermedia Program, or films that screened in a limited number of film festivals are eligible to participate.<sup>176</sup> The emphasis on government funding reflects the prominent role of the state in financing cinema and its close relationship with nominally autonomous organizations in the country's audiovisual sector. Likewise, the prerequisite that

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<sup>175</sup> See "Modificaciones al Convenio de colaboración para el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de la industria cinematográfica chilena."

<sup>176</sup> These film festivals are as follows: Berlin, Toronto, San Sebastián, Venice, Locarno, Sitges, International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), Hot Docs, Clermont Ferrand, and Sundance.

films without government funding screen at prominent film festivals underscores the prestige the state and film industry attribute to these events. Participation in these select festivals signals a film's worthiness to be screened at local multiplexes. The modified Agreement adds further restrictions. Only one national production can be premiered under the modified Agreement per week (with only three premieres during the months of May and June, and none in July).<sup>177</sup> Not all of the changes are restrictive, however. Producers and distributors may provide between six and seventeen copies of the film for exhibition, thereby enabling production and distribution companies with fewer copies of a film to participate, while also allowing producers and distributors to exhibit more copies of a film. Notwithstanding its restrictions and limitations, this historic accord between producers, distributors, and exhibitors increased opportunities for Chilean films to screen within the multiplex chains that dominate the exhibition sector. In 2014, eighteen films or 45 percent of those released that year benefitted from the Agreement. This grew to twenty films in 2015, or 77 percent of all films released that year ("El cine en Chile en el 2016" 24). This Agreement exemplifies the public-private partnership model employed by other organizations and initiatives in Chile's cinematographic sector. The byzantine conditions of the partnership reflect the delicate political compromise underlying the Agreement, as well as the complex equilibrium between the public and private sectors in Chile's cinematographic industry.

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<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, films that participate under the Agreement are only guaranteed a minimum of three screenings daily during the first week, and only films that attract at least one hundred spectators or 6 percent attendance (out of any of the copies) are eligible to extend their exhibition for a second week.

## 2. And the Award Goes To: Film Festivals and Early-21st-Century Art Film

Film festivals play a vital role in the development and reception of Chilean art film. At these cosmopolitan organizations-cum-events, Chilean art cinema filmmakers gained global visibility, accrued considerable cultural prestige, and obtained resources for the production, distribution, and exhibition of their films. For Larraín, Scherson, Silva, and, to a lesser degree, Fuguet, film festivals shape the reception of their films and their cosmopolitan identities. In the face of small domestic audiences for many of their works, the “alternative network” of film festivals offer these filmmakers exposure to a global public and the opportunity to accumulate prestige (De Valck 58). Parallel with their role in shaping the reception of these films, many of these events-slash-cultural organizations operate funding mechanisms and affiliated-organizations designed to support the production, distribution, and exhibition of films. With the adoption of this relatively new role, a significant number of film festivals function along the lines of a vertical model of industry, financing and supporting films which are then screened, often as exclusive premieres, by the very same festivals.

This chapter is divided into two halves. The first half highlights the dual roles of film festivals, which are as semi-annual or annual events dedicated to the exhibition, curation, production, distribution, and business of cinema. I analyze the role of three film festival production and distribution initiatives as they relate to the development of Chilean art cinema: International Film Festival Rotterdam’s Hubert Bals Fund, Donostia Zinemaldia Festival de San Sebastián and Rencontres Cinémas d’Amérique Latine de Toulouse’s Films in Progress initiative, and the Berlin Film Festival’s World Cinema Fund. I also examine the participation of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, Silva, and their films at festivals. These filmmakers’ cosmopolitan identities are inextricable from their circulation within the global film festival network. The



second half presents short case studies of film festivals that bookend the period under study and which loom large in critical narratives of early-21st-century Chilean art cinema: the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and the 2015 Berlin Film Festival. The circulation of Chilean art films and filmmakers at these two festivals is emblematic of their transnational filmmaking practices. I also examine accounts by journalists and critics of Chilean films and filmmakers at these two festivals. These accounts emphasize the auteur qualities and cultural prestige of Chilean art cinema.

## 2.1. Film Festivals, Cultural Prestige, and Chilean Art Cinema

Film festivals are multifaceted, generally not-for-profit organizations with two principal functions: 1) the curation and exhibition of cinema at annual or semi-annual events, and 2) the production and distribution of cinema through financing initiatives, film markets, pedagogical programs, and related activities.<sup>178</sup> The manifold operations of film festivals reflect their eclectic and diverse nature. James English describes film festivals as “exceptionally cosmopolitan contact zones where artists, critics, financiers, and the general public mingle with their counterparts from all around the world” (23). The film festival has evolved significantly since its origins in the early 1930s.<sup>179</sup> Early-21st-century festivals, much like the films they show, are diverse affairs. Some, like Los Angeles’s queer cinema-themed Outfest (founded in 1982)<sup>180</sup> or the Festival de Cine Documental de Chiloé (Chiloé Documentary Film Festival) (founded in 2006), are oriented

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<sup>178</sup> Ragan Rhyne observes that the umbrella organizations of many film festivals utilize public-private partnerships and adopt not-for-profit organizational structures: “Contemporary festivals around the world are primarily administered and funded through public/private partnerships. Consequently, most have adopted the institutional structure of the not-for-profit organisation, a unique formation that may or may not receive funding from the state but participates in the kind of service provision and cultural management that has historically been the exclusive domain of governments” (10).

<sup>179</sup> The first film festival in Latin America, the Punta del Este International Film Festival, was held in the Uruguayan beach resort in 1951 (Diestro-Dópidio 100).

<sup>180</sup> *Nasty Baby* screened at the 2015 edition of Outfest.

toward specific themes, genres, or modes of cinema. Large festivals like Berlin, Cannes, and Venice adopt a broader thematic scope even as the feature-length art film continues to be their primary commodity. Film festivals compete for a limited number of resources (films, audiences, symbolic capital, etc.) and work to shape the global cinematic marketplace. Marijke de Valck describes festivals' dual agenda: "firstly, they work towards self-preservation and, preferably also, the amelioration of their position in the festival network; and, secondly, they use their power of value addition and agenda setting for a politics of participation, advancing those films and filmmakers they deem to be of particular artistic, cultural, national, or socio-political interest" (211). "Self-preservation" and "agenda setting" are closely bound with festivals' role as arbiters of symbolic capital.

The potent role of film festivals in shaping the reception of films is intertwined with their function as sites of contestation and negotiation of economic and symbolic capital. Ragan Rhyne, building off the work of Janet Harbord (2002), identifies five categories of stakeholders in contemporary film festivals:

- 1) filmmakers and producers
- 2) journalists
- 3) the film industry of financiers, lawyers, distributors and studios
- 4) tourist and ancillary industries
- 5) policymakers, funders and festival managers (17)

To this list, we could add a sixth: film festival juries, whose members are often drawn from the other categories. The multiplicity of actors involved shapes their function "as a unique institutional arrangement that straddles art, commerce and governance" (Rhyne 17). In this vein, Jennyfer Salvo, the subdirector of ProChile, highlights the multifaceted nature of festivals and their relationship to the Chilean film industry. Commenting on Chilean filmmakers' participation in the 2016 Cannes film festival, Salvo highlights the overlapping qualities of the festival:

“Cannes es un escenario fundamental para los negocios relacionados con el cine. Chile tiene hoy la madurez suficiente para estar en un lugar expectante y por eso debemos ir donde están los principales compradores del mundo para exhibir nuestro producto audiovisual, nuestras historias y lo que eso significa para darnos a conocer (“Destacada delegación”; “Cannes is a fundamental site for the businesses of cinema. Today Chile has sufficient maturity to be in a promising place and that’s why we should go to where the principal global buyers are and exhibit our audiovisual product, our stories, and what it means to make ourselves known”). For cultural bureaucrats like Salvo, festivals are where the business of art cinema unfolds.

Marijke de Valck notes that film festivals “are in the business of cultural prestige” (106). The various stakeholders at festivals play a critical role as trend-setters and arbiters of prestige. Film canons and the qualities of a national cinema are established and cultivated at these festivals through the festival prize.<sup>181</sup> These awards hold symbolic value and cultural prestige, which can boost the circulation and visibility of award recipients. English argues that cultural prizes “are the single best instrument for negotiating transactions between cultural and economic, cultural and social, or cultural and political capital—which is to say that they are our most effective institutional agents of *capital intraconversion*,” or the conversion of one kind of capital into another (10; author’s emphasis).<sup>182</sup> Wong notes that film festivals are efficient arbiters and generators of prestige: “Film festivals make cultural capital concrete in the shapes of Golden Palms, Bears, Lions, Leopards, and other gilded figurines that populate carousels of screening and appraisal” (16). Films that garner these prizes are marked as valuable commodities. In

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<sup>181</sup> Film festival audiences also play an important role in validating and canonizing cinemas and are actively incorporated into the festival economy of prestige through mechanisms like audience choice prizes. Wong observes that audiences play an even more vital role in championing art cinema as festivals have become increasingly centered on business: “Audiences are important to sustain the culture of cinephilia and to demand that festivals serve as guardians of quality cinema, especially as festivals have changed in the last few decades to accommodate the business of cinema” (10).

<sup>182</sup> English calls cultural prizes “perhaps the most ubiquitous feature of cultural life” (2).

practice, these prizes can enhance a film's critical cachet, visibility, and its prospects for a theatrical release.

The impact of film festival prizes goes beyond individual films and filmmakers. One enduring feature of film festivals is their close and interdependent relationship to national cinemas. Although the contemporary film festival no longer functions primarily as a geopolitical showcase of the nation—as was the case with festivals prior to 1968—the nation and, in the case of Latin American cinema, the region remain significant factors within these events.<sup>183</sup> Alicia Scherson describes contemporary film festivals as cosmopolitan points of contact that reshape the traditional contours of national cinema:

At festivals I get to see genuinely multinational movies, and I do not mean forced co-productions that are finally local but with shared financing, but multinational films originally aimed at a global culture, questioning it from that standpoint. I'd say we're at a very interesting stage, a transition to a new concept of nation and cinema, with a less conservative idea of what is national. That comes from Bolaño too; a guy who is Spanish, Mexican, Chilean, and I also see that in other directors. For example, I spoke in Rotterdam with an English director who directed a film in Dubai about a Chinese prostitute, that is, characters with no fixed territory, struggling on the horizon of the global village. It is even problematic for film programmers who do not know where to put these films, how to catalog them. (“Alicia Scherson ‘The idea of a national cinema’”)

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<sup>183</sup> De Valck notes that “Film festivals began as showcases for national cinemas” (53). She establishes three distinct historical periods in the development of film festivals: “The first phase runs from the establishment of the first reoccurring film festival in Venice in 1932 until 1968, when upheavals began to disrupt the festivals in Cannes and Venice, or, more precisely, the early 1970s, when these upheavals were followed by a reorganization of the initial festival format (which comprised film festivals as showcases of nation cinemas). The second phase is characterized by independently organized festivals that operate both as protectors of the cinematic art and as facilitators of the film industries. This phase ends in the course of the 1980s when the global spread of film festivals and the creation of the international film festival circuit ushers in a third period, during which the festival phenomenon is sweepingly professionalized and institutionalized” (19-20).

For Scherson, the cosmopolitan qualities of film festivals and the films they screen blur and expand the boundaries of national cinemas.<sup>184</sup>

Film festivals' emphasis on "innovation and discoveries" is central to their relationship to the category of national cinema (Wong 91). The film festival and the festival prize not only validate the novelty and cultural currency of individual films; they also confirm the prestige of national cinemas or, in the case of Chilean cinema during the Pinochet dictatorship, the category of Chilean cinema in exile.<sup>185</sup> Both cultural bureaucrats and journalists underscore this function. Writing in 2012, then Minister of Culture Luciano Cruz-Coke describes the mutually beneficial relationship between festivals and Chile's audiovisual industry:

The good health of our film industry has been enhanced internationally by the presence and poise of our films, amounting to nominations to major awards and the seizure of several prizes in first-rate international festivals, showcasing our films in events and markets such as Cannes, Berlinale, Sundance, Goya, among many more. This certainly proves that our industry has achieved international quality standards in its film and television output, but with budgets way under those of productions obtaining very similar results. ("Welcome to Shoot in Chile" 11)

Cruz-Coke portrays the country's national cinema as a perennial underdog, which, by virtue of its "presence and poise"—euphemisms for cultural prestige—at film festivals is now globally recognized and esteemed.

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<sup>184</sup> Bill Nichols notes that festivals serve as an exhibition space for the local within the global cinematic marketplace: "The festival circuit allows the local to circulate globally, within a specific system of institutional assumptions, priorities and constraints. Never only or purely local, festival films nonetheless circulate, in large part, with a cachet of locally inscribed difference and globally ascribed commonality. They both attest to the uniqueness of different cultures and specific filmmakers and affirm the underlying qualities of an 'international' cinema" (68).

<sup>185</sup> Films like Sergio Castilla's *Pinochet: fascista, asesino, traidor, agente del imperialismo* (Sweden, 1974), Raúl Ruiz's *Diálogos de exiliados* (France, 1974), and Miguel Littin's *El recurso del método* (Mexico/Cuba/France, 1978) are emblematic of Chilean cinema in exile.

In his 2012 *Los Angeles Times* article, Mark Olsen emphasizes the symbiotic links between the prestige of Chilean cinema and its success at film festivals. Olsen highlights the role of film festivals as arbiters of quality and underscores the prominence of the category of the national at these cosmopolitan events:

There is often a national cinema that seems to percolate up from the festival circuit to exhibit a fresh new sensibility. In years past, Romania, Iran, South Korea and Argentina have been frequent faves. Now there's an abundance of exciting films from Chile, including Pablo Larraín's "No," Cristián Jiménez's "Bonsái," Marialy Rivas's "Young & Wild" and Dominga Sotomayor's "Thursday Till Sunday." All of these films meld personal politics with broader societal forces. In stepping out from the long shadow of Chile's dictatorship era, the work of these filmmakers is infused with a sense of freedom and renewal. ("The independent film breakout stars of 2012")

Olsen's description of the "sense of freedom and renewal" embodied by these Chilean films reflects the conception of film festivals as "institutions of discovery" for national cinemas (De Valck 175).<sup>186</sup>

Film festivals' incursion into various aspects of film production and distribution since the 1980s has accentuated their impact on art cinema. Many of these initiatives are fundamentally transnational, inasmuch as they support filmmakers and films from across the world, often in conjunction with third-party sponsors. De Valck argues that their relatively new functions as producers and distributors have increased the influence and control over the films they exhibit, while also creating new avenues for festivals to shape the cinematic marketplace:

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<sup>186</sup> Olsen's description of the "personal politics" of these films echoes press and scholarly accounts of early-21st-century Chilean art cinema ("The independent film breakout stars of 2012").

Many film festivals nowadays look beyond the programming and evaluation of finished products and demand a say in which films are artistically interesting *before* they are made; with these funds the festivals, in fact, influence which films will be realized and what (type of) films will be on the market for their and other festival programmers to choose from. This development adds a whole new layer of meaning to the label “festival film,” as these films are not only predominantly produced *for* the festival circuit, but also partially *by* (and with the cultural approval of) the festival circuit. (181; author’s emphasis)

Film festivals’ production and distribution initiatives vary widely. They include production financing mechanisms like the Berlin Film Festival’s World Cinema Fund (founded in 2004), residency programs for filmmakers to develop projects like the Cannes Film Festival’s Cinéfondation Residence (founded in 2000 under the aegis of its Cinéfondation arm)<sup>187</sup>, co-production markets like International Film Festival Rotterdam’s CineMart (founded in 1983), and the Sundance Institute Lab Program (founded in 1981), which hosts development workshops for directors, editors, screenwriters, and producers. Núria Triana maintains that these film festival-based initiatives form the basis of a symbiotic relationship between festivals and filmmakers:

Activities such as workshops, funding contests and scriptwriting residencies are becoming pivotal elements in ensuring a healthy supply of world cinema to the many festivals that take place in the world but at the same time, filmmakers are looking at these festival-created initiatives as a form of ensuring their own survival in filmmaking. The fact remains that film festivals may be considered as film showcasing sites but they are in

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<sup>187</sup> Jiménez, Lelio, and Sotomayor participated in the Cinéfondation Residence program.

equal measure the sites where films are generated. (112)

This symbiotic relationship between film festivals and filmmakers is a vital aspect of the transnational strategies of production employed by contemporary art cinema filmmakers.

The Hubert Bals Fund, the World Cinema Fund, and Films in Progress figure prominently in the development of contemporary Chilean art cinema. The Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress, and the World Cinema Fund financed and supported the production, distribution, and/or exhibition of dozens of Chilean art films between 2005 and 2015.<sup>188</sup> These competitive funding programs are attached to film festivals and rely on support and financing from third-party organizations. However, as Triana notes, these initiatives are not ancillary, but rather essential components of their parent organizations. They are often geared towards supporting Latin American cinema, as well as films and filmmakers from countries and regions outside of the United States and Western Europe. As we shall see, for Chilean art cinema filmmakers like Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva, these programs are key facets of their cosmopolitan identities and transnational filmmaking strategies.

Established in 1988, International Film Festival Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund is the oldest of these three programs.<sup>189</sup> The fund, named after the film festival's founder, provides competitive pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution financing for feature-length films by filmmakers from outside of the United States and Western Europe.<sup>190</sup> The fund is one IFFR's various production and distribution initiatives.<sup>191</sup> According to its website, the

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<sup>188</sup> In addition to these three film festival initiatives, Miriam Ross highlights the not-for-profit U.S.-based Global Film Initiative, whose production and distribution grant program operated from 2002-2013. See Ross, *South American Cinematic Culture* (127-37).

<sup>189</sup> Maza highlights the impact of IFFR's focus on emerging directors and Chilean film festivals. He calls this the "Efecto Rotterdam" (2, author's emphasis; "Rotterdam Effect") and notes that Chilean and Latin American film festivals like the Santiago Film Festival (SANFIC) also focus on new filmmaking talent.

<sup>190</sup> The Hubert Bals Fund occasionally supports documentary features.

<sup>191</sup> Another notable program is the Rotterdam Lab, a training workshop for producers that is sponsored by the festival's CineMart co-production market.



Hubert Bals has supported over one thousand projects since its inception (“About HBF”). The fund is supported by the European Union’s Creative Europe MEDIA Programme, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and several Dutch non-governmental organizations. The fund also provides a line of financing in partnership with the Netherlands Film Fund called NFF+HBF.<sup>192</sup>

The fund’s philanthropic and publicity-minded ethos is reflected in the mission statement listed in bold typeface on its website: “The Hubert Bals Fund is designed to help remarkable or urgent feature films by innovative and talented filmmakers from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe on their road to completion. It provides grants that often turn out to play a crucial role in enabling these filmmakers to realise their projects” (“About HBF”). In insisting on the “crucial role” it plays in the creation of the works its sponsors, the fund underscores its identity as a patron of cinema from developing regions and differentiates itself in a crowded field.<sup>193</sup> A press release from IFFR announcing the selections of the 2008 edition describes the fund as a financial lifeline and a guarantor of quality: “The fund’s contributions act as seal of approval which helps to convince additional investors” (“Hubert Bals announces winning film projects”). The “prestigioso” (“prestigious”) fund, as an article in Chile’s *El Mercurio* describes it, is a sign of value and prestige among critics, filmmakers, and other industry professionals.<sup>194</sup>

The selection criteria for the Hubert Bals Fund reflects its symbiotic relationship with parent organization. The films selected by the fund are intended to replicate, in both style and substance, the works shown annually at International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) in late January and early February: “The Hubert Bals Fund is part of International Film Festival

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<sup>192</sup> Niles Attallah’s *Rey* and Dominga Sotomayor’s *De jueves a domingo* received funding from the NFF+HBF initiative.

<sup>193</sup> See Ross, “The film festival as producer: Latin American Films and Rotterdam’s Hubert Bals Fund” (262).

<sup>194</sup> See *El Mercurio*, “Chileno Théo Court gana fondo Hubert Bals.”

Rotterdam and generally speaking, the type of projects that the HBF supports are in line with the type of films that are screened at IFFR” (“HBF General”). As a producer, IFFR, carefully cultivates its brand with its “focus . . . on recent work by talented new filmmakers” (“IFFR Is”). The fund’s mission has a circular quality, insomuch as it aims to reproduce the kinds of art films it exhibits. The irony in this model is that art films, which are porous by nature, resist replication.

Miriam Ross notes that the films selected by the Hubert Bals Fund hew to a certain set of criteria: “The films that emerge from this fund are diverse and do not always display a ‘third-world’ or ‘developing-nation’ aesthetic and content, yet there are expectations placed on them: the need to represent ‘authentic’ third-world culture, the desire to fit within art cinema, and the belief that they will engage with film festival audiences” (“The film festival as producer” 267). In *Cinémeta*, Fuguet offers a biting critique of the Hubert Bals Fund and what he calls “el síndrome Rotterdam” (139; “the Rotterdam syndrome”). He argues that the principal effect of the Hubert Bals Fund is to circumscribe the creativity of Latin American filmmakers and impose a narrow view of cinema:

No sé quién fue el señor Hubert Bals. Ni siquiera sé si está vivo (no lo voy a googlear) pero el señor Bals, del Premio Hubert Bals para desarrollar cine latinoamericano y del tercer mundo, ha terminado por afectar (de afectación) el cine “alternativo” mucho más de lo que pensamos. Tanto así que ya no es una alternativa; es un cliché. Rotterdam y estos festivales obsesionados con la región creen hacer el bien, pero, como buena ONG paternalista, el tiro les está saliendo por la culata. Se están convirtiendo en el FMI del cine. (140; I don’t know who Mr. Hubert Bals was. I don’t even know if he’s alive (I’m not going to google it) but Mr. Bals of the Hubert Bals Prize for the development of Latin American and Third World cinema, has ended up affecting (from affectation)

“alternative” cinema much more than we think. So much so that it’s not an alternative; it’s a cliché. Rotterdam and those festivals obsessed with the region think that they are doing good, but, like a good paternalist NGO, it’s backfiring. They are becoming the IMF of cinema)

Ironically, Fuguet’s criticism of the Hubert Bals Fund reflects its prestige, as well as the extent to which Chilean filmmakers rely on these film festival-affiliated funding mechanisms, in spite of their “paternalist” dispositions.<sup>195</sup>

Between the Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress, and the World Cinema Fund, the Hubert Bals Fund has supported the largest number of Chilean films. The first Chilean film supported by the initiative was Ricardo Larraín’s *El entusiasmo*, which received funding for script and project development in 1996. Between 2005 and 2015, the Hubert Bals Fund, through its varied lines of financing, supported seventeen projects by eleven Chilean filmmakers.<sup>196</sup> In keeping with IFFR and the fund’s emphasis on consistency, many of these filmmakers were awarded funding for multiple projects and for the same projects across different lines of financing. Larraín and Scherson were among the Chilean filmmakers—and repeat recipients—selected by the fund.<sup>197</sup> *Play*, Scherson’s debut feature, was a two-time recipient. In 2002, the fund provided *Play* with funding for script and project development and in 2005 the fund awarded the movie financing for its distribution in Chile. In 2008, the fund granted Scherson’s

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<sup>195</sup> Fuguet is critical in general of the byzantine financing system for cinema: “Uno se enfrenta a muchas cosas que llamo ‘extra cinematográficas’, como postular al FONDART y conseguir plata. Todo eso es bastante atroz y a la larga lo que más me ha choqueado es el mundo financiero, lo tremendo que es conseguir plata” (*¿Por qué filmamos lo que filmamos?* 84; “One confronts many things that I call ‘cinematographic extras,’ like applying to FONDART and obtaining money. All of it is really horrible and in the long run what has most shocked me is the financial world, how difficult it is to get money”).

<sup>196</sup> The 2010 film *Manuel de Ribera*, which received distribution financing from the Hubert Bals Fund, was co-directed by Christopher Murray and Pablo Carrera. Some projects were selected for multiple lines of financing. See Hubert Bals Fund, *Hubert Bals Fund: Complete Results 1988-2017*.

<sup>197</sup> Niles Attallah, Dominga Sotomayor, and José Torres Leiva also received support for multiple projects from different lines of financing.

second-feature *Turistas* post-production financing. That same year, the fund supported two of Larrain's films: *Tony Manero* was awarded post-production financing and *Post Mortem* received a grant for script and project development.

Founded in 2002, Films in Progress is a "joint initiative" of the Donostia-San Sebastián Film Festival and the Cinélatino, Rencontres de Toulouse Film Festival ("Films in Progress: Presentation").<sup>198</sup> Although it has a more limited scope than the Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress, known in Spanish as Cine en Construcción, supported several Chilean films between 2005 and 2015. According to the San Sebastián Film Festival's website, Films in Progress, "nació con la intención de apoyar la producción de cine latinoamericano mediante ayudas para la finalización de películas en fase de postproducción" ("Cine en Construcción"; "was born with the goal of supporting the production of Latin American cinema through assistance for the completion of films in the post-production phase"). Each year twelve films are selected to participate in the initiative. These films are divided up between the March (Toulouse) and September (San Sebastián) editions of the event.<sup>199</sup> The selected works are screened in front of industry professionals and judged by a jury. Films compete for the Films in Progress Award (Premio Cine en Construcción de la Industria), which provides post-production financing and support (sound editing, subtitles, distribution coordination services, etc.) for two films (one screened in Toulouse and the other in San Sebastián). The jury also awards smaller prizes that come attached with a more limited range of post-production services. Films in Progress is supported by partnerships with a variety of audiovisual companies, including private firms like U.S.-based Dolby Production Services and Spain's Nephilim Productions. Films in Progress also

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<sup>198</sup> For more on the Films in Progress initiative see Falicov, "Cine en Construcción'/Films in Progress'" and Triana, "Building Latin American Cinema in Europe."

<sup>199</sup> The eleventh edition of Films in Progress (March 2007) was hosted jointly by the Toulouse and Guadalajara film festivals.

partners with government and not-for-profit entities like France's Centre National du Cinéma et de L'image Animée (CNC), Ibermedia, and the not-for-profit Spanish cultural institution Casa de América. In 2006, Films in Progress established a partnership with the not-for-profit Cervantes Institute, which screens participating films at its centers across the world.

In her study of the 2011 San Sebastián edition of Films in Progress, Tamara Falicov highlights the collaborative and transnational nature of the initiative: "This competition affords a space for two constituencies to creatively collaborate; one being film-makers/producers from Latin American countries in need of funding, and two, Spanish post-producers who donate their labour and resources towards one winning project" ("Cine en Construcción"/ 'Films in Progress'" 254). Falicov observes that the program privileges films with a "globalized art-house aesthetic," which she defines as "a particular narrative, *mise-en-scène*, use of actors and other aesthetic choices that more easily facilitates transnational border crossing, successfully engaging global art-house audiences through familiar art-house forms of realism with the objective of generating critical acclaim, winning prestigious film festival awards and ultimately generating revenue at the box office" ("Cine en Construcción"/ 'Films in Progress'" 254; author's emphasis). Although Falicov's definition of "globalized art-house aesthetic" is broad, she correctly identifies the type of films that are selected for participation and awarded by the initiative, namely art films. Although art films do not inherently "facilitat[e] transnational border crossing" and the path between the Films in Progress Award, festival circulation, and box office revenue is indirect at best, the Chilean films that participate in the program exemplify the porous qualities that define this cinematic genre.

Between 2005 and 2015, twenty-seven Chilean films by twenty-one directors participated

in Films in Progress.<sup>200</sup> In 2008, Larraín's *Tony Manero* and Silva's *La nana* participated in the thirteenth and fourteenth editions of the program, respectively. Larraín and Silva's contemporaries, the art-house directors Alejandro Fernández Almendras, Sebastián Lelio, Cristián Jiménez, Rodrigo Marín, and Marialy Rivas participated in Films in Progress with distinct films two or more times. Like the Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress's tendency to select multiple films by the same director reflects an emphasis on consistency and a desire to play a significant role in the careers of the filmmakers it supports. Of the twenty-six films Chilean that participated in Films in Progress between 2005 and 2015, five received the top prize, the Films in Progress Award: Pablo Larraín's *Tony Manero* (Toulouse 2008); Cristián Jiménez's *Bonsái* (Toulouse 2011); Sebastián Lelio's *Gloria* (San Sebastián 2012); Marcela Said's *El verano de los peces voladores* (Toulouse 2013); and Rodrigo Sepúlveda's *Aurora* (Toulouse 2014).

The World Cinema Fund is a partnership between the Berlin Film Festival, Germany's Federal Foundation for Culture, the Goethe Institute, Germany's Foreign Ministry, and German producers. Like the Hubert Bals Fund and Films in Progress, the World Cinema Fund is oriented towards national cinemas outside of the United States and Europe. This competitive funding mechanism awards production financing for films from Latin America, Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Caucasus region. It operates an additional line of funding that offers financing to German distributors. According to its website, the fund's mission is "to develop and support cinema in regions with a weak film infrastructure, while fostering cultural diversity in German cinemas. The *World Cinema Fund*

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<sup>200</sup> *Mitómana* (2009) participated in the eighteenth edition in San Sebastián (September 2010) and was directed by José Luis Sepúlveda and Carolina Adriaola. Data based on information from the websites of Cinélatino, Rencontres Toulouse and the San Sebastián Film Festival.

supports films that could not be made without additional funding: films that stand out with an unconventional aesthetic approach, that tell powerful stories and transmit an authentic image of their cultural roots” (“World Cinema Fund”; author’s emphasis). The fund’s focus on cultural authenticity, reflects the unequal political and cultural dynamics (the expectation being that these films function as national allegory or are at least recognizably local in theme and setting), and the intersections of local, regional, and global culture that characterize film festivals.<sup>201</sup> Selected films must team up with a German producer or production company. The German producer, not the filmmaker, is the recipient of the financing.<sup>202</sup> Between 2005 and 2015, the fund provided production financing for seven projects by five Chilean filmmakers, including Larraín’s *Post Mortem*, which received a production grant in 2009.<sup>203</sup> Together, the Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress, and the World Cinema Fund serve as vital sources of funding and technical support for Chilean and Latin American cinema, but also as tastemakers and gatekeepers to the film festival network.

Critics and filmmakers point to the prominent role of festivals as producers of Chilean art cinema. In a 2012 article in *The Hollywood Reporter*, Agustín Mango describes a reciprocal feedback loop between film festival-sponsored funds, national cinemas, and filmmakers: “In a region where foreign financial support is a pillar for film production, Chile has recently become a favorite among international funds like Hubert Bals, World Cinema Fund and Cinefondation” (“Cannes 2012: Latin American Film Sector”). Mango notes that Chilean films and filmmakers are not just successful at obtaining financing, and by extension prestige, from festivals; Chilean

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<sup>201</sup> Both Falicov (“Cine en Construcción”/ ‘Films in Progress’) and Triana emphasize the unequal power dynamics at play in Films in Progress.

<sup>202</sup> According to the fund’s website, these German producers are valued for “approaching a kind of positive understanding of globalisation” (“World Cinema Fund”).

<sup>203</sup> See World Cinema Fund, “World Cinema Fund: Funded Projects Production.”

films are now “a favorite” among film festivals’ production initiatives. The author situates Chilean cinema’s favorable reception among these film festival funds within the context of Chile’s expanding cinematographic industry and its regional footprint: “Chile’s increasingly robust independent film scene is aiming for a fourth chair next to main LatAm players Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico” (“Cannes 2012: Latin American Film Sector”).

Scherson comments on the significance of these funds and initiatives on her career. She contextualizes filmmakers’ relationship with these funds as part of a broader set of transnational filmmaking practices:

ocupamos los mismos circuitos de distribución, los mismos fondos. La máquina de producción detrás de las películas es muy parecida, no de todas, obviamente. Hay directores que están en circuitos más industriales, pero hay un grupo que está asociado por ejemplo al festival de Toulouse, a Rotterdam, a los fondos públicos. Son los directores de un cine personal, de bajo presupuesto, y que tienen entre 20 y 40 años. (Bello, “Nuevos autores para el cine chileno”; we occupy the same distribution circuits, the same funds. The production machinery behind these films is very similar, but not for all, obviously. They are the directors of a personal cinema, of low budgets, and they are between 20 and 40 let’s say)

Scherson makes a clear distinction between the films that circulate and rely on film festivals for financing and those that do not. She establishes a clear dividing line between what she calls “industrial” cinema and the kinds of works—art films—that she and her fellow film festival regulars produce with support of these organizations. For Chilean art cinema filmmakers like Scherson, circulation in film festivals and the solicitation of financing from film festival funds are central components of their transnational filmmaking practices.



Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva's circulation within the global film festival network exemplifies the central role these organizations play in these four filmmakers' cosmopolitan filmmaking practices and in the formation of what Leah Kemp calls a "kinship network" ("Stardom in Spanish America" 49). Juan de Dios Larraín, the co-founder of Fabula, describes film festivals as spaces where filmmakers, producers, and other industry actors meet and forge bonds: "Nosotros llevamos 11 años en esto, viajando a Cannes, a Berlín, te vas topando a la misma gente, haciendo redes, conectando con ciertos proyectos" ("Las películas de Juan de Dios Larraín"; "We have been doing this for 11 years, traveling to Cannes, to Berlin, you run into the same people, building networks, connecting with certain projects"). In addition to looking to film festivals to forge connections and obtain financing, these four filmmakers premiere their films at festivals and compete for cultural prestige in the form of the film festival prize. In circulating through and associating themselves with these cosmopolitan sites and events, these filmmakers reinforce their own status as artists with global reach and ambitions.

Among these four filmmakers, Fuguet has the lowest profile in terms of circulation within the film festival network.<sup>204</sup> Notwithstanding his limited presence at these events, all of Fuguet's feature-length films have premiered at film festivals. *Se arrienda* premiered at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and screened at the 2006 Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse Film Festival. His subsequent feature-length films, including *Locaciones: Buscando a Rusty James*, premiered at the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema (BAFICI). Although his films do not circulate as prominently or often at festivals as the other three filmmakers studied here, Fuguet has nevertheless garnered a few notable prizes. *Música Campesina* won the Prize for Best Chilean Film and the Moviecity Prize at the 2011 Valdivia

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<sup>204</sup> Fuguet is a regular at literary festivals across Latin America.

Film Festival.

Of these four filmmakers, Larraín is the most visible on the global film festival network. He has premiered films the “Big Three festivals”: Berlin, Cannes, and Venice (Wong 5). *Tony Manero* premiered at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival in the Directors’ Fortnight Section; *Post Mortem* premiered at the 2010 Venice Film Festival, where it screened in the main competition; *No* premiered at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival, where it screened in the Directors’ Fortnight Section; and *El Club* premiered at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, where it screened in the main competition. Among the notable festival awards Larraín’s films have won include the Golden India Catalina for Best First Film at the 2007 Cartagena Film Festival for *Fuga*; the KNF Award<sup>205</sup> at the 2009 International Film Festival Rotterdam for *Tony Manero*; the Grand Coral Prize for Best Film at the 2009 Havana International Film Festival for *Tony Manero*; the Second Coral Prize and the Best Screenplay Prize at the 2010 Havana International Film Festival for *Post Mortem*; the Golden India Catalina for Best Film at the 2011 Cartagena International Film Festival for *Post Mortem*; the Art Cinema Award at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival for *No*; the Grand Coral Prize for Best Film at the 2012 Havana International Film Festival for *No*; the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival in 2015 for *El Club*; the Grand Coral Prize for Best Film at the 2015 Havana International Film Festival for *El Club*; and the award for Best Screenplay at the 2015 Mar del Plata International Film Festival for *El Club*.<sup>206</sup> *Post Mortem* was also nominated for the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 2010, and *No* received the award for Best Film at the 2012 Pedro Sienna Awards. After 2015, Larraín’s

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<sup>205</sup> The International Film Festival Rotterdam’s website describes the KNF Award as follows: “The KNF Award is given to the best feature film in The Big Screen Award Competition that is yet to find distribution within the Netherlands. The winner is selected by a jury of the Kring van Nederlandse Filmjournalisten (KNF), the ‘Circle of Dutch Film Journalists’” (“KNF Award”).

<sup>206</sup> Alfredo Castro received the award for Best Actor at the 2008 Havana Film Festival and the 2009 Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema for *Tony Manero*. Alfredo Castro, Roberto Farías, Alejandro Goic, and Jaime Vadell shared the award for Best Actor at the 2015 Mar del Plata Film Festival for *El Club*.

success on the film festival circuit continued: his 2016 film *Neruda* premiered at Cannes in the Director's Fortnight section, and that same year *Jackie* premiered at the Venice Film Festival, where it garnered the Best Screenplay Award. In a 2016 interview Juan de Dios Larraín reflects on the significance of *Tony Manero*'s participation the Director's Fortnight program at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival: "Con Cannes se nos abrió el mundo. Entendimos qué rol podíamos tener en la industria, qué oportunidades teníamos. Y nos dimos cuenta de que había oportunidades" ("Las películas de Juan de Dios Larraín"; "With Cannes the world opened for us. We understood what role we could play in the industry, what opportunities we had. And we realized that there were opportunities").

Like Larraín, Scherson and her films screen and compete at film festivals around the world. *Play* premiered at the 2005 Tribeca Film Festival where it was exhibited in the Feature Narrative Competition; *Turistas* premiered at the 2009 International Film Festival Rotterdam, where it was screened in the VPRO Tiger Awards Competition; and *Il Futuro* premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition.<sup>207</sup> Scherson's films have garnered a number of awards on the film festival circuit. *Play* won the award for Best New Narrative Filmmaker at the 2005 Tribeca Film Festival; the Coral Prize for Best First Feature at the 2005 Havana International Film Festival; the Glauber Rocha Award for the Best Film from Latin America at the 2005 Montreal World Film Festival; and the Independent Camera Award at the 2006 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. *Il Futuro*, like *Tony Manero* before it, won the KNF Award at the 2013 International Film Festival Rotterdam. And *Play* garnered awards for Best Film and Best Director at the first edition of Chile's Pedro Sienna Awards in 2006.

Additionally, the Fribourg Film Festival-affiliated fund *visions sud est* awarded post-production

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<sup>207</sup> Shortly after its world premiere at Sundance, *Il Futuro* had its European premiere at the 2013 Rotterdam International Film Festival where it screened in the Spectrum section.

grants for both *Turistas* and *Il Futuro*.<sup>208</sup> *Vida de familia* (2017), which Scherson co-directed with Cristián Jiménez, premiered at Sundance in 2017.

Silva and his films also circulate prominently on the international film festival, most notably at Sundance. *La vida me mata* premiered at the 2007 Valdivia Film Festival; *La nana* premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition; *Gatos viejos* premiered at the 2010 New York Film Festival; *Crystal Fairy* and *Magic Magic* premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition; and *Nasty Baby* premiered at the 2015 Sundance Festival in the Next section.<sup>209</sup> Some of the notable awards Silva's films have garnered include the Grand Jury Prize in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival for *La nana*; the Critics Award for Best Film at the 2009 Cartagena Film Festival for *La nana*; the Second Coral Prize at the 2009 Havana International Film Festival for *La nana*; the Directing Award at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival for *Crystal Fairy & the Magical Cactus*; and the Teddy Prize for Best Queer Feature Film at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival for *Nasty Baby*.<sup>210</sup> Silva also received awards for Best Film (*La vida me mata* and *La nana*) and Best Director (*La nana* and *Crystal Fairy & the Magical Cactus*) at the 2008, 2010, and 2014 editions of the Pedro Sienna Awards. His short film *Dolfun* and feature-film *Tyrel* premiered at the 2016 and 2018 editions of the Sundance Film Festival, respectively.

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<sup>208</sup> The visions sud est fund was founded in 2005. It is an initiative by the Foundation trigon-film Baden, the Fribourg Film Festival, Nyon's Visions du Reel, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. According to its website, the visions sud est fund "supports film productions from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, aims at making them visible worldwide and guarantees their distribution in Switzerland" (visions sud est, "Informations").

<sup>209</sup> *Gatos viejos* screened in the Spotlight section at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. *Magic Magic* had its European premiere at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, where it screened in the Directors' Fortnight section. And *Nasty Baby* had its European premiere at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival, where it screened in the Panorama section.

<sup>210</sup> Catalina Saavedra won the award for Best Actress at the 2009 Cartagena Film Festival and the 2009 Havana Film Festival, as well as a Special Jury Prize for acting in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival for *La nana*.

Film festivals are essential features of the cosmopolitan identities and transnational production practices of these four Chilean art cinema filmmakers and their contemporaries. These multifaceted organizations function as producers, distributors, and exhibitors of Chilean art cinema. They are also key arbiters of culture prestige and places where the business of art cinema unfolds. Through affiliated organizations and initiatives like the Hubert Bals Fund, Films in Progress, and the World Cinema Fund, festivals have moved beyond their curatorial and exhibition functions, and play an increasingly significant role as producers and distributors of art film. A close look at two film festivals that bookend the period reveals the centrality of these organizations-slash-events to the critical conception and development of early-21st-century Chilean art film.

## 2.2. The 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and the 2015 Berlin Film Festival

The 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and the 2015 Berlin Film Festival are emblematic of the interdependent relationship between film festivals and Chilean art cinema. These two festivals are significant events in the careers of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, Silva, and their contemporaries. They also figure prominently in journalistic and scholarly accounts of Chilean art cinema. Fuguet and Scherson premiered their first films at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival. Building on Leah Kemp's work, I argue that the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival is notable primarily as a critical phenomenon.<sup>211</sup> Journalists covering this festival established many of the critical tropes, including an emphasis on the auteur qualities of the participating films and their connection with the New Chilean Cinema of the late 1960s and early 1970s, that recur in later accounts of Chilean art cinema. Situated at the other end of this period, the 2015 Berlin Film

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<sup>211</sup> See Kemp, *Citizenship in Chilean Post-Dictatorship Film* (262-343).

Festival was a landmark moment for Chilean art cinema and a culmination of its growing cultural prestige on the global film festival network. Press accounts of the 65th Berlinale, where Larraín and Silva each premiered a film and won awards, describe the participating Chilean filmmakers as auteurs, and describe the festival as the coronation of Chilean cinema on the global stage.

Journalists play a vital role in creating the narratives of film festivals. According to Janet Harbord, journalists often shape how the public experiences these festivals:

Journalism is the main mediating function of festivals to the general public. The accounts represent first-hand experience, instilling a type of authenticity to the event, a personalized diary of the experience rather than simply reviewing films. In so doing, journalistic discourse reproduces the bounded field of the festival, an occurrence both spatially and temporally removed from everyday life. (68)

As we shall see, press coverage of the 2005 Valdivia and 2015 Berlin film festivals serves a vital role in shaping early-21st-century Chilean art cinema.

The Valdivia Film Festival (formally known as the Festival Internacional de Cine de Valdivia) is an annual film festival held in the Southern city of Valdivia. The first edition of the festival was organized by the Cinema Club at Universidad Austral de Chile in 1994.<sup>212</sup> The festival ranks among the country's three most important film festivals (the other two are the Santiago and Viña del Mar film festivals). According to its website, the Valdivia Film Festival “has been part of a matrix for cultural, artistic and social development in Chile” (“FICValdivia”).

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<sup>212</sup> The festival was originally known as the Festival Valdivia Cine & Video. In 1998, the name was changed to the Festival Internacional de Cine de Valdivia. In 2006, the Municipality of Valdivia, the Regional Government of De los Ríos, and the not-for-profit consortium Centro Cultural de Promoción Cinematográfica de Valdivia (Valdivia Cultural Center of Cinematographic Promotion) assumed management of the festival (FICValdivia, “Historia”).

The website also touts the event's status as one of Latin America's premier film festivals, noting that the festival "has managed to become a reference for Latin America, thanks to its official selection and out-of-competition program, which have achieved great recognition, thanks to the independent character of its content, to its avant-garde vision, anticipating new trends, and to its strong support and articulation of the national audiovisual industry" ("FICValdivia").<sup>213</sup> During the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival numerous films screened over the course of a week from September 30 to October 6, competing for prizes including best film and best Chilean film. Notwithstanding the festival's conventional art-cinema-centric format, press accounts at the time described the festival as a moment of rupture in which a new kind of Chilean cinema emerged.

Journalists and critics writing during and in the immediate aftermath of this 2005 film festival in the provincial city of Valdivia depict the event as a watershed moment in Chilean cinema. They describe the emergence of a new generation of filmmakers at the festival and argue that a sea change was taking in place within Chile's cinematic industry. I argue that this festival was not the decisive moment of cinematographic rupture that critics writing at the time describe, but rather a significant moment in the formation of a critical consensus on the nature of Chilean art cinema in the early-21st century. This locally-situated international film festival served as a vehicle through which journalists and filmmakers articulated the qualities of Chilean cinema. I maintain that the coverage of the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival in the national press, online, and in media abroad played a key role in delineating post-Transition Chilean art cinema and establishing a critical taxonomy that persists well after the festival.

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<sup>213</sup> In 2009, the Valdivia Film Festival established the AUSTRALAB industry platform, which operates encounters for industry professionals and a co-production market. According to the website, AUSTRALAB is the first film festival in "Chile and in Latin America, to organize initiatives relating to distribution, exhibition and audience building, in addition to the usual modules in festival platforms devoted to co-production and works in progress" ("AUSTRALAB del FICValdivia").

At the 2005 festival, journalists from Chile and abroad focused their stories on the youth and inexperience of the five Chilean filmmakers participating in the event. Critics noted that the participating Chilean directors were screening their first or second features. Matías Bize presented his second feature, the Chilean-German co-production *En la cama (In Bed)*; Alex Bowen also showed his second feature, the Chilean-Argentine-Spanish co-production *Mi mejor enemigo (My Best Enemy)*; Fuguet screened his debut feature *Se arrienda*; Lelio screened his first film, *La sagrada familia (The Sacred Family)*; and Scherson presented her first feature, the Chilean-Argentine-French co-production *Play* (Kemp, *Citizenship* 262). Writing about these five films, journalists underscored their variety and identified several shared characteristics and themes, most notably the authorial imprint of their filmmakers, their emphasis on personal points of view, and their link to political filmmaking from the 1960s and early 1970s. Although many critics underscored the similarities of the films and the approaches of their directors, they also debated whether the films shown at the festival comprised a coherent generational phenomenon, or simply a fortuitous confluence of filmmakers who were beginning their careers.

Journalists describe the Chilean films participating in the event as breaking with local films from the 1990s and early 2000s. In her study of cinema of the Transition, Kemp observes: “The most enduring categories [critics] find in the films from 1990-2004 focus on the dispossessed, or the perceived idiosyncrasies of Chilean culture—the ‘*costumbrista*’ films; both of these groupings have been increasingly associated by critics with a sense of national identity—‘*chilenidad*’—albeit in different manners” (*Citizenship* 3; author’s emphasis). Highlighting the distinction made between the films of the Transition and the filmmakers who emerged at this festival, Kemp observes: “This group of filmmakers is consistently defined not according to its own characteristics, but in opposition to those that immediately preceded it,



particularly the *costumbrismo* of *El chacotero sentimental* and *Sexo con amor*” (262; author’s emphasis). The winner of the prize for Best Chilean Film at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival undermines this notion of rupture with the cinema of the Transition. The winning film, *Mi mejor enemigo*, tells the story of a group of Chilean and Argentine soldiers caught up in the 1978-1979 border conflict between Argentina and Chile. Kemp observes that Bowen’s film, with its exploration of traditional rivalries between Argentina and Chile, is an archetypal *costumbrista* film (Footnote, 264).

Writing in the online magazine *Mabuse*, Jorge Morales describes the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival as a moment of rupture with *costumbrismo*. Morales argues that the films shown in Valdivia stood in stark contrast to the art-house and genre films of the recent past:

De un paraguazo, todo el cine que vimos el año pasado envejeció. *Machuca* y *B-Happy* quedaron convertidas en piezas de museo pese a que la mayor parte del medio tuvo frente a ambas los mismos síntomas de embriaguez, catalogándolas sin vergüenza de casi auténticas obras maestras en aquel lejano y añejo año 2004. Ni hablar de las cintas más antiguas como *Sexo con amor* ahora considerada apenas “simpática” (antes una “aguda” radiografía de la vida sexual de los chilenos), o *El chacotero sentimental*, una infamia siquiera citarla. (Morales, “Entre ponerle”; In one fell swoop, all of the cinema we saw last year aged. *Machuca* and *B-Happy* were turned into museum pieces although the greater part of the media had the same symptoms of inebriation in front of both, cataloging them without shame of almost authentic masterworks in that distant and vintage year 2004. That’s without mentioning older pictures like *Sexo con amor* now considered merely “sympathetic” (in the past an “acute” radiography of the sexual lives of Chileans), or *El chacotero sentimental*, an infamy even to cite it)

Morales's hyperbolic description of a rupture in cinematic tradition—"In one fell swoop, all of the cinema we saw last year aged"—occurs in other accounts, which also depict the festival as a decisive break with the cinema of the Transition.

Journalists argued that the *costumbrismo* of the films of the Transition was replaced with an auteur sensibility, a notion closely linked to "an ideology of art as individual expression" (Neale 36).<sup>214</sup> Writing about a conference held at the film festival titled "Los nuevos aires del cine chileno," Alejandro Herrero underscores the auteur and personal qualities of Bize and Lelio's films:

Sobre los nuevos aires que está viviendo el chileno y las [*sic*] nuevos temas que están abordando la nueva generación de directores, alejándose de los argumentos políticos, cada uno entregó sus apuestas personales. El responsable de *En la cama* aseguró que su apuesta eran las películas personales; en el caso del realizador de *La sagrada familia*, apuntó a la "función moral del cine". ("Valdivia"; In regards to the new airs that the Chilean is living and the new themes that a new generation of directors are addressing, moving away from political plots, each one delivered their personal wagers. The creator of *En la cama* assured that his bet was personal films; in the case of the maker of *La sagrada familia*, he pointed to the "moral function of cinema")<sup>215</sup>

In his article "Los nuevos directores del cine chileno" ("The New Directors of Chilean

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<sup>214</sup> Steve Neale observes that the notion of auteur and the concept of art as individual expression are closely linked: "There exists, then, a space for the intervention of a number of competing definitions of art, culture and quality and for the consequent funding of a range of practices differing from those of the mainstream commercial industry. Historically, however, that space has been foreclosed. What has tended to fill it has been an ideology of art as individual expression, manifest both in policies to support and to fund new film-makers (conceived as individuals who otherwise would be denied the means to express themselves) and in the prevalence of auteurism with the discourses circulating centrally across the institutions involved in Art Cinema as a whole with a set of individual names: Antonioni, Bergman, Bertolucci, Bresson, Buñuel, Chabrol, Dreyer, Fassbinder, Fellini, Herzog, Truffaut, Visconti, Wenders, etc." (36).

<sup>215</sup> Bize, Fuguet, and Lelio participated in this conference.

Cinema”), the critic Ernesto Garrat also underlines the auteur qualities of *En la cama*, *Mi mejor enemigo*, *Se arrienda*, and *Play*. He comments on the diversity of themes in their films and finds common ground in their emphasis on individual and artistic expression: “Esta generación valdiviana son cineastas frecuentes del Festival de cine de Valdivia y consumidores feroces de películas, como se ve, opta por la diversidad. Pero hay un afán común: salirse de la serialización para escribir notas personales. Con sello y voz propia” (“This Valdivian generation is filmmakers who frequent the Valdivia Film Festival and ferocious consumers of movies, who as we see, opt for diversity. But there is a common desire: escape from serialization to write personal notes. With one’s own stamp and voice”). Emphasizing the importance of “voz propia,” Garrat argues that these filmmakers are quintessential auteurs, immersed in film festivals and students of film history. Herrero and Garrat’s focus on the filmmaker reflects “the contemporary status of the auteur as star” (Corrigan, “The Commerce of Auteursism” 48).

Morales is more critical of the auteur qualities of these national films and he links them with the filmmakers’ self-promotional rhetoric: “Basta haber visto en Valdivia la conjunción de ‘estrellas’ nacionales que en masa no sólo apoyaron sino que literalmente—como si fuese un guion aprendido—repitieron a quien quisiera escucharlos que llegaba una nueva generación, con aires nuevos y que se autodenominaba *Nuevo cine chileno*. Todo muy nuevo, aunque el nombre es hartó viejo, pero en fin” (“Entre ponerle,” author’s emphasis; “It was enough to have seen in Valdivia the conjunction of national ‘stars’ that together not only literally supported each other but also literally—as though it were a rehearsed script—repeated to whomever would listen to them that a new generation had arrived, with new airs and which called itself *New Chilean Cinema*. Everything very new, although the name is very old, but anyway”). According to Morales, filmmakers and critics mutually reinforced the idea that a new generation of cineastes

emerged at the festival.

In an article published in September 2005 in the prestigious French journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* titled “Nouveaux espoirs chiliens” (“New Chilean Airs”), Nicolas Azalbert also emphasizes the auteur elements of the films of Bize, Fuguet, Lelio, and Scherson. He claims that the festival is a moment of generational change that has given rise to a “tout nouveau cinéma chilien” (qtd. Kemp, *Citizenship* 264, Kemp’s translation; “all new Chilean cinema”).<sup>216</sup> He attributes the emergence of these filmmakers to a series of industrial factors including local film schools, film festivals, international cultural funds, new technologies, and the audiovisual laws of 2003 and 2004. Azalbert also draws connections between the filmmakers at Valdivia and the New Chilean Cinema—a critical invention of a generation of Chilean filmmakers that emerged in the 1960s that includes Raúl Ruiz, Miguel Littin, Patricio Guzmán, and others.<sup>217</sup> Azalbert singles out Lelio’s *La sagrada familia* as an example of a cinema in which “certaines flèches lancées depuis les années 1970 commencent à peine à être retrouvées” (qtd. Kemp, *Citizenship* 264, Kemp’s translation; “some arrows shot off in the seventies are just beginning to be found again”). In a 2005 interview Lelio also draws a link between his first feature and filmmakers associated with the New Chilean Cinema: “Para mí los directores de las películas de los años 70 son como padres y cuando yo filmé *La sagrada familia* pensaba todas las noches en ellos. Porque esas películas están hechas en combate con la realidad, con una actitud de guerrilla, con gran urgencia, con implicancia total y con un estilo confrontacional” (Campos, “*La sagrada familia* es un documental”); “For me the directors of the 70s are like fathers and when I filmed *La*

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<sup>216</sup> Kemp notes that Azalbert “puts *Mi mejor enemigo* in a separate category with *Machuca* as an example of ‘revisitation académique d’un passé qui ne passe pas’ (qtd. *Citizenship* 264; Kemp’s translation; “an academic revisitation of a past that does not pass”).

<sup>217</sup> According to Cortínez and Engelbert, the category of the New Chilean Cinema was an invention of the German film critic Peter B. Schumann. See *Evolución en libertad* 157-61.

*sagrada familia* I thought about them every night. Because these films are made in combat with reality, with a guerrilla attitude, with great urgency, with total involvement and with a confrontational style”). As we shall see, this connection between the New Chilean Cinema and Chilean art cinema filmmakers recurs in later criticism.

In an article published in *El Mercurio* at the end of 2005 titled “El año rojo del cine chileno” (“The Red Year of Chilean Cinema”), Ascanio Cavallo offers a more ambiguous portrait of the filmmakers than many of the accounts published in the immediate aftermath of the Valdivia Film Festival. Like Garrat and Azalbert, Cavallo underscores the “auteur vision” of Bize, Fuguet, and Scherson and their intimate focus: “Las tres son películas intimistas, exploratorias, un poco especulativas. Es más que dudoso que haya entre ellas alguna identidad de puntos de vista como se ha dicho, pero es indiscutible que las tres tienen vocación autoral” (“The three are intimate, exploratory, somewhat speculative films. It is more doubtful that there is any identity of points of view between them as has been said, but it is unquestionable that the three have an auteur vocation”). However, Cavallo tempers his favorable description of the filmmakers’ “auteur vocation” by highlighting the lack of local audience for their films. He observes that despite the euphoria produced by the Valdivia Film Festival, in 2005 Chilean cinema is still in a precarious economic position and does not attract large audiences: “En verdad, 2005 es uno de los años más calamitosos para el cine chileno desde el retorno de la democracia. Los 15 estrenos no superan, en total, los 500 mil espectadores” (“In truth, 2005 is one of the most calamitous years for Chilean cinema since the return to democracy. The fifteen premieres did not surpass, in total, 500 thousand spectators”). In the years after this festival, the limited domestic audience for these films remained a recurring topic and source of anxiety among critics. In 2011 article in *Variety*, Anna Marie de la Fuente writes: “Unfortunately,

soaring international acclaim has not necessarily translated into boffo box office returns back home” (“Chile pics heat up”).

In the years after 2005, scholars and critics continue to point to the festival as a moment of generational change. In a 2014 article in *Variety*, Hopewell observes: “Since breaking out at 2005’s Valdivia Festival, no other Latin American national cinema has matured as fast” (“Chilean Biz Sees Growth”). In their edited volume *El novísimo cine chileno* (2011)—published with support from the Valdivia Film Festival and featuring a foreword by Bruno Bettati, director of the festival from 2010 to 2013—, Ascanio Cavallo and Gonzalo Maza identify the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival as the site of “la eclosión” (15; “the emergence”) of a new group of filmmakers: “Lo que nacía en ese momento era lo que empaquetamos hoy: el Novísimo Cine Chileno” (15; “What was born in that moment is what we are packaging today: the Novísimo Chilean Cinema”).<sup>218</sup> In selecting this festival as the birthplace of this wave of filmmakers, Cavallo and Maza exaggerate its long-term significance. However, the fact that only five of the twenty-three filmmakers included in the book participated in this festival belies Cavallo and Maza’s representation of the event as a moment of generational change.

In her chapter on Bize’s *En la cama* and Sebastián Lelio’s *La sagrada familia*, “Escaping National Allegory: Cosmopolitan Virtue in the Generation of 2005” (2010), Kemp establishes the origin of what she calls the “New New Chilean Cinema of 2005” (*Citizenship* 312) at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival. Kemp organizes her narrative of the festival and its aftermath around criticism published in the press and online and concludes that this generation of filmmakers “debuted in full force at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival” (*Citizenship* 7). She argues that accounts of the festival emphasize aesthetic connections over thematic ones: “While

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<sup>218</sup> FICValdivia, the parent company of the Valdivia Film Festival, co-published *El novísimo cine chileno* with Uqbar Editores, which was founded by Cavallo.

thematic categorizations are the norm in the criticism of the pre-2005 films, after the advent of the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival the media hail a ‘new generation’ in Chilean filmmaking that shares aesthetic coincidences, but not thematic ones” (*Citizenship* 85). Kemp observes that media coverage highlights the auteur qualities of these films and filmmakers: “The unifying aspects of this generation, according to the press, are the sense of ‘rupture’ from the previous production, and their ‘personal’ aesthetic” (*Citizenship* 9).

Carolina Urrutia and Leopoldo Muñoz also underscore the impact of the festival in shaping a generation of filmmakers. In *Un cine centrífugo: ficciones chilenas 2005-2010* (2013), Urrutia describes the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival as the beginning of “una reapropiación y redefinición del cine de ficción chileno” (45; “a reappropriation and redefinition of Chilean narrative cinema”). She maintains that *La sagrada familia*, *Play*, *En la cama*, and *Se arrienda* “son películas que articulan, de acuerdo a lo sugerido por medios tanto locales como extranjeros, un *nuevo cine chileno*; con visibilidad internacional y con diferencias específicas con el cine inmediatamente precedente—el de los noventa y principios de los dos mil” (46, author’s emphasis; “are movies that articulate, in agreement with the observations of local and foreign press, a *new Chilean cinema*; with international visibility and with specific differences from the cinema immediately preceding it—that of the nineties and early two thousands”). In a 2013 article, Leopoldo Muñoz contends that an entire generation of Chilean cinema “se diseñó en la ideología artística del Festival de Valdivia” (“El triunfo del cine sin sonrisas” 38; “was shaped by the artistic ideology of the Valdivia Film Festival”). These later narratives of the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival attribute a vital role to this festival in terms of delimiting a generation of filmmakers.

However, not all critics writing after 2005 share a view of the festival as a moment of

enduring significance. Writing about Cavallo and Maza's prologue, Verónica Cortínez and Manfred Engelbert observe that their selection of the Valdivia Film Festival as a foundational site and moment of Chilean cinema in the first decade of the 2000s "es un indicador de la autoimposición de una visión del mundo" ("El cine chileno de los sesenta" 17; "is an indicator of the self-imposition of a worldview"). Another voice of dissent is Vidaurre. In his essay "Nómades y Caníbales, el cine chileno actual" ("Nomads and Cannibals, contemporary Chilean cinema"), Vidaurre criticizes Azalbert's *Cahiers du Cinéma* coverage and asserts that "el nuevo cine chileno no existe" ("the new Chilean cinema does not exist"). I agree with Cortínez, Engelbert, and Vidaurre that critics are mistaken in hailing the emergence of a generation of filmmakers at the festival; however, I believe this festival is significant for another reason: the critical tropes journalists and critics established in their contemporaneous coverage of the festival—the auteur qualities of the films and filmmakers and their connection with the New Chilean Cinema—recur in post-2005 accounts of early-21st-century Chilean art film.

A final point I want to consider is the relationship between the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and the critical category of Chilean national cinema. The controversy over the Grand Jury Prize of the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival reveals the high stakes of film festivals for national cinemas. The polemic at this festival exemplifies James English's observation that the "threat of scandal is constitutive of the cultural prize" (36-37). Despite the excitement generated by the five Chilean films that screened at the festival, none received the Golden Pudú Grand Jury Prize. Instead, the prize was awarded to Yasmine Kassari's film *L'enfant endormi* (*The Sleeping Child*, 2004), a Belgian-Moroccan co-production. However, Chilean cinema did not walk home from the festival empty handed: *Mi mejor enemigo* won the prize for Best Chilean film and Viviana Herrera was awarded the prize for Best Actress for her role in Scherson's *Play*. The jury's choice



generated a rebuke among some critics. In her polemically-titled article “Valdivia ignora al cine chileno” (“Valdivia ignores Chilean cinema”), Natalia Núñez declares: “Nunca se sabe con Valdivia” (“You never know with Valdivia”). Alejandro Herrero, also writing in *El Mercurio*, notes that “la decisión rompió con todos los pronósticos que daban como ganadora a alguna de las cinco películas chilenas que estaban en competencia” (“Sorpresivo triunfo”; “the decision broke with all of the predictions that pointed to the winner being one of the five Chilean films in competition”). Adding more fuel to the controversy, Herrero erroneously reported that the prize for best Chilean film was created by the jury at the last minute at the request of the Minister of Culture.<sup>219</sup>

Ultimately, the festival’s jury rejected this nationalistic outcry. In an open letter titled “Historias del cine chileno” published in *La Nación*, Verónica Cortínez, the president of the jury, criticized the press and defended the jury’s decision and the cosmopolitan spirit of the festival:

En “Valdivia ignora al cine chileno”, (“El Mercurio”, 07/10/2005) se inventó una polémica porque el premio al mejor largometraje lo obtuvo “El niño dormido”, una película belga-marroquí de Yasmine Kassari. El cine chileno fue bien representado con cinco largometrajes. El jurado lo midió con la misma vara que usó para evaluar el cine internacional; lo que debería ser motivo de satisfacción. Parece que los periodistas ignoraron parte de la muestra presentada en Valdivia. Cabe destacar la honestidad del periodista de La Nación: me confesó algo avergonzado que ninguno de sus colegas había visto la ganadora, pues especulaban que ganaría una chilena. No sería malo instituir en el

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<sup>219</sup> Herrero’s report on the existence of this fabricated prize and the ensuing controversy encapsulates James English’s observation that opposition to prizes is part of what imbues them with such important instruments of cultural exchange: “Modern cultural prizes cannot fulfill their social functions unless authoritative people—people whose cultural authority is secured in part through these very prizes—are thundering against them. The vast literature of mockery and derision with respect to prizes must . . . be seen as an integral part of the prize frenzy itself, and not as in any way advancing an extrinsic critique” (25).

Festival un premio del público, pues el jurado oficial no siempre coincide con las expectativas. (In “Valdivia ignores Chilean cinema,” (“El Mercurio,” 07/10/2005) a polemic was invented because “The Sleeping Child,” a Belgian-Moroccan film by Yasmine Kassari received the award for best feature film. Chilean cinema was well represented with five features. The jury measured it with the same yardstick that it used to evaluate international cinema; which should be cause for satisfaction. It seems that the journalists ignored part of the program in Valdivia. The honesty of the journalist from La Nación should be pointed out: he confessed somewhat ashamed that none of his colleagues had seen the winner, because they speculated that a Chilean film would win. It would not be a bad idea to institute an audience award in the Festival, since the official jury does not always coincide with expectations)<sup>220</sup>

Underlying this polemic over the Grand Jury Prize was a strong sense of cultural nationalism. Núñez and Herrero perceived a symbolic slight in the awarding of the prize to a non-Chilean film. Their criticism of the jury’s decision underscores the function and importance of festivals as showcases of national cinemas. This controversy encapsulates what Janet Harbord calls “An interdependency of nation and film culture [that] exists at the heart of the festival event. Festivals are not simply spaces of commerce free from the state, nor are they localities disconnected from the national context” (73). This scandal reveals the high stakes of film festivals as spaces where films, and by extension, national cinemas compete for recognition and prestige. In their contemporaneous coverage of this festival and the controversy over the Grand Jury Prize, journalists and critics asserted the significance of film festivals in giving shape to and validating a national cinema.

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<sup>220</sup> A revised version of Cortínez’s letter was published in *El Mostrador* under the same title.

Whereas contemporaneous accounts of the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival established the critical tropes later critics use when writing about early-21st-century Chilean art film, coverage of the 2015 Berlin Film Festival centered on the festival as an arbiter and purveyor of cultural prestige. Journalists and critics inside and outside of Chile portray the 2015 Berlinale, held from February 5-15, as the apotheosis of Chilean cinema's success and confirmation of its quality. They describe the Chilean filmmakers participating in the festival the culmination of a multi-generational tradition of auteur cinema, and characterize the multiple awards won by Chilean films and filmmakers as evidence of the diversity of the country's cinema.

The Berlin Film Festival was founded in 1948 amid the ideological battles of the Cold War.<sup>221</sup> In her history of the Berlinale, Heide Fehrenbach notes that the festival was a symbolic endeavor designed to project American and West German cultural and political values:

The festival was conceived as a way to revive the former capital's interwar reputation as an important European cultural center; and ultimately American and West German officials expected the image of a revitalized Berlin to serve as proof of Western economic superiority and cultural dynamism. Yet the Bonn government also fostered this image for national purposes, expecting a thriving "colony" in the East to lend a certain legitimacy to its claim to represent the best interests of all Germans—not just those residing in the West. (234)

Although the festival no longer functions as an overt tool of political and cultural propaganda, the festival remains a political and cosmopolitan affair. Whereas the Valdivia Film Festival presents itself as a hub for Chilean and Latin American cinema, the Berlin Film Festival positions itself as a fixture of the global cultural calendar. The Berlinale's website describes the

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<sup>221</sup> The Berlin Film Festival received an "A" accreditation from the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) in 1956.

festival as “a great cultural event and one of the most important dates for the international film industry” (“The Berlinale Festival Profile”). Additionally, its website highlights the festival’s multifaceted engagement with cinema: “art, glamour, parties and business are all inseparably linked at the Berlinale” (“The Berlinale Festival Profile”).<sup>222</sup> The festival hosts and sponsors a diverse array of initiatives oriented towards production and distribution. In addition to the World Cinema Fund, the festival also stages the European Film Market, a co-production market, the Berlinale Talents workshop program, and a residency program.<sup>223</sup>

The Berlinale’s programming reflects its diverse and ambitious agenda, as well as its historical efforts to promote itself as a “popular affair” (Fehrenbach 239). The festival primarily exhibits art cinema, although it has screened and awarded prizes to films by filmmakers Paul Thomas Anderson and Terrence Malick, who bridge the gap between Hollywood and art cinema.<sup>224</sup> Alongside its exhibition of a limited number of Hollywood films, the festival features a wide-variety of art cinema. Films are divided into discrete “sections” centered around different themes. However, these sections are not equal in terms of prestige; the Competition program, which features “great international cinema” is the festival’s main event (“The Berlinale Festival Profile”). In 2015, additional sections included Panorama, which features arthouse films aimed at “a target audience [that] explicitly includes film buyers” (“Panorama”); the Forum, whose “films straddle the line between art and cinema” (“Forum”); and the Berlinale Shorts for short films. The sheer size of the 2015 festival reflects the organizations expansive and striated character:

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<sup>222</sup> On this point Wong observes: “Major competitive festivals depend on the glamour of stars and spectacles as well as cutting-edge art; thus, they occupy the peculiar role of bridging art and commercial cinemas (both of which in and of themselves have porous boundaries)” (29). This blurring of boundaries and emphasis on the business of cinema was evident at the 2015 Berlinale. The festival’s jury presided over by Darren Aronofsky, who met Larraín at the festival. Aronofsky’s production company, Protozoa Pictures, later produced *Jackie*.

<sup>223</sup> Bize and Lelio participated in the 2012 and 2013 editions of the Berlinale Residency, respectively.

<sup>224</sup> Paul Thomas Anderson won a Golden Bear Award for Best Film for *Magnolia* (1999) and a Silver Bear award for Best Director for *There Will Be Blood* (2007). Terrence Malick garnered the Golden Bear for Best Film for *The Thin Red Line* (1998).

405 films screened in the public program at the 2015 Berlinale in more than a dozen sections and subsections and the festival recorded 505,771 theater visits (“65<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival”).

The Berlin Film Festival has played an important role in the delineation of Chilean art cinema since the 1960s. In 1966, Alfred Bauer, then the director of the Berlinale, selected Álvaro Covacevich’s film *Morir un poco* to screen at that year’s Berlinale (Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* 212-13). In 1970, the Woche des jungen Films (Week of Youth Cinema), the precursor to the festival’s Forum section, hosted a screening of Latin American cinema organized by the German film critic Peter B. Schumann.<sup>225</sup> Since its founding in 1971, the Forum has been an important site of exhibition for Chilean and Latin American film.<sup>226</sup> Between 1971 and 1973, films by Claudio Sapiaín, Carlos Flores, Guillermo Cahn, and Helvio Soto screened at the Forum (Villarroel and Mardones 45-47). After the 1973 coup, the Forum, driven by Schumann, remained a privileged site for the exhibition of Chilean cinema produced in Chile and abroad. Between 1973 and 1990, films by Pablo de la Barra, Patricio Guzmán, Miguel Littin, Pablo Perelman, Raúl Ruiz, Cristián Sánchez, and others screened in the Forum (Villarroel and Mardones 104-06). Between 1990 and 2014, Chilean films continued to participate in the Berlinale with four receiving awards: Ricardo Larraín won a Silver Bear award for an Outstanding Single Achievement for *La frontera* in 1992; Raúl Ruiz garnered a Silver Bear award for an Outstanding Artistic Achievement for his French production *Généalogies d’un crime* in 1997; María José San Martín won the DAAD Short Film Prize for *La ducha*—a film she

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<sup>225</sup> Schumann served as the programmer for Latin American cinema at the Forum section from 1971 to 2006. He curated Latin American films for the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen from 1971 to 1985.

<sup>226</sup> The Forum was founded in 1971 as a parallel festival, known as the Forum des jungen Films, in the aftermath of the scandal over Michael Verhoeven’s film *OK* at the 1970 Berlinale. The first Forum ran from June 27-July 4, 1971. See De Valck (66-68).

co-wrote with Alicia Scherson—in 2011; and Paulina García won the Silver Bear for Best Actress for her performance in Sebastián Lelio’s *Gloria* in 2013. Between 2005 and 2015, nineteen Chilean productions and co-productions screened at the festival. The 2015 edition of the festival featured nine Chilean productions or co-productions, the highest number of Chilean films screened at a single Berlinale.<sup>227</sup> Four Chilean filmmakers garnered awards at the festival: Patricio Guzmán won the Silver Bear award for Best Script and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury in the Competition section for *El botón de nácar* (2015); Pablo Larraín won the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize for *El Club*; Sebastián Silva garnered the Teddy Award for Best Queer Feature Film for *Nasty Baby*; and Omar Zúñiga garnered the Teddy Award for Best Queer Short Film for *San Cristóbal* (2015). Guzmán and Larraín screened their features in the Competition section, Silva screened his film in the Panorama section, and Zúñiga screened his film in the Berlinale Shorts section.<sup>228</sup> Together, Guzmán, Larraín, Silva, and Zúñiga’s careers span more than five decades. At one end of the spectrum is Guzmán, who began his filmmaking career in the 1960s and at the other, Zúñiga, who made his first film in 2007. As we shall see, media coverage seized upon these filmmakers’ differences in age and their mutual successes as evidence of the prestige of Chilean art cinema and the country’s established auteur tradition.

Chilean journalists and critics heralded Chilean filmmakers’ participation and success in

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<sup>227</sup> The following nine Chilean productions and co-productions that were official selections of the 2015 Berlinale: Sebastián Sepúlveda’s *Las niñas Quispe* (Chile/France/Argentina, 2013); Dominga Sotomayor’s *Mar* (Chile/Argentina, 2014); Chico Teixeira’s *Ausência* (Brazil/Chile/France, 2014); Sergio Castro San Martín’s *La mujer de barro* (Chile/Argentina, 2015); Aldo Garay’s *El hombre nuevo* (Uruguay/Chile, 2015); Patricio Guzmán’s *El botón de nácar* (France/Chile/Spain, 2015); Pablo Larraín’s *El Club* (Chile, 2015); Sebastián Silva’s *Nasty Baby* (USA/Chile/France, 2015); and Omar Zúñiga’s *San Cristóbal* (Chile, 2015).

<sup>228</sup> The Teddy Award was established in 1987. The independent award is an officially-recognized prize of the Berlinale. The award is administered by the Teddy Sponsorship Society, a not-for-profit foundation. The Society’s website describes the Teddy Award as “a societal engaged political award, which is given to films and people, that communicate queer themes and content on a large scale and contribute with this to more tolerance, acceptance, solidarity and equality in society” (Teddy Award, “About”).

the festival as confirmation of the country's cinema as a prestigious global brand.<sup>229</sup> They describe the 65th Berlin Film Festival as the culmination of years of success on the global film festival network by Chilean filmmakers. The anonymous author of the article “A la caza del Oso de Berlín: Chile inicia histórica participación con ocho películas en la Berlinale” (“On the Hunt for the Bear of Berlin: Chile Begins its Historic Participation with Eight Films in the Berlinale”), published in the digital newspaper *El Mostrador* the day before the festival, describes the high expectations for Chilean cinema at the event. The author observes that Chile has “more than 50 projects in the industry section, 8 titles in official selections and 18 representatives of the national audiovisual industry” participating in “the second most important film competition in the world.” In addition to highlighting the quantity of Chilean films participating in the festival, the article traces a history of participation by Chilean filmmakers in the Berlinale, beginning with Cristián Sánchez in 1983.<sup>230</sup> The author notes: “Thirty years later, a surprising interest in Chilean cinema takes hold in Berlin.” As we shall see, this focus on the history of Chilean participation in the Berlinale is a recurring feature of domestic and foreign press accounts of the festival.

Another article in *El Mostrador*, titled “Doble Oso de Plata para Chile en Berlín: Patricio Guzmán en Guión y Pablo Larraín Premio Gran Jurado” (“Double Silver Bear for Chile in Berlin: Patricio Guzmán for Screenplay and Pablo Larraín Grand Jury Prize”), exemplifies the prevailing sentiment of the domestic press in the aftermath of the festival. The lede is concise: “Chile triunfó en Berlín” (“Chile triumphed in Berlin”). The article describes Guzmán and

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<sup>229</sup> See *La Tercera*, “Películas chilenas destacan en Festival de Cine de Berlín”; *El Mercurio*, “El botón de nácar’ recibe uno de los premios independientes de la Berlinale”; *El Mostrador*, “Afirman que Pablo Larraín subió el nivel de la Berlinale con su ‘club’ de curas pescadores”; *24Horas*, “Pablo Larraín y Patricio Guzmán triunfan en el Festival de Cine de Berlín”; and *The Clinic*, “Pablo Larraín y Patricio Guzmán son premiados en el Festival de Berlín 2015.”

<sup>230</sup> Cristián Sánchez’s films *El zapato chino* (1979) and *Los deseos concebidos* (1982) screened at the 1983 Berlinale. *Los deseos concebidos* screened in the Forum section.

Larraín's Silver Bear awards in celebratory language: "Chile acudía a Berlín con dos nombres de peso, dispuesto a refrendar el buen momento de su cinematografía y logró con creces su objetivo" ("Chile arrived at Berlin with two heavyweights, prepared to authenticate the good moment of its cinematography and it far exceeded its objective"). In addition to highlighting their awards, the article refers to the three Chilean productions and co-productions that garnered the queer-cinema-themed Teddy Awards at the 2015 Berlinale: Silva's *Nasty Baby*, Zúñiga's short film *San Cristóbal*, and the feature-length documentary *El hombre nuevo* (2015), an Uruguayan-Chilean co-production by the Uruguayan filmmaker Aldo Garay, which screened in the Panorama section: "Pero Chile no fue solo uno de los grandes triunfadores en la competencia oficial, sino que también arrasó en los Teddy Award, importante sección que premia a películas de temática LGBT" ("But Chile was not only one of the grand winners in the official competition, it also cleaned out the Teddy Awards, an important section that gives awards to LGBT-themed movies"). In drawing attention to the variety of prizes awarded to Chilean films at the festival—which screened in and outside of the main Competition section—the article depicts the diversity of early-21st-century Chilean art film and its appeal across audiences and juries.

In his article "La historia de la Berlinale y la huella del cine chileno en el año 2015" ("The History of the Berlinale and the Footprint of Chilean Cinema in 2015"), published on the website *Galaxia UP*, Juan Pablo Faus also adopts a celebratory tone: "este año las producciones chilenas marcaron historia" ("this year Chilean productions made history"). An article on the website of the television news program Teletrece, titled "Berlinale 2015: El festival de Berlín con más premios para el cine chileno" ("Berlinale 2015: The Berlin Film Festival with More Awards for Chilean Cinema"), highlights the significance of the 2015 Berlinale for Chilean



cinema and contextualizes the festival within Chilean film history. The unnamed author remarks on the success of Chilean cinema at the Berlin Film Festival in recent decades, singling out García's Silver Bear in 2013, Ruiz's Silver Bear in 1997, and Larraín's 1992 Silver Bear. In framing Chilean filmmakers' participation in the Berlin Film Festival through a historical lens, the article depicts the 2015 edition of the festival within a tradition of Chilean auteurs. The author quotes the critic René Naranjo who describes the 2015 Berlinale as "la consolidación de una autoría cinematográfica" ("The consolidation of a cinematographic authorship"). As we have seen, this depiction of the auteur filmmaker also marks press coverage of the 2015 Valdivia Film Festival. However, whereas local and international journalists at Valdivia describe the emergence of a new generation or group of filmmakers, the Chilean press depict the 2015 Berlinale as confirmation of the quality and prestige of early-21st-century Chilean art film.

Chilean cultural brokers and bureaucrats also underscored the significance of the 2015 Berlin Film Festival. Commenting before the festival, Constanza Arenas, the executive director of CinemaChile, observes that the participation of Chilean filmmakers in Berlin provides an opportunity to burnish the cachet of Chilean cinema: "Chile never had such a solid participation in an 'A' list festival. Berlin consolidates our positive international image: an emerging and novel cinematography with much to offer" ("Berlinale 2015"). CinemaChile, which, along with ProChile, was present at the festival's European Film Market, has a vested interest in the success of Chilean cinema. Notwithstanding Arenas' bias, her statement echoes other accounts with its emphasis on the prestige of the Berlinale ("an 'A' list festival") and the global resonance of the festival ("Berlin consolidates our positive international image"). A press release published by the CNCA shortly before the festival presents the Berlinale as a site where Chilean cinema competes for prestige. The piece focuses on then Minister of Culture Claudia Barattini's attendance at the

event and details her planned meeting with German cultural officials, including the President of the Berlinale and the Minister of Culture. Like other accounts, the press release highlights Chilean cinema's short history of participation in the Berlin Film Festival and frames the festival as a historical proving-ground for the country's cinema. The release quotes Barattini, who describes Chilean filmmakers' participation in the 2015 festival as a moment of national cultural significance: "Ilegamos a la versión número 65º muy bien posicionados como país. Los 10 títulos escogidos demuestran que el cine chileno comienza a hacerse lugar en circuitos internacionales" ("Ministra Barattini encabeza"; "we arrive at the 65º edition well-positioned as a country. The 10 selected titles show that Chilean cinema is beginning to make a place for itself in international circuits").<sup>231</sup> Fitting with her role as Minister of Culture, Barattini praises Chilean cinema through the lens of the nation and emphasizes its appeal as an export.

In a 2015 editorial published in the Chilean daily *La Tercera*, Myriam Gómez, the Executive Director of Fundación Imagen de Chile, also establishes a connection between the Chilean film's participation in the 2015 Berlinale and its importance as a cultural export:

El cine se ha consolidado como un poderoso vehículo constructor de identidad. Las producciones nacionales son parte importante de la imagen de Chile en el exterior, gozando de un amplio reconocimiento. Así pudimos verlo en el Festival de Cine de Berlín, donde los directores chilenos Pablo Larraín y Patricio Guzmán obtuvieron importantes premios con la película "El Club" y el documental "El botón de nácar", respectivamente. ("Cine chileno en el extranjero"; Cinema has consolidated itself as a

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<sup>231</sup> Barattini situates the participation of Chilean filmmakers at the 2015 Berlinale within the evolution of the country's cinema since the Transition to Democracy: "Las oportunidades que se han abierto hace muy poco obedecen a una lógica que se extiende por 30 años y en la que hubo que consolidarse y validarse como expresión cultural" ("Ministra Barattini encabeza"; "The opportunities which have recently opened obey a logic that goes back 30 years and in which one had to consolidate and validate themselves as cultural expression").

powerful vehicle for constructing identity. National productions are an important part of Chile's image in the exterior, enjoying wide recognition. We saw this at the Berlin Film Festival, where the Chilean directors Pablo Larraín y Patricio Guzmán received important prizes for the film "El Club" and the documentary "El botón de nácar," respectively) For Gómez, these two Silver Bear awards represent a stamp of approval for Chilean film and also reinforce the potency of cinema as a national cultural export.

Journalists for media outlets abroad depict the participation of Chilean film in the 2015 Berlinale through the overlapping lenses of national cinema and the auteur. Gemma Casadevall, writing for the syndicated Spanish news agency EFE, describes the excitement generated by Chilean film in an article titled "Larraín y Guzmán, representantes del 'momento mágico' chileno en la Berlinale" ("Larraín and Guzmán, representatives of Chile's 'magic moment' at the Berlinale"). Casadevall calls Chilean cinema a "superpotencia" ("superpower") and describes the festival as a moment of coronation for Chilean cinema: "Los directores Pablo Larraín y Patricio Guzmán plasmaron en la Berlinale el momento mágico que vive el cine de Chile, no solo por la presencia de dos películas chilenas [en] competición, sino porque además son firmes aspirantes al Oso de Oro" ("The directors Pablo Larraín and Patricio Guzmán captured in the Berlinale the magic moment that Chilean cinema is living, not only because of the presence of two films in competition, but also because they are solid contenders for the Golden Bear"). She also raises the issue of the discrepancy between Chilean cinema's success at film festivals and in theaters abroad and the limited audiences it attracts in Chile: "El auge del cine chileno y su proyección exterior contrasta con su déficit en cuanto a su difusión en las salas de cine y televisión del país" ("The boom of Chilean cinema and its projection abroad contrasts with its deficit as it relates to its distribution in the country's movie theaters and televisions"). In highlighting this anxiety over

local spectatorship, the author echoes the accounts of other journalists, critics, and filmmakers who note that the accumulation of cultural prestige does not always translate into large audiences at domestic cinemas.

In a second article, “Larraín y Guzmán, dos Osos berlineses exponentes del poderío del cine chileno” (“Larraín and Guzmán, Two Berlin Bears Indicators of the Power of Chilean Cinema”), Casadevall notes that Chile “se llevó del festival europeo la confirmación del poderío de su cinematografía en forma de dos Osos” (“walked away from the European festival with confirmation of the power of its cinematography in the form of two Bears”). In addition to the cultural prestige embodied by the Silver Bear awards, the author emphasizes the generational divide between Guzmán and Larraín. She notes that Chilean cinema “concurría con dos máximos representantes, de generaciones y estilos distintos” (“partook with two of its maximum representatives, of different generations and styles”). In describing Guzmán and Larraín as “heavyweights” and “maximum representatives” of Chilean film, Casadevall positions them as auteurs, whose work exemplifies the prestige of the country’s cinema. And, in drawing attention to their age differences and distinct styles of filmmaking, she highlights the diversity of this national cinema.

In a third article, “Latinoamérica arrasa en la Berlinale, que dio su Oro político al iraní Panahi” (“Latin America Triumphed in the Berlinale, Which Gave its Political Gold to the Iranian Panahi”), Casadevall expands her analysis of the festival’s significance beyond Chile. In addition to foregrounding the success of Latin American cinema at the festival, the title of the article, which references Jafar Panahi’s win for *Taxi*, points to the festival’s history as a site of contestation and geopolitics.<sup>232</sup> Alongside Guzmán and Larraín, Casadevall highlights Jayro

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<sup>232</sup> Panahi made *Taxi* (2015) without the approval of the Iranian government. Due to restrictions on his movement outside of Iran, Panahi was not permitted to attend the festival. His niece accepted the Golden Bear in his stead.

Bustamante's Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize for his film *Ixancul* (2015) and observes that Latin American cinema emerged as the winner of the festival: "Latinoamérica arrasó ayer en la Berlinale, con osos de plata tanto para dos grandes del cine chileno, Pablo Larraín y Patricio Guzmán, como para el debutante guatemalteco Jayro Bustamante" ("Latin America cleaned out the Berlinale yesterday, with silver bears for two greats of Chilean cinema, Pablo Larraín and Patricio Guzmán, and the Guatemalan newcomer Jayro Bustamante").<sup>233</sup> An article published by German public broadcaster *DW* titled, "Berlinale: Osos de plata para todos los latinoamericanos en competencia" ("Berlinale: Silver Bears for all the Latin Americans in Competition"), calls the three Silver Bears for Guzmán, Larraín, and Bustamante a "un palmarés muy latinoamericano" ("a very Latin American list of winners"). In establishing a link between the festival and Latin American cinema, these two press accounts underscore the role of film festivals in canon formation and their capacity to endow national or a regional cinema with symbolic capital.

In his dispatch from the German capital published in *El País*, "El cine chileno exhibe músculo en Berlín" ("Chilean cinema shows its muscle in Berlin"), Gregorio Belinchón likewise singles out Chilean cinema as the story of the festival: "Si alguien ha sacado pecho a lo largo de la 65ª edición de la Berlinale, ha sido el cine chileno. Por cantidad y por calidad" ("If anyone has thrown their weight around during the 65<sup>th</sup> edition of the Berlinale, it has been Chilean cinema. In quantity and quality"). He remarks on the diversity of these films and observes that Guzmán and Larraín's films "Son dos apuestas muy distintas" ("Are two very different wagers"). Like Herrero, who describes the "personal wagers" of the Chilean filmmakers at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival, Belinchón points to the differences between *El botón de nácar* and *El club*—

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Gerd Germünden connects the 2015 Berlinale to the festival's political origins: "Founded at the height of the Cold War, the Berlinale has always been a political festival, a tradition that was rejuvenated by many of this year's winners" (138).

<sup>233</sup> The Alfred Bauer Prize is for "a feature film that opens new perspectives" ("65. Berlinale: The Awards," 2).

Guzmán's documentary focuses on violence against indigenous peoples in Chile's colonial period and the forced disappearance of citizens under the Pinochet regime while Larraín's film tells the story of a group of disgraced priests living in seclusion in Southern Chile—, as well as the age divide between the two filmmakers. Belinchón quotes Juan de Dios Larraín, who observes: “Hay hasta cinco generaciones de cineastas chilenos rodando en la actualidad” (“There are up to five generations of Chilean directors filming today”). Like the Chilean press and cultural brokers, Belinchón describes the Chilean films at the Berlinale as emblematic of the country's pan-generational tradition of auteur cinema.

In his Berlinale review of *El Club* in the *Hollywood Reporter*, Jordan Mintzer also underscores the auteur status of Larraín and situates him within a continuum of Chilean art cinema auteurs. Mintzer observes that *El Club* “is definitely not as mainstream as the crowd-pleasing *No*, which broke out to minor acclaim and was nominated for a foreign-language Oscar in 2013.” However, he notes that the film has niche commercial prospects and “should find sufficient takers on the international art house circuit, while drawing further attention to a growing crop of Chilean auteurs that includes Sebastián Lelio (*Gloria*), Sebastián Silva (*Nasty Baby*) and fellow Golden Bear contender Patricio Guzmán (*Nostalgia for the Light*).” In grouping these Chilean filmmakers together, Mintzer like Casadevall and Belinchón, highlights the auteur qualities of Chilean art cinema and its global appeal.

Journalists play a central role in the construction of the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and the 2015 Berlin Film Festival. Press coverage of Valdivia established critical templates for later narratives and criticism of Chilean art cinema released in the ten years after the festival. The journalists, critics, and scholars writing during and in the immediate aftermath of Valdivia, underscore the auteur and personal qualities of the five Chilean films at the festival, as well as

the connection between Bize, Bowen, Fuguet, Lelio, Scherson and filmmakers from the 1960s and early 1970s. Press accounts of the 2015 Berlin Film Festival depict Chilean cinema as a national cinema with a tradition of quality that stretches across decades, a reality manifest in the awards garnered by Guzmán, Silva, and Larraín. Journalists portray the 2015 Berlinale as confirmation of the prestige and quality early-21st-century Chilean art cinema.

### 3. Selling Out: The Transition to Democracy and McOndo in Alberto Fuguet's *Se arrienda*

*En esencia, soy un crítico de cine. Es un trabajo sucio pero alguien tiene que hacerlo.*  
—Alberto Fuguet

In his eclectic, film-centric book *Cinépata* (2012)—the title is a play on the Spanish words for cinema (cine) and psychopath (psicópata)—, Alberto Fuguet reflects on the central role cinema occupies in his life:

He sido cinéfilo desde siempre. Pienso en mi pasado y pienso en tal o cual película; pienso en tal o cual filme y de inmediato recuerdo qué sentía o en qué estaba en ese momento. Me acuerdo de afiches en mi habitación, esos inmensos lienzos pintados por Solís (que intentaban reproducir los pósters originales sin lograrlo del todo) a la entrada de esos antiguos cines hoy cerrados o demolidos; me acuerdo de críticas recortadas y subrayadas, tarjetas coleccionables en francés de la revista *Premiere*, mis cuadernos universitarios donde anotaba qué veía, dónde, cuándo, con quién. (11; I have been a cinephile since forever. I think about my past and I think about this or that movie; I think about this or that movie and I immediately remember what I felt or was doing in that moment. I remember posters in my room, those immense canvases painted by Solís (who tried to reproduce the original posters without accomplishing it entirely) in the entrance to those old cinemas closed or demolished now; I remember reviews cut out and underlined, collectable cards in French from the magazine *Premiere*, my university notebooks where I noted what I saw, where, when, with whom)

For the cinephile, Fuguet writes, cinema is a self-reflexive means of engaging with the world: “La mayor parte de la gente ve cine para entretenerse; el cinéfilo ve películas para entenderse e intentar comunicarse con el mundo” (79; “The majority of people watch cinema to enjoy



themselves; the cinephile watches movies to understand himself and to try to communicate with the world”). For cinephiles like Fuguet, film facilitates and is the basis of the common conversations that are integral to the practice of cosmopolitanism.

Fuguet incorporates his love of cinema into his fiction. Two of his most cinema-centric novels, *Por favor, rebobinar* (*Please, Rewind*, 1994) and *Las películas de mi vida* (published in English as *The Movies of My Life*, 2003), are replete with references to film and feature movie-loving protagonists. The characters of *Por favor, rebobinar* include a film critic, a director, and screenplay writers. The film critic, Lucas García, embraces cinema as a way of life and death: “Creo que cuando uno se muere, se va a un gran microcine que está en el cielo y, junto a un comité ad hoc, uno se sienta a ver lo que ya vio” (15; “I think that when you die, you go to a grand microcinema in heaven and, together with an ad hoc committee, you sit down to watch what you saw”). Film provides Lucas with a prism through which to catalogue and reflect upon his experiences. In addition to Lucas’s post-mortem celluloid fantasies, *Por favor, rebobinar* depicts the fictional cinematographic production *Las hormigas asesinas* (*The Killer Ants*). Later in this chapter, I analyze three versions of *Las hormigas asesinas* in *Por favor, rebobinar*; Fuguet’s 2005 short film; and the incorporation of fragments from the *Las hormigas asesinas* short within *Se arrienda*.

In *Las películas de mi vida*, Fuguet explores the connection between film and memory.<sup>234</sup> Upon learning of the death of his grandfather while traveling through Los Angeles, the novel’s protagonist and narrator, Beltrán Soler, reflexively turns his mind to the movies of his childhood: “Why have I returned to think—to live, to feel, to enjoy, to suffer—about facts and people and

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<sup>234</sup> In *VHS (unas memorias)*, Fuguet writes that *Las película de mi vida* “no era exactamente acerca de las películas de *mi vida* sino de las del personaje principal y narrador del libro, Beltrán Soler” (18, author’s emphasis; “was not exactly about the movies of *my life* but those of the main character and narrator of the book, Beltrán Soler).

films chalked up to the oblivion (superceded, eliminated, erased) of my unconsciousness? Why am I remembering now, after so much time? Why, after years of not going to the movies, of seeing absolutely nothing, have I returned to the days when I used to devour them?” (3). In the novel, these films are the foundation of Beltrán’s memories of his youth and provide a focal point for his relationships with his friends, family, and his bi-cultural identity.

Like these novels, *Se arrienda* depicts cinephilia as a self-reflexive and cosmopolitan practice. Cinephilia shapes the identity and informs the memories of the film’s protagonist Gastón Fernández (played by the actor and future Minister of Culture Luciano Cruz-Coke). In *Se arrienda*, *Las hormigas asesinas* also functions as a site of memory for the protagonist. In addition to exploring the themes of cinephilia and cosmopolitanism, the film presents a national allegory of Chile during the Transition to Democracy. It depicts Chile’s model of “hierarchical capitalism” (Schneider, *Hierarchical Capitalism* 4), which is characterized by the predominance of family run business groups, the concentration of wealth, and socio-economic inequality.<sup>235</sup> The juxtaposition and tension between the film’s allegorical elements and its cosmopolitan themes mark the work as an inflection point between the cinema of the Transition and post-Transition art cinema.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section analyzes *Se arrienda*’s representation of Chile’s Transition to Democracy through the lenses of culture and economics. I maintain that the film portrays the economic model of “hierarchical capitalism” (Schneider, *Hierarchical Capitalism* 4) that characterizes the country’s Transition-era economy. I maintain that Gastón’s relationship with his father exemplifies “family capitalism” (47), while the

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<sup>235</sup> According to Carlos Saavedra, *Se arrienda* not only depicts Chile’s neoliberal economic model but embodies it. He maintains that the protagonist and director of *Se arrienda* “coinciden con una visión burguesa de la producción artística” (94; “share a bourgeois vision of artistic production”).

depiction of Chernovsky reflects the entrenched socio-economic inequality of the Transition period. Additionally, I contend that the film's thematic focus on the nation represents a point of continuity with the cinema of the Transition, even though Fuguet's film focuses on the upper-middle class, rather than the marginalized figures that populate the films from the Transition to Democracy period. The second section considers Gastón's relationship to culture and cinema. I argue that the film depicts Gastón as a McOndo artist and cinephile. Gastón's border-spanning career, his varied cultural consumption, and his focus on his own individual well-being exemplify the McOndo sensibility of plural cultural consumption and the emphasis on individual experience established by Fuguet and Sergio Gómez in "Presentación del País McOndo," the prologue to their 1996 collection *McOndo*. The final section analyzes the film within the film *Las hormigas asesinas*. I examine the metafictional qualities and genesis of *Las hormigas asesinas*. I highlight three interrelated versions of *Las hormigas asesinas*: the version which appears in *Por favor, rebobinar*, the 2005 stand-alone black-and-white short film, and the fictional film in *Se arrienda* which is comprised of fragments from the short film. The three iterations of *Las hormigas asesinas* are emblematic of the porous and cosmopolitan qualities of *Se arrienda*. Additionally, I maintain that the juxtaposition of the two narrative levels in *Se arrienda*—the story of Gastón's development and the fragments from *Las hormigas asesinas*—function as "communicating vessels" (Breton, *Communicating Vessels* and Vargas Llosa, *Letters to a Young Novelist* 121). Through use of match cuts and parallel editing, the film establishes connections between Gastón and Paul Kazán, the protagonist of *Las hormigas asesinas* and augments *Se arrienda*'s narrative themes of cinephilia and its connection to art cinema.

### 3.1. A Family Business: Chile and the Transition to Democracy

*Se arrienda* depicts a landmark era in Chile's cultural, economic, political, and social history: the Transition to Democracy (1988-2005).<sup>236</sup> This period begins with the "No" campaign's victory in the October 5, 1988 plebiscite and ends with the implementation of a series of wide-ranging constitutional reforms in August 2005. Fuguet's film, which follows the composer Gastón Fernández, unfolds at the beginning and tail end of the Transition to Democracy. *Se arrienda* represents Chile during the Transition through the lenses of culture and economics. The film's dual temporal narrative structure bookending the Transition, polysemous title, and epigraph from L.P. Hartley's novel *The Go-Between* (1953) establish its allegorical qualities. Additionally, three facets epitomize *Se arrienda*'s allegorical representation of Transition-era Chile: the October 14, 1988 Human Rights Now! concert in Mendoza, the relationship between Gastón and his father, and the portrayal of Chernovsky. The film's depiction of the Human Rights Now! concert, held days after the 1988 plebiscite, reflects the collective optimism and solidarity at the beginning of the Transition, as well as the prominence of human rights as a political, social, and cultural issue. Turning to the film's present of 2003, the relationship between Gastón and his father functions as a metaphor of "family capitalism" (Schneider, *Hierarchical Capitalism* 47), while Chernovsky's descent into poverty and isolation reflects the entrenched socio-economic inequality and limited social safety net in Transition-era Chile.

Chile's Transition to Democracy was a process of political reform, which coincided with the final part of the seventeen-year military dictatorship (1973-1990). The Transition was set in motion by the October 5, 1988 plebiscite, in which a majority of Chileans (55 percent) voted

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<sup>236</sup> A version of this section was previously published by the author. See Trautenberg, "A Family Business: Chile and the Transition to Democracy in Alberto Fuguet's *Se arrienda*."

against Augusto Pinochet serving as President for an additional eight-year term.<sup>237</sup> General elections in December 1989 and the inauguration of Patricio Aylwin as President in 1990 marked the formal restoration of democracy. The period from 1988 to 2005 was characterized by sustained economic growth; a significant reduction in poverty; the gradual implementation of economic, political, and social reforms; the prosecution of human rights violators under the military dictatorship; and the persistence of authoritarian enclaves. Carlos Huneeus observes that during the Transition Chilean democracy followed “un camino de reforma” (“a path of reform”) within the context of “una triple continuidad” (“a triple continuity”) comprised of the 1980 Constitution, the installation of Pinochet as commander of the army until 1998 and then senator-for-life until 2002, and the preservation of a neoliberal economic model (32). The constitutional reforms enacted under President Ricardo Lagos in August 2005 addressed one of the most significant deficits in the country’s democracy—the limited accountability of the armed forces to civilian leadership—by restoring oversight and control of the military to the President and elected officials, thereby ushering in the post-Transition era.<sup>238</sup>

From 1990 to 2005, successive center-left Concertación coalition governments pursued, with varying degrees of success, an economic model that President Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994) labeled “crecimiento con equidad” (“En el acto de aniversario” 109; “growth with equity”). In practice, the growth with equity model, with its emphasis on free trade and open markets, entailed maintaining the “pragmatic neoliberalism” (Schneider, *Hierarchical Capitalism* 49) instituted by the military government, while at the same time generating economic opportunities and providing increased social support for poor, young, and vulnerable Chileans. Ben Ross

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<sup>237</sup> For more on the 1988 plebiscite see Constable and Valenzuela, “Chile’s Return to Democracy.”

<sup>238</sup> See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional, “Reforma constitucional que introduce diversas modificaciones a la constitución política de la República” and “Chile: Democratic at last.”

Schneider labels the country's economic model during the Transition "hierarchical capitalism" (4). He notes that this model was first instituted under the military government and broadly maintained during the Transition and post-Transition periods. Schneider identifies four core elements of hierarchical capitalism:

(1) that Latin America has a distinctive, enduring form of hierarchical capitalism characterized by multinational corporations (MNCs), diversified business groups, low skills, and segmented labor markets; (2) that institutional complementarities knit together features of corporate governance and labor markets and thus contributed to the resiliency of hierarchical capitalism; (3) that elements of the broader political system favor incumbents and insiders who pressed governments to sustain core economic institutions; and (4) that hierarchical capitalism has not generated enough good jobs and equitable development nor is it, on its own, likely to. (4)

As we shall see, *Se arrienda* depicts two key elements of hierarchical capitalism: "family capitalism" (47) —embodied by the relationship between Gastón and his father—and socio-economic inequality—epitomized by the penurious fate of Chernovsky.

Successive Concertación governments implemented economic and social reforms gradually throughout the Transition. In 1990, Aylwin's government passed a progressive tax reform that significantly increased government revenues, raised the minimum wage, and instituted a labor reform that granted more bargaining power to unions. Reforms by subsequent governments to the education, labor, pension, and health care systems were coupled with significant increases in spending on education and poverty eradication.<sup>239</sup> Despite these reforms,

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<sup>239</sup> See Ffrench-Davis (25-34) and Collier and Sater (390-410).

public social spending as a percentage of GDP declined over the course of the Transition, decreasing from 10.6 percent in 1988 to 8.7 percent in 2005 (OECD, “Social spending”).

Chile experienced strong economic growth during most of the Transition period. From 1990 to 2005, the country’s annual GDP growth averaged 5.5 percent, compared to 2.9 percent in the period between 1974 and 1989 under the military dictatorship (Ffrench-Davis 270). This economic expansion was accompanied by a significant decline in poverty rates. The number of Chileans living below the national poverty line fell from 45.1 percent in 1987 to 18.7 percent in 2003 (The World Bank, “Poverty headcount ratio”). However, socio-economic inequality remained high. The country’s Gini coefficient, a measure of economic inequality, averaged 53.1 between 1990 and 2005, only slightly lower than its 54.3 Gini coefficient average between 1974 and 1989 (Ffrench-Davis 270).<sup>240</sup>

In addition to these politics of economic continuity and political reform, Concertación governments implemented human rights policies aimed at documenting and persecuting human rights abuses that occurred during the dictatorship. More than forty thousand people were victims of political and state-sponsored violence during the dictatorship (*Informe de la Comisión Presidencial* 51). The National Commission of Truth and Reconciliation (known as the Rettig Commission) (1990-1991) and the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (known as the Valech Commission) (2003-2005) were among the most significant and wide-reaching human rights initiatives of the Transition period.<sup>241</sup> These and subsequent commissions compiled evidence and testimony from victims and perpetrators. Upon the release of the Rettig

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<sup>240</sup> For comparison, Argentina’s Gini coefficient measured 46.8 in 1991 and 49.3 in 2005. The United States’ Gini coefficient measured 38.2 in 1991 and 40.5 in 2004 (OECD, “Gini index”).

<sup>241</sup> The Rettig Commission served as a model for Peru and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation commissions. See *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation* (1991), *Informe de la Comisión Nacional Sobre Prisión Política y Tortura* (2005), and *Informe de la Comisión Presidencial Asesora para la Calificación de Detenidos Desaparecidos, Ejecutados Políticos y Víctimas de Prisión Política y Tortura* (2011).

Commission's report in 1991, President Aylwin declared: "it is Chilean society that is indebted to the victims of human rights violations" ("Justice 'To the Degree Possible'" 530). However, the protracted and ultimately unfinished prosecution of Pinochet for human rights violations—a saga that began in 1998 with his detention in London and ended with his death in 2006—, exemplified the difficulty in pursuing human rights violations. *Se arrienda* portrays the centrality of human rights in Transition-era Chile through the Human Rights Now! concert, an event in which human rights, politics, and culture intersected.

*Se arrienda* intertwines a cosmopolitan vision of the world with a national allegory of Chile during the Transition to Democracy. In incorporating a socio-economically-oriented national allegory alongside cosmopolitan cultural references—the poster for Brian de Palma's film *Blow Out* (USA, 1981) hangs on a wall in Gastón's apartment (seg. 23) and Gastón and his friends discuss *Los Prisioneros*, Julio Iglesias, and Sting during their conversation in the pizzeria (seg. 6b)—, the film serves as a bridge between the largely allegorical "cinema of the transition" (Kemp, *Citizenship* 69) and a cosmopolitan strand of post-Transition cinema. Fuguet's film depicts the Transition as a frustrated promise of a more equitable, just, and happy future. In 1988, Gastón (Luciano Cruz-Coke), Chernovsky (Eliana Furman), and their friends embrace the possibilities of the incipient Transition to Democracy; however, their collective optimism gives way to disenchantment as they confront the challenges of adulthood and the limits of the country's political, economic, and social progress.

*Se arrienda*'s dual temporal structure, title, and epigraph establish its allegorical qualities. The film's elliptical narrative unfolds in two distinct time periods separated by fifteen years, at the beginning and tail end of the Transition. Most of the first act is set in late 1988 and early 1989, just after the 1988 plebiscite that marked the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of



the Transition (segs. 4-10). Segment 2 and the remainder of the film are primarily set in and around 2003. The exceptions are the brief sequences and fragments of sequences (segs. 2, 10, 19, 32, 38, 41, 44, 53) from *Las hormigas asesinas*, a production which, in the narrative world of the film, was conceived of and shot around 1989. *Se arrienda*'s dual temporal structure presents a split-frame portrait of the Transition to Democracy. This divided framing device encourages critical viewing, inasmuch as the spectator assumes an active role in piecing together the characters' lives in the intervening fifteen years.

*Se arrienda*'s title—which translates to *For Rent* in English—reflects the plural qualities of the film's allegory of Chile during the Transition. On its surface, the title alludes to Gastón's work as a real estate agent for his father's company. However, the title has two additional meanings. The title also refers to the film's allegorical representation of Chile's economy during the Transition, in which much is for sale (or rent). The title also alludes to Gastón's anxieties about the incompatibility of his art and his new career as a real estate agent. Gastón's job renting properties forces him to confront the complicated relationship between art and commerce, as well as his resistance to becoming a sell-out, a theme that surfaces in the discussion at the pizzeria in Mendoza (seg. 6b) and when Gastón and Balbo (Felipe Braun) visit the discotheque after Gastón's return to Santiago (seg. 34).

Like the film's temporal structure and title, the epigraph establishes *Se arrienda*'s allegorical qualities. The film's epigraph is the opening line of the English author L.P. Hartley's mid-century coming-of-age novel *The Go-Between*.<sup>242</sup> The epigraph, quoted in Spanish-language translation, reads: "El pasado es como un país extranjero: allí hacen las cosas de otro modo" (00:12-00:19). The original English is more direct: "The past is a foreign country: they do things

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<sup>242</sup> Joseph Losey directed a 1971 filmic adaptation of *The Go-Between*.

differently there” (17).<sup>243</sup> These are the words of the novel’s sexagenarian narrator, Leo, who recounts his stay at Brandham Hall in the English countryside in July 1900, when he was a young adolescent.

Hartley’s novel and Fuguet’s film share three features in common. First, they have similar narrative structures. The film and book shift between the protagonists’ present (the 1950s in *The Go-Between* and the early 2000s in *Se arrienda*) and the recent past (the turn of the 20th-century in *The Go-Between* and the late 1980s in *Se arrienda*). Second, both works function as national allegories. The narrator of Hartley’s novel draws a parallel between his experiences at Brandham Hall and the calamitous first half of the 20th century in England and continental Europe—a century young Leo naively believed would be “the dawn of a Golden Age” (20). The adolescent protagonist’s high hopes for the epoch are dashed by the tragedy that unfolds during the hot summer of 1900. As we shall see, a similar trajectory and tone of disillusionment mark Fuguet’s film, as the optimism of the Human Rights Now! concert and the earlier 1988 plebiscite—with its famous theme song “Chile, la alegría ya viene” (“Chile, happiness is coming”)—recedes and the hoped-for change fails to materialize. Finally, *Se arrienda* and *The Go-Between* feature objects imbued with personal history that precipitate their narratives. These metafictional objects, Leo’s diary and the film *Las hormigas asesinas*, respectively, function as “lieux de mémoire where memory crystallizes and secretes itself” (Nora 7). They are manifestations of the past, but also invitations for their creators to reckon with their personal histories and memories.

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<sup>243</sup> In *Apuntes autistas* (2007), Fuguet, citing Hartley’s novel, observes that the past seems more exotic than the foreign: “La famosa primera frase de *The Go-Between* (‘el pasado es como un país extranjero’) ya no tiene el mismo valor. Hoy el pasado es mucho más inexplicable e inasible que el extranjero. Si existiera una máquina del tiempo, no me cabe duda que viajar al Chile de 1964 sería bastante más raro y exótico y choqueante que viajar a Mendoza, Cleveland u Odessa” (19; “The famous first line of *The Go-Between* (‘the past is a foreign country’) does not have the same meaning anymore. Today the past is much more inexplicable and elusive than the foreign. If there were a time machine, I have no doubt that traveling to Chile in 1964 would be much more weird and exotic and shocking than traveling to Mendoza, Cleveland, or Odessa”).

In Hartley's novel, the elder Leo's discovery of his old personal diary motivates his retelling of his experiences at Brandham Hall. Similarly, *Se arrienda* begins with Gastón watching *Las hormigas asesinas*, a film which he helped make when he was a university student (Gastón created the soundtrack). Like the diary, this black-and-white film within *Se arrienda* functions as a point of departure for the narrative and dialogues with the primary, reality-based narrative level. Additionally, *Las hormigas asesinas* features prominent allegorical elements. This film-within-the-film presents an invasion of killer ants as a loosely-veiled metaphor for the September 11, 1973 coup and subsequent dictatorship, a connection underscored by newspaper articles read by the protagonist Paul Kazán (Benjamín Vicuña). By opening with this epigraph from *The Go-Between*, *Se arrienda* establishes parallels between both works and, by extension, draws attention to its own allegorical qualities.

Two early sequences (segs. 5 and 6) exemplify *Se arrienda*'s representation of the early stages of the Transition as a time of solidarity, collective optimism, and a preoccupation with human rights. These sequences are set before, during, and after the October 14, 1988 Human Rights Now! concert in Mendoza, Argentina. This Argentine city near the two countries' border was chosen as the site of the concert after Pinochet refused to host the event in Chile. The Mendoza concert was the penultimate show of Human Rights Now!, a six-week, twenty-stop world tour marking the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). The Human Rights Now! tour featured popular music stars from around the world, including Tracy Chapman, Peter Gabriel, Youssou N'Dour, Bruce Springsteen, and Sting.<sup>244</sup> In Mendoza, these performers were joined by two iconic Chilean groups from two eras,

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<sup>244</sup> In his review of the final concert of the tour in Buenos Aires for the *Los Angeles Times*, James Smith highlights the performers' political activism: "The 20th and final concert of the six-week 'Human Rights Now!' Tour combined the virtuosity of Springsteen, Sting, Peter Gabriel, Tracy Chapman and Youssou N'Dour of Senegal with odes to the missing, the tortured and the persecuted in Argentina, Chile and South Africa" (G1).

the ensemble Inti-Illimani—an outfit affiliated with the New Chilean Song movement of the 1960s and 1970s—and Los Prisioneros, who at the time were one of Latin America’s most prominent rock bands.

Thousands of Chileans traveled to the Estadio Mundialista Mendoza for the cosmopolitan cultural event, which took place just nine days after the victory of the “No” campaign in the 1988 plebiscite. In a *Los Angeles Times* article, James Smith describes the ecstatic crowds in the Argentine border city: “The penultimate concert on Friday in Mendoza, near the Argentina-Chile border, became a celebration of Pinochet’s defeat in a plebiscite Oct. 5. Thousands of Chileans attended, and two Chilean bands, recently returned from exile, joined the international stars on stage” (G4).<sup>245</sup> Chilean author Ariel Dorfman, who attended the event, described the jubilant atmosphere: “This is a concert for Chile. If Pinochet had won the plebiscite, it would have been a protest. But we said no, and it’s a celebration” (Henke 141). The festive atmosphere, however, did not preclude protests onstage, most notably during Sting’s Spanish-language performance of his song “They Dance Alone (Cueca Solo)” (1987). The British rock star was joined on stage by relatives of the disappeared holding photos of their missing loved ones. The presence of family members of the disappeared added a powerful visual element to the song, which, as its title suggests, is a tribute to the “cueca sola.” In the cueca sola, daughters, mothers, and widows of victims of the military regime perform the cueca—Chile’s national dance—alone, thereby highlighting the absence of their loved one.<sup>246</sup>

Fuguet himself attended the concert. He recalls: “Yo fui uno de esos chicos y ese recital fue uno de los grandes mitos de mi generación” (“Escritor chileno Fuguet rueda”; “I was one of

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<sup>245</sup> Members of Inti-Illimani returned from exile in Italy at the end of the Pinochet regime.

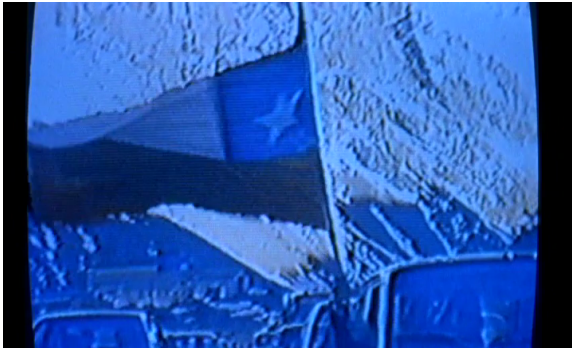
<sup>246</sup> The cueca sola was featured in a prominent advertisement for the “No” campaign produced by the Grupo Proceso collective. See Marco Jiménez’s 1990 documentary *Memorias primera victoria*. For more on Sting’s performance see Henke (146-67).

those kids and that concert was one of the great myths of my generation”). He compares the Human Rights Now! concert in Mendoza to a defining cultural event of the 1960s: “Para mi generación Mendoza fue como Woodstock” (“For my generation Mendoza was like Woodstock”). Channeling Fuguet’s rosy recollections, the film represents the concert in Mendoza as a seminal cultural and political moment. For Gastón, his friends, and the 55 percent of Chileans who voted “No” in the plebiscite, the concert embodies a new frontier of possibility after a decade-and-a-half of repressive rule by Pinochet. The film depicts the concert, with its mix of global popular culture and human rights activism, as a moment of cultural, generational, and political change. Traveling alongside thousands of Chileans, Gastón, a student in music composition at the University of Chile, and his friends, who are also university students in their late teens and early twenties, make the pilgrimage to Mendoza over the Andes via bus (seg. 5). Their shared mode of transportation reflects the collective exuberance and solidarity of the moment. After a scene in which Gastón and his friends descend from the bus to admire the vista at the border, the camera cuts to a series of ten shots of visually distinct, unlabeled archival footage (seg. 6a). This footage is comprised of images of Chileans traveling to Mendoza and scenes from the concert. Meanwhile, the upbeat song “Tele-ka” (1984) by the Argentine rock-en-español band Soda Stereo plays on the soundtrack—a self-reflexive allusion to *Se arrienda*’s trans-Andean soundtrack and production.<sup>247</sup> In the shots of the concert, many of the attendees hold Chilean flags and ephemerae emblazoned with the rainbow “No” logo of the anti-Pinochet campaign. In the tenth and final shot of the sequence, the camera cuts away, revealing images from the concert on the television in the restaurant where Gastón and his friends eat pizza and discuss popular culture and their hopeful dreams for the future (seg. 6b). The framing of this

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<sup>247</sup> *Se arrienda* was shot in Mendoza and Santiago.

archival footage within the television underscores the metacinematic nature of *Se arrienda* and echoes the film's opening scene in which Gastón watches *Las hormigas asesinas* (seg. 2). After the camera pans away from the television, Luc Fernández (Nicolás Saavedra), the budding director, ironically remarks "It would have been great to film it all" (05:05-05:06).<sup>248</sup>



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<sup>248</sup> All Spanish-language dialogue from *Se arrienda* is quoted from the English-language subtitles by Paula Salazar.



*Archival footage from the 1988 Human Rights Now! concert in Mendoza*

The incorporation of archival footage from the concert exemplifies the allegorical and cosmopolitan qualities of *Se arrienda*. These images of thousands of joyful concert-goers traveling together and enjoying music by some of the world’s most well-known musicians, reflect the optimism of Chileans like Gastón at the end of the military dictatorship. This is a celebration of Chile’s political and cultural opening to the world. In the same vein, the concert personifies the excitement Gastón and his friends feel towards Chile’s incipient democratization—Balbo wears a t-shirt inscribed with the “No” campaign logo—, and their cosmopolitan cultural sensibilities. In this respect, their journey across the Andes is at once an act of political solidarity and plural cultural consumption. Los Prisioneros, who performed in Mendoza, captured the larger cultural and political zeitgeist of the time in their 1984 song “La voz de los ‘80” (“The Voice of the ‘80s”):

En plena edad del plástico  
seremos fuerza, seremos cambio.  
No te conformes con mirar  
en los '80 tu rol es estelar  
tienes la fuerza, eres actor principal.  
De las entrañas de nuestras ciudades  
surge la piel que vestirá al mundo.  
Ya viene la fuerza, la voz de los '80

(In the middle of the plastic age  
we'll be strength, we'll be change.  
Don't settle with watching  
in the '80s you have a starring role  
you have the strength, you are the leading actor.  
From the entrails of our cities  
rises the flesh that will dress the world.  
The strength is coming, the voice of the '80s)

The jubilation, optimism, and solidarity on display in Mendoza carries over to the group's return to Santiago and their "collective project" *Las hormigas asesinas* (Barraza 446).

The tone of optimism about the present and future that pervades the characters' experiences in Mendoza continues in the next scene (seg. 8), which is set after the concert in late 1988 or early 1989. In the scene, Gastón and his friends lie interlocked in the grass while Gastón plays a song on the guitar for his girlfriend Cordelia (Ignacia Allamand) titled "Encontrar" ("Finding Out").<sup>249</sup> The camera pans counterclockwise above Gastón and his friends, who describe their thoughts and anxieties. Capturing the whimsical mood and sense of freedom—mirrored by the floating camera—, one of the young women remarks: "Here you can forget everything" (14:59-15:01). In a meditative tone, Balbo adds: "Everything and yet . . . nothing" (15:03-15:04). Luc, wearing a t-shirt with an image of Jack Nicholson's character from *The Shining* (1980), embraces the moment: "It would be great to always be like this," he says (15:19-15:21). Cordelia echoes Luc's declaration of contentment and extends a question to the group:

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<sup>249</sup> Andrés Valdivia wrote and performs the song.



“Life should always be like this . . . Here I feel calm, safe . . . What are you scared of?” (15:29-15:35). The answers are a collection of youthful and mundane anxieties: “The future”, “Hurting others”, “Regretting,” “Having no friends,” “Ending up alone,” and “Missing someone” (15:37-15:47). However, Chernovsky’s response, “Remembering,” stands apart (15:50-15:51). Like the narrator of *The Go-Between*, whose “buried memories of Brandham Hall are like effects of chiaroscuro, patches of light and dark,” Chernovsky fears engaging with her past (45). As the film later reveals, Chernovsky’s concern about her memory was prescient. She has had the most difficult life of this group of friends in the intervening fifteen years between 1988 and 2003.



*Gastón and Cordelia in the Grass*

The film *Las hormigas asesinas* is a cinematographic manifestation of the optimism and camaraderie depicted in this scene in the grass and the Human Rights Now! concert. The scene in which Gastón’s university friends gather in the cafeteria and implore him to make the soundtrack for the film exemplifies the ethos of mutual obligation and possibility that is also present in Mendoza (seg. 9). The esoteric science-fiction-cum-art film is a collective endeavor, of which Gastón’s soundtrack is just one piece. The film is a testament to the solidarity of the moment, a virtue, which, as we shall see, dissipates by the end of the Transition. Moreover, *Las hormigas asesinas*’ central narrative conceit—the protagonist Paul Kazán’s quest for love—mirrors the dreaming and striving towards a free future during the plebiscite, as well as Gastón’s

own pursuit of romance.

Whereas the Human Rights Now! concert reflects the optimism and possibility felt by young Chileans at the end of the military dictatorship, the sequences set in 2003 depict a plutocratic and highly unequal society. Upon his return to Chile, Gastón confronts the economic model of hierarchical capitalism. The film focuses on two key aspects of hierarchical capitalism: family capitalism and socio-economic inequality. In the film's contemporary present of 2003, Gastón, now in his mid-thirties, has recently returned to Chile after working and studying in the United States for the previous six years. In New York, Gastón pursued a career as a composer, but, as he tells his father, he was unable to break into the music industry.<sup>250</sup> Back in Santiago, Gastón finds that things have changed. Cancino (Cristóbal Gumucio), now divorced and wearing a suit and tie, states the obvious: "A lot of things happened since you left" (28:46-28:48). Gastón's friends have adapted their professional careers and artistic aspirations to the demands of the market: Luc Fernández is a television director and Balbo is a popular Grammy-winning composer and local celebrity.

Gastón's relationship with his father (played by Jaime Vadell, one of Chile's most well-known actors) exemplifies family capitalism, a phenomenon that is "endemic in Latin America" (*Hierarchical Capitalism* 47). According to Schneider, family capitalism is defined by the dominant role of family-owned and controlled businesses in an economy. These firms "are characterized by concentrated ownership, family control, and multisectoral diversification" (47). These family-controlled business groups are leading forces in economies across Latin America. Schneider notes that "In the 2000s, more than 90 percent of the 32 largest business groups in

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<sup>250</sup> Gastón's experiences abroad are part of a larger demographic and social phenomenon. In 2000 and 2001, an estimated 75,800 Chileans lived in the United States, making it the second most popular destination for Chilean emigrants after Argentina (OECD, *Connecting with Emigrants* 198).

Latin America were controlled by families and most had several family members in top management positions” (47). In Chile, the Angelini, Luksic, Matte, Paulmann, Said, Solari, and Yarur conglomerates, the largest of these firms, exemplify this pattern of family control.<sup>251</sup> Although Fernández Propiedades is not a diversified conglomerate like the Solari family’s Falabella, it is nonetheless emblematic of this nepotistic manifestation of capitalism.<sup>252</sup> The company’s employees, which include Gastón and his cousin, reflect its identity as the domain of the Fernández family.

Gastón’s father is the owner and operator of Fernández Propiedades. The elder Fernández’s lack of a first name underscores his identity as an archetypal Chilean family business owner. His relationship with his son is inextricable from the family business: he seeks to cultivate Gastón as the heir of Fernández Propiedades. The elder Fernández pushes his son towards the family business by dismissing his career as a musician, while also threatening to cut him off financially. The relationship between the business owner and his musician son represents a synecdoche, on a much smaller scale, of the historical relationship between strongmen like Diego Portales (1793-1837), Carlos Ibáñez (1877-1960), and Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006) and the Chilean nation.<sup>253</sup> During their time in power, these autocrats positioned themselves as fathers of the nation—a role the elder Fernández occupies within his family and business. Moreover, in his use of both threats (he tells Gastón he will raise the rent on his company-owned apartment) and incentives (the job at the family firm appears to be an open-ended offer) to push his son into the family business, Gastón’s father enacts Portales’s principle of authoritarian

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<sup>251</sup> In 2016, these seven family-controlled conglomerates had a combined market capitalization of just under twenty-five billion U.S. Dollars (“Ranking de Grupos Económicos” 7). See Schneider, “Economic Liberalization and Corporate Governance: The Resilience of Business Groups in Latin America.”

<sup>252</sup> Falabella epitomizes the diversified nature of many Chilean conglomerates. Falabella owns and operates department stores, hardware stores, supermarkets, and a travel agency. The company also has banking, consumer finance, and insurance divisions. Falabella operates in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru.

<sup>253</sup> For more on these three leaders see Loveman (111-28, 218-28, and 310-61).

governance: “The stick and the cake, justly and opportunely administered, are the specifics with which any nation can be cured, however inveterate its bad habits may be” (Portales qtd. Loveman 125).<sup>254</sup> In Fuguet’s film, the relationship between father and son represents a microcosm of the relationship between autocrats like Portales and the Chilean nation.

In addition to these historical parallels, the fraught and unequal relationship between Gastón and his father closely resembles the troubled dynamics of another fictional father-son pair: don Julio and Julio in Silvio Caiozzi’s *Julio comienza en Julio* (Chile, 1979).<sup>255</sup> Although *Se arrienda* does not explicitly reference Caiozzi’s film, both works center on a father-son relationship, depict the power of Chile’s landowning class, and use color to represent the past.<sup>256</sup> In Caiozzi’s film, the authoritarian latifundista don Julio García del Castaño arranges for his adolescent son Julio to undergo his sexual initiation. Julio rebels against his father’s abusive and possessive behavior by falling in love with the prostitute with whom he loses his virginity. However, his youthful insurrection is short lived; he cannot escape his father’s reach. The film culminates in an act of paternal revenge: don Julio compels Julio to watch him have sex with his son’s girlfriend. In both *Se arrienda* and *Julio comienza en Julio*, the sons’ relationship with their fathers is characterized by dependency, subordination, and resentment. Julio’s sexual coming-of-age and Gastón’s professional and artistic development unfold under the vigilant eyes of their domineering fathers. Another point of connection between these two films is the source of the two fathers’ source of wealth. Both men derive their fortunes and power from their positions as members of the country’s landowning class, which has dominated Chile’s economy,

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<sup>254</sup> For more on Portales See Quay Hutchinson, et al., eds., “The Authoritarian Republic” (139-40).

<sup>255</sup> *Julio comienza en Julio* was one of a handful of feature-length films made in Chile in the 1970s under the military dictatorship.

<sup>256</sup> The narrator of *Las películas de mi vida* recalls watching *Julio comienza en Julio* as a teenager: “The title *Julio comienza en Julio* masterfully summed up the movie’s theme. A kid is about to turn fifteen, and his father takes him—of course—to lose his virginity. We didn’t know what else was supposed to happen, but if that much did, we’d be happy. All of us were fifteen, and the majority were technically virgins” (246).

politics, and social relations since the colonial period (Loveman 29). Finally, *Se arrienda* and *Julio comienza en Julio* incorporate color as a means of representing the past. Caiozzi's film has a sepia color tone, while the sequences from *Las hormigas asesinas* are in black and white. These sepia and monochromatic color palettes emphasize their respective works' historical qualities, while also signaling their remove from the present.

The first scene in which Gastón and his father appear together in *Se arrienda* establishes the shared bond and unequal power dynamics between the two men, and also sets the stage for Gastón's accession to the family business (seg. 13). Father and son visit the grave of Gastón's mother in Santiago's General Cemetery, where some of the country's most famous figures, including Salvador Allende, are buried. The setting of this scene in the cemetery is resonant with symbolism. On the one hand, this hallowed location alludes to twin obsessions of the Chilean elite: family and tradition. On the other, the setting reflects Gastón's moribund artistic career. In the first half of the scene, Gastón and his father are framed side by side in a static long shot, peering down at the grave of Gastón's mother (26:05-26:09). The juxtaposition between the camera's far-off placement and the characters' physical closeness serves a dual and contradictory function. The camera's distance from the characters underscores the emotional divide between Gastón and his father, while their side-by-side positioning in the frame emphasizes their close bond and shared moment of grief.

The second part of the scene at the cemetery is an extended long shot of Gastón and his father as they walk along a path towards the camera (26:05-27:29). The elder Fernández scolds his son for wasting time in New York under the aegis of what he sardonically calls "the Fernández grant" (26:23-26:24). Gastón replies that he worked at a café to support himself and was therefore unable to dedicate as much time as he wanted to composing music. Gastón's

father, unconvinced, responds: “You can work in New York, but you can’t work here? Is it bad taste to work in Santiago de Chile?” (26:48- 26:53). He goes on to connect his wife’s death to his son’s immaturity and lack of professional ambitions: “Maybe it would’ve been better if I’d died instead” (27:13-27:15). Expanding on these comments, he says: “when the father dies . . . [b]oys grow up, they turn into men. Without your mother, you seem like an orphan” (27:16-27:28). As his father sees it, Gastón’s way out of his orphaned state and into adulthood, like the path they walk on, is straightforward: enter the family business. A position at Fernández Propiedades is not only Gastón’s birthright; it is also a means of becoming an adult member of the family. This choice between growing up or remaining in a state of arrested development comes to a head when Gastón visits his father at the office to ask for a loan.



*Father and son visit the cemetery*

Gastón approaches his father for money at the headquarters of Fernández Propiedades, a glass office building typical of the architecture in the capital’s financial district, an area colloquially referred to as Sanhattan (seg. 21).<sup>257</sup> The encounter between Gastón and his father high above Santiago is not only a key moment in the development of the film’s narrative; it is also infused with allegorical symbolism. In situating this scene within a skyscraper perched above the city, the film alludes to the concentration of wealth and power among Chile’s family

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<sup>257</sup> See Zambra, “Las dos décadas de Sanhattan” and Leal Trujillo et al., *Global Santiago* (2).

businesses. Inside the building, Gastón's father, wearing a white shirt and gold tie, quizzes his son, who sports a hoodie. Their conversation, which unfolds like an interrogation, touches on a range of issues, including Chile's economy, its health care system, its social safety net, and questions of individual responsibility. Father and son sit across from one another at a large table in the office's conference room, a space which reflects the entangled themes of their conversation: business and family. A map of Santiago hangs on the wall behind Gastón, a visual symbol of the nature and reach of his father's business.

After commenting that his son "barely comes around to see me" (33:04-33:06), Gastón's father consults the notepad in front of him and fires off a round of questions. He asks his son whether he has a pension fund, health insurance, car, bank account, and life insurance (33:20-33:56), items which Joanna Page observes, "might serve as a checklist for citizenship in neoliberal Chile" (275). These questions elicit a "no" from Gastón. When his dad asks whether he receives royalties, Gastón responds that he "once got a check from Poland . . . Don't ask me why, but *The Killer Ants* became a cult movie over there. We never understood why. Maybe because Pascal Barros [the film's fictional star] looks Polish" (34:08-34:22). When Gastón tells his dad that the check for seven dollars is framed on his wall, his father rebukes him. "I'm being serious, Gastón," he says (34:31-34:32). His father then asks whether Gastón has any real estate, which produces another negative response.

Vadell's character considers Gastón's lack of health care, a car, and a pension fund as tangible evidence of his progeny's immaturity and shirking of financial responsibility. As his deliberate pattern of questioning reveals, the elder Fernández equates being a responsible adult with having the resources to acquire private health insurance and a private pension—material signs of respectability as well as products designed to offer financial security and peace of

mind.<sup>258</sup> In an effort to goad his son towards a career in the family business—an offer he does not explicitly make in the film—he tells Gastón “you have to get your act together” (35:29-35:34) and concludes by saying that he will increase the rent on his son’s apartment to the “market rate” (35:22-35:23). Consistent with a family capitalism-friendly approach, the elder Fernández does not seek to cut his son off; rather he uses a financial stick to prod Gastón into the family business, thereby deepening his son’s connection to and dependence on the family patrimony.



*From slacker to businessman*

Gastón’s father not only thrives within Chile’s hierarchical economy; he also puts this economic model into practice by cultivating his own son as the company’s heir. The elder Fernández confirms his nepotistic intentions when Gastón, wearing a suit, shows up to his first day of work (seg. 28): “Welcome to the company Gastón. I think you’ve made the right decision” (53:05-53:09). The right decision, in his father’s view, is following the well-trod path of family and tradition. In Gastón’s case, attaining the kind of financial security expected by the Chilean upper class means acquiescing to his father’s wishes and joining the family firm.

However, Gastón’s decision to join the business is not just the result of his father’s appeal to “get

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<sup>258</sup> The country’s private health insurance system, known by the acronym ISAPRE, was established in 1981. The private pension system was implemented in 1980. The pension reform was the brainchild of then Secretary of Labor and Pensions José Piñera, who is the elder brother of President Sebastián Piñera. Private pensions are commonly referred to by the acronym AFP. See Loveman (338-39) and Collier and Sater (371-74).



his act together”; he is also motivated by a fear of ending up poor, isolated, and ostracized like Chernovsky. The film underscores this second motive via editing and juxtaposition. Gastón learns about his friend’s fall into poverty from Balbo and Cancino in the sequence just prior to his first day at work (seg. 26).

At the end of *Se arrienda*, Gastón and his father undergo a symbolic reconciliation as they pass through the car wash while remaining inside their automobile (seg. 51). Whereas their visit to the cemetery highlights the fissures and tension in their relationship—magnified by the absence of Gastón’s mother—, their passage through the car wash is a moment of shared understanding and mutual respect, in which Gastón’s father recognizes the value of his son’s music. The scene is comprised of two shots, which underscore father and son’s renewed intimacy. In the first shot, the camera, which is situated inside the car, frames Gastón, who sits in the passenger seat, and his father, who sits behind the wheel, in a two-shot from behind (1:43:33-1:43:42). The car inches slowly forward, its windshield is streaked with water. The two men’s interactions inside their car contrast with their earlier confrontation at the office, as well as Pancho Santander’s violent relationship with his father (seg. 48).<sup>259</sup> As father and son are pulled slowly through the car wash, a song from Gastón’s new composition of short instrumental pieces, *Departamentos vacíos* (*Empty Apartments*), plays on the car’s sound system.<sup>260</sup> As the title of the composition suggests, it is inspired by Gastón’s work as a real estate agent and evokes his cousin’s observation during his first day on the job—“Each customer’s a world of his own, you’ll never be totally prepared” (52:12-52:14). Extending this observation to the musical composition, each instrumental piece embodies one of these worlds. The composition bridges

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<sup>259</sup> Pancho’s character and storyline are loosely adapted from Fuguet’s short story “El Far West” (“Far West”). The story was published in Fuguet’s 2004 short story collection *Cortos* (*Shorts*).

<sup>260</sup> The song is titled “Emerger” (“Emerging”) and is performed by Andrés Valdivia.

Gastón's artistic impulses, his work at the family firm, and his romantic relationship with Elisa (Francisca Lewin).

As the music plays, Gastón's father turns slightly towards his son and comments: "It's nice" (1:43:39-1:43:41). His praise carries a dual significance. He congratulates Gastón for the music itself, but also for the compromise it represents. After Gastón turns towards his father to acknowledge his approval, the camera cuts to another two-shot of the two men framed from the front through the windshield. Accompanying this change in the framing of the characters, the camera shifts position to the outside of the car (1:43:42-1:44:12). As in the long shot of Gastón and his father at their mother and wife's grave, the camera's placement outside of the glass establishes a buffer between the father-son pair and the viewer. The sound of an air dryer above the car melds with Gastón's new musical composition, and the streaks of water are pushed aside, revealing an unobstructed view of the two men. The characters' body language and their position within the frame underscore this moment of cleansing reconciliation: father and son sit side by side (as opposed to face to face, as during their interaction at the company headquarters earlier in the film), grinning and looking straight ahead. Like the car, their relationship has undergone a symbolic baptism. They embrace a mutual understanding and respect for each other, all while keeping the business in the family. Yet notwithstanding their rapprochement, the elder Fernández is still in charge, unwilling, at least for now, to relinquish the driver's seat.





*Father and son at the car wash*

Gastón's successful reconciliation of family capitalism and his art contrasts with the tragic trajectory of Chernovsky. Like Gastón and his father, Chernovsky is an allegorical figure, albeit from the opposite end of the socio-economic spectrum. Already an outsider figure by virtue of her Jewish background, she embodies the marginalized and vulnerable population in Transition-era Chile.<sup>261</sup> Chernovsky, whose name evokes the radioactive site of Chernobyl, first appears in the sequences set in 1988.<sup>262</sup> She is an integral part of Gastón's friend group: she travels to Mendoza (seg. 5), shares in their discussion of popular culture at the pizzeria (seg. 6b), and encourages Gastón to participate in the making of *Las hormigas asesinas* (seg. 9). By 2003, Chernovsky's situation is very different: she is poor, isolated, and estranged from her friends.

Chernovsky only appears in one scene set during 2003 (seg. 15). This scene unfolds inside a bus company ticket office, where Chernovsky tries and fails to pay with a check for a ticket back home. Two shots preceding this scene in the ticket office underscore the distance between Gastón and his impoverished friend (seg. 14). The first is a long shot of Gastón exiting the optical store Rotter y Krauss on the left side of the screen. The camera pans right, tracking

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<sup>261</sup> Vulnerable and marginalized characters like Chernovsky appear in many Transition-era films, including Gustavo Graef Marino's *Johnny Cien Pesos* (1993), Gonzalo Justiniano's *Caluga o menta* (1990), and Orlando Lübbert's *Taxi para 3* (2001). See Kemp, *Citizenship in Chilean Post-Dictatorship Film* (90-168) and Urrutia, *Un cine centrífugo* (37).

<sup>262</sup> Thank you to Roberta Johnson for this observation about Chernovsky's name.

him as he walks past a store front—perhaps the bus ticket office— where people inside stand in a queue (27:29-27:37). Gastón stares straight ahead as he passes by the building. The framing of Gastón from a distance signals the film’s upcoming shift in focus away from its protagonist, as well as the divide between his privileged social and economic circumstances and Chernovsky’s alienating poverty. The camera then cuts from Gastón to a shot of pedestrians on a street corner as a bus passes by in the background (27:37-27:39), presaging the location and topic of discussion in the next scene.



*Chernovsky stranded in Santiago*

Inside the ticket office, Chernovsky pleads with a clerk to accept an expired check as payment for a return bus ticket to Los Vilos, a popular beach town on the Pacific coast north of Valparaíso. The framing and mise-en-scène underscore Chernovsky’s precarious state. The placement of the camera behind a transparent barrier separating Chernovsky from the clerk and the use of shallow focus emphasize her isolation. The three men standing in line behind

Chernovsky look on as she pleads with the clerk. The most distant of these men closely resembles Gastón in both appearance and costume, although the camera's shallow depth of field prevents the viewer from drawing a definitive conclusion. Nevertheless, the shared likeness of this man with Gastón and the fact that he does not recognize Chernovsky underscore the distance between the two characters' lives and socio-economic situations, as well as the absence of solidarity. After Chernovsky hands the clerk a check, the employee notes that the document is expired and, per company policy, she cannot accept it. Chernovsky makes a plea for sympathy: "Please, I've got to get back to Los Vilos. I don't feel very well" (27:50-27:55). When the clerk rebuffs her, Chernovsky appeals to their shared identity as women: "We're both women, I've got to pay this bill" (28:00-28:03). The clerk, unmoved by this appeal for solidarity and support, again responds that she cannot take the check: "It's out of date. The company doesn't let me accept them" (28:03-28:07). The scene ends as the camera cuts away from the ticket office and Chernovsky and reverts its focus back to Gastón.

The scene in the bus ticket office represents the persistence of poverty, the limits of the growth with equity model, and the dearth of solidarity in Transition-era Chile. Even the man with Gastón's likeness is not moved by Chernovsky's appeal for compassion. In addition to representing a lack of solidarity, this scene also functions as a counterweight to Gastón's successful immersion in the family business and the realization of his artistic endeavors. Although Gastón also struggles, he can rely on his father's financial support. More broadly, the tonal contrast between the scene in the ticket office, with its serious tone, and the sequences centered on Gastón, which are replete with humor and irony, underscores Chernovsky's suffering and her perilous circumstances.

Although the scene at the bus ticket office is the last time Chernovsky appears in *Se arrienda*, she is the topic of discussion during a conversation between Balbo, Cancino, and Gastón later in the film (seg. 26). In this scene, Balbo and Cancino inform Gastón about how Chernovsky's life has unfolded since Gastón left for New York. Gastón's friends filter their narrative of Chernovsky's difficult life through the lenses of class and privilege—they have comfortable and stable lives as a music producer and businessman, respectively. Their recitation of Chernovsky's struggles with alcoholism and poverty is informed by their belief—which gradually manifests itself in their conversation—that hard work is a sign of respectability. They portray her as an absurd and pathetic figure who embodies economic and moral impoverishment.



*Balbo, Cancino, and Gastón discuss Chernovsky's recent misfortunes*

Balbo, Cancino, and Gastón, wearing jackets and sharing a cigarette, walk in lockstep through a residential street at night. The dim lighting of the scene reflects the unseemliness of the subject of their conversation, and also contrasts with the colorful elements of Balbo and Cancino's narrative of Chernovsky's hardships. The scene is comprised of three shots. In the first, the camera tracks the three men in profile and then lingers behind them, pausing in a static shot, as they walk to the end of an alleyway (46:00-46:57). In the second, also an extended take, the three men round a corner and the camera moves backward as they advance towards it (46:57-49:30). The scene ends with a shot of the three men in the foreground, waiting for a taxi (49:30-

50:10). When the taxi pulls up to the curb, Balbo and Cancino depart for the City Hotel, while Gastón remains on the street and tells his friends that he would “rather walk” (49:40-49:41).<sup>263</sup>

The conversation between Gastón and his two friends begins in medias res. Balbo and Cancino comment that Chernovsky always had affection for Gastón. Their discussion, however, takes on a grim tone as they discuss Chernovsky’s recent misfortunes. Cancino remarks: “It’s awful what she went through. It’s sort of sad” (46:12-46:14). Balbo challenges his friend’s show of sympathy: “Why? I mean you dig your own grave, man. It’s sad to say it, but that’s the way it is!” (46:14-46:20). Cancino replies, “Poetic justice. All the bad blood ends up poisoning you” (46:22-46:24). Gastón, who is unfamiliar with Chernovsky’s recent troubles, asks Balbo and Cancino to explain what happened to his friend. In response, the two men detail Chernovsky’s humiliations and hardships: losing a leg in an accident, a failed campaign for mayor, and a miscarriage.

Balbo and Cancino depict Chernovsky as a ridiculous figure, a self-destructive anomaly who was rightfully expelled from respectable society. In emphasizing the picaresque and outlandish aspects of Chernovsky’s story, like her affair with a married fisherman with seventeen children, the two underscore her marginalization and fall into disrespectability. After hearing about the affair with the fisherman, Gastón challenges his friends’ version of events: “Hang on . . . what the fuck’s this? Fiction? This is like a fucking soap opera!” (47:32-47:37). Balbo responds: “Life for most is worse than a fucking soap opera!” (47:37-47:39). Balbo’s comments diminish Chernovsky’s plight by suggesting that her alcoholism, poor health, and poverty are exercises in bad taste, which pale in comparison to the adversities faced by most Chileans.

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<sup>263</sup> The City Hotel is situated in downtown Santiago. This historic building appears in a number of Fuguet’s literary works, including his novels *Mala onda (Bad Vibes)* and *Por favor, rebobinar*. The City Hotel is also featured in *Las hormigas asesinas* (seg. 38).

Ultimately, Balbo and Cancino's unsympathetic representation of Chernovsky reveals more about their rigid view of class and their commitment to the existing societal order of hierarchical capitalism than their penniless friend. Balbo sums up Chernovsky's plight as the result of "bad management" (46:29-46:30) and warped expectations: "you can't write poetry and make handicrafts and expect the country or the government to pay for your hobbies," he tells Gastón (48:53- 48:58). Balbo, who we see earlier reading the January 9-15, 1989 issue of left-wing magazine *APSI*<sup>264</sup> with the headline "El Programa Económico de la Oposición" (16:12-16:29; "The Economic Program of the Opposition"), and whose nickname in university was "J.J.C.C." or "Julián Cristóbal Juventud Comunista" (1:02:56-1:03:02; "Julián Cristóbal Communist Youth"), is now an unabashed apologist of the country's neoliberal economy.<sup>265</sup> Balbo and Cancino ignore structural factors like Chile's limited social safety net and the entrenchment of socio-economic inequality, and instead blame Chernovsky's for failing to adapt to and prosper within the country's hierarchical mode of capitalism. Their observations echo the comments made by Gastón's father in the earlier scene at the Fernández Propiedades office in which he chastises his son for neglecting to obtain health care, a retirement fund, and other trappings of Chile's upper class.

For Balbo and Cancino, accounting for Chernovsky's tragic fate is a matter of cold analysis, albeit one informed by misogyny and class hierarchy. "The market is cruel," Balbo declares (48:24-48:26). After Gastón pushes back—"Fuck, what does the market have to do with it?" (48:27-48:28)—, Balbo responds: "[It's] much better to take advantage of it than b[e]

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<sup>264</sup> *APSI* or *Agencia de Prensa de Servicios Internacionales* was founded in 1976 and ceased publication in 1995. The magazine was a prominent voice of the opposition during the dictatorship. The headline of the issue (no. 286) Balbo reads underscores the film's economic focus.

<sup>265</sup> Balbo's nickname is a play on the *Juventudes Comunistas de Chile* (Communist Youths of Chile), which is often referred to by the acronym J.J.C.C.



destroyed by it. She was always a bit of a loser” (48:29-48:34). For Balbo and Cancino, Chernovsky embodies indifference and failure in an economic system which tolerates neither. She is one of the 52 percent of Chileans who in a 2001 survey identified themselves as “perdedores” (“losers”).<sup>266</sup> Like Cancino, Balbo is unable to muster sympathy for his friend: “I should really feel bad about all this . . . but how the fuck can you care about a bitch who doesn’t give a shit about reality. It’s fucking irresponsible! That’s not what I call idealism” (49:10-49:21). In the eyes of Balbo and Cancino, Chernovsky’s hardships are the result of her unwillingness to adapt to the country’s unforgiving economy. Rather than express sympathy or extend a hand to their friend, Balbo and Cancino write her off as a lost cause and an example to be avoided. They expect her to bear her misfortune alone. These two scenes centered on Chernovsky reflect a fundamental shift in the relationship and outlook of this group of friends. Whereas the sequences set in the late 1980s exude a sense of hope, camaraderie, and collaboration, the portrayal of Chernovsky at the bus ticket office and Balbo, Cancino, and Gastón’s nocturnal conversation reflect a society marked by socio-economic inequality, a limited social safety net, and a dearth of solidarity.

To conclude this section, I want to highlight two sequences that encapsulate the film’s representation of Chile at the end of the Transition as a society that has jettisoned the collective spirit and action of the early years of the Transition. The first (seg. 5) is set in 1988 and shows Gastón and his friends as they make their way by bus over the Andes to Mendoza. In this sequence, the collective form of transportation parallels the communal expression of hope and optimism at the concert. The second (seg. 27) occurs just after the nocturnal conversation about Chernovsky’s fall into poverty. As he rides along at night, Gastón’s reflection stares back at him,

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<sup>266</sup> See Palet and Velasco, eds., *Nosotros los chilenos* (257) and Jocelyn-Holt (581-84).

a visual motif that underscores his dueling fears of selling-out by joining the family business and ending up poor and abandoned like Chernovsky. Whereas the bus ride in 1988 embodies a communal sense of enthusiasm, Gastón's lonely nocturnal ride reflects his personal isolation and anxiety. Considered together, these two sequences encapsulate the film's portrayal of Chile during the Transition as a society which initially embraces democracy and an optimistic vision of the future, but which ultimately lacks solidarity to overcome an entrenched resistance to change.



*Two bus rides*

### 3.2. Gastón: McOndo Artist and Cinephile

Fuguet's career and work bridge continents and languages. In *Cinémeta*, Fuguet notes that he shares a cosmopolitan identity with many Latin Americans: “Soy fronterizo, tengo dos idiomas, dos culturas, pero mi impresión es que no soy el único así en América Latina” (101; “I’m a man of borders, I have two languages, two cultures, but my impression is that I am not the only one like that in Latin America”). Gastón shares the experience of living abroad in the United States with his creator, although the circumstances of their time abroad are quite distinct: Fuguet was a child living with his family, while Gastón is an adult living on his own. However, the connection between Gastón and Fuguet extends beyond their time in the States. I argue that

Gastón's identity as an artist and his embrace of a McOndo sensibility of artistic creation establish the character as an alter ego of Fuguet.

McOndo's origins lie in *McOndo* (1996), an anthology of short stories by eighteen authors under thirty-five from Latin America and Spain, edited by Fuguet and fellow Chilean author Sergio Gómez.<sup>267</sup> In the prologue to *McOndo*, titled "Presentación del País McOndo" ("Presentation of the Country McOndo"), Fuguet and Gómez, lay out their artistic ethos.<sup>268</sup> The authors describe McOndo as a break from the tradition of Magical Realism and the collective, rigidly ideological politics of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>269</sup> They offer stories by cosmopolitan, city-dwelling writers whose work centers on their individual experiences, globalization, and porous cultural consumption. They aim to present a new, modern vision of the Spanish-speaking world:

Lo que nosotros queremos ofrecerle al público internacional son cuentos distintos, más aterrizados si se quiere, de un grupo de nuevos escritores hispanoamericanos que escriben en español, pero que no se sienten representantes de alguna ideología y ni siquiera de sus propios países. Aun así, son intrínsecamente hispanoamericanos. Tienen ese prisma, esa forma de situarse en el mundo. (16-17; What we want to offer the international public are different stories, more grounded if you like, by a group of new Hispanic American writers who write in Spanish, but who do not feel like representatives of any ideology or even of their own countries. Even so, we are intrinsically Spanish American. We have

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<sup>267</sup> The authors included in *McOndo* are Juan Forn, Rodrigo Fresán, Martín Rejtman, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Santiago Gamboa, Rodrigo Soto, Alberto Fuguet, Sergio Gómez, Leonardo Valencia, Martín Casariego, Ray Loriga, José Ángel Mañas, Antonio Domínguez, Jordi Soler, David Toscana, Naief Yehya, Jaime Baily, and Gustavo Escanlar. All of these writers are male.

<sup>268</sup> Fuguet and Gómez insist that their prologue is not a manifesto: "Sabemos que muchos leerán este libro como un tratado generacional o como un manifiesto. No alcanza para tanto. Seremos pretenciosos, pero no tenemos esas pretensiones" (11; "We know that many will read this book as a generational treatise or as a manifesto. It doesn't reach that far. We may be pretentious, but we do not have those pretensions").

<sup>269</sup> For more on the relationship between the Latin American boom and McOndo see Cortínez, "Macondo versus McOndo: La teoría de la aldea global" (279-82).

that prism, that form of situating ourselves in the world)

Even before the publication of the prologue, Fuguet incorporated McOndo into his fiction.

Andoni Llovet, one of the narrators of *Por favor, rebobinar*, quotes the novelist Baltasar Daza, who describes his in-progress novel as a work that positions itself against the template of magical realist writers like Isabel Allende: “Quiero hacer una saga, pero sin caer en la fórmula del realismo mágico. Puro realismo virtual, pura literatura McCondo. Algo así como *La casa de los espíritus* sin los espíritus” (153; “I want to make a saga, but without falling into the formula of magical realism. Pure virtual realism, pure McCondo literature. Something like *The House of Spirits* without the spirits”).

In the essay “Magical Neoliberalism,” published in *Foreign Policy* in 2001, Fuguet conceives of McOndo as a Latin American form of cosmopolitanism:

McOndo is no more and no less than a sensibility, a certain way of looking at life, or, better yet, of understanding Latin America (make that America, for it is clear that the United States is getting more Latin American every day). In the beginning, it was a literary sensibility, but now, I suppose it encompasses much more. McOndo is a global, mixed, diverse, urban, 21st-century Latin America, bursting on TV and apparent in music, art fashion, film, and journalism, hectic and unmanageable. (69)

While interconnectivity and plural cultural consumption are the core elements of McOndo, it is also closely connected to time and place. In their prologue, Fuguet and Gómez describe McOndo as “el gran país McOndo” (15; “the great country of McOndo”). The label “great” underscores the global reach of McOndo. The word “country” emphasizes a sense of community that extends

across peoples with a shared language, history, and cultural identity in Latin America, the United States, and Spain.<sup>270</sup>

In a 1997 essay in *Salon* titled “I Am Not a Magic Realist,” Fuguet describes McOndo not only as a rejection of the literary tradition of The Latin American boom, but also as a product of globalization and the internet: “Unlike the ethereal world of García Márquez’s imaginary Macondo, my own world is something much closer to what I call ‘McOndo’—a world of McDonald’s, Macintoshes and condos. In a continent that was once ultra-politicized, young, apolitical writers like myself are now writing without an overt agenda, about their own experiences.” Timothy Robbins calls McOndo a “specifically upper middle class generational ethos (27).<sup>271</sup> Wealth and social status may facilitate the practice of McOndo, but the basic cost of entry—an internet connection, a television, a cellphone—is relatively low.<sup>272</sup>

In addition to championing interconnectivity and transnational collaboration, McOndo also privileges the relationship between art and individual experience. In his 1997 essay Fuguet writes: “I feel the great literary theme of Latin American identity (who are we?) must now take a back seat to the theme of personal identity (who am I?).” The tension between this focus on personal and collective identity represents the paradoxical core of this cosmopolitan sensibility. In their prologue to *McOndo*, Fuguet and Gómez observe that, ironically, the diverse global culture of the late-20th century unifies the authors included in the collection: “debajo de la

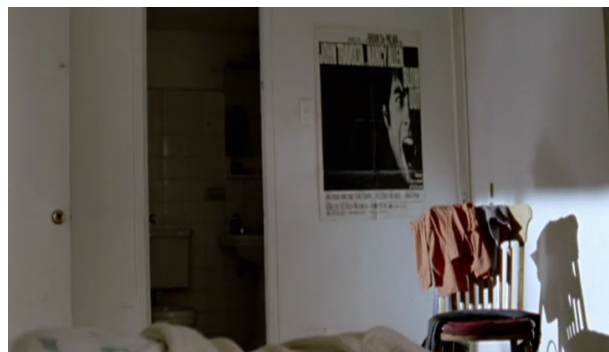
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<sup>270</sup> It is notable that Fuguet and Gómez use the metaphor of a country rather than a city, given the urban focus of McOndo.

<sup>271</sup> Héctor Hoyos maintains that there is a fundamental tension between the cosmopolitan impulse of McOndo and its representation of class: “Under the moniker of ‘magical neoliberalism,’ Fuguet conjures an aesthetic project that condemns the alleged parochialism of magical realism and purportedly achieves two conflicting goals: opening itself to the world and representing the inner life of the individual. While earlier figures wrote about the gap between rich and poor countries, Fuguet implies the existence of a global middle class. For the ‘magical neoliberal,’ the world is but a collection of individuals” (111).

<sup>272</sup> In 2003, 44 out of 100 Chileans had a mobile cellular subscription. This grew to 129 out of 100 Chileans in 2015, a rate higher than that of the United States (The World Bank, “Mobile cellular subscriptions”).

heterogeneidad algo parece unir a todos estos escritores, y a toda a una generación de adultos recientes. El mundo se empequeñeció y compartimos una cultura bastarda similar, que nos ha hermanado irremediabilmente sin buscarlo” (18; “beneath the heterogeneity something seems to unite these writers, and an entire generation of recent adults. The world has become smaller and we share a similar bastard culture, which has brought us together”). *Se arrienda*’s representation of Gastón’s personal transformation and his self-reflexive engagement with art exemplifies the McOndo sensibility of openness and its connection to an epoch of generational, cultural, and technological change. The film portrays Gastón’s move from a collective creative process, embodied by *Las hormigas asesinas*, to his composition *Departamentos vacíos*, a solo project that represents an analogue to filmmaking and which is informed and inspired by his personal experiences as a real estate agent. In the section that follows, I analyze five sequences in the film that exemplify Gastón’s identity as a McOndo artist and cinephile: the film’s opening sequence (seg. 2); the debate among Gastón and his friends about Julio Iglesias and the Chilean band Los Prisoneros in Mendoza (seg. 6b); Gastón’s visit to the McDonald’s restaurant with Cancino (seg. 24); the protagonist’s argument with Balbo about the music business (segs. 33 and 34); and the scene in which Gastón reveals his new compositions to Balbo (seg. 50).



*Gastón the cinephile*

The opening sequence of the film (seg. 2) establishes Gastón as a cosmopolitan McOndo cinephile and lays the foundation for the film's Chinese box or Russian doll structure of dual narrative levels.<sup>273</sup> In this sequence, Gastón looks through a stack of DVDs, ultimately selecting *Las hormigas asesinas* to play on the television (00:20-00:56). Among these DVDs are the Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki's animated fantasy *Spirited Away* (2001), American director Quentin Tarantino's revenge thriller *Kill Bill* (2003 and 2004)<sup>274</sup>, and British director Guy Ritchie's heist movie *Snatch* (2000). This diverse collection establishes Gastón as a cinephile who consumes films from around the world and across genres.<sup>275</sup> In pursuing his cinephilia at home in front of his TV, Gastón mirrors his creator's embrace of an intimate cosmopolitanism: "I feel very comfortable at my desk in Santiago, writing about the world around me. A world that comes to me through television, radio, the Internet and movies, which I send back through my fiction. My Latin American fiction" ("I Am Not a Magic Realist"). The posters on the wall of Gastón's apartment also reflect his self-reflexive cinephilia. They include a poster of Brian De Palma's 1981 film *Blow Out* hanging in Gastón's bedroom, a poster for De Palma's 1976 movie *Obsession* on a wall in the living room, and a Polish-language poster for *Las hormigas asesinas* in the living room above the TV. The protagonist of De Palma's *Blow Out* is a sound effects technician, a role that mirrors Gastón's work as a composer. In an email, Fuguet tells me that the original music for *Obsession* was composed by Bernard Herrmann, who worked with Martin Scorsese, Alfred Hitchcock, and François Truffaut, and observes: "creo que Gastón lo tiene por el tema de Herrmann aunque también quizás por casualidad porque yo lo tenía" (email

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<sup>273</sup> See Vargas Llosa, *Letters to a Young Novelist* (101).

<sup>274</sup> The DVD case for *Kill Bill* is partially obscured. It is not clear if the DVD Gastón holds includes both films (Vols. 1 and 2) or just a single volume.

<sup>275</sup> The protagonist of Fuguet's film *Velódromo* is also a cinephile. In the beginning of the film he describes his love of films in voice-over narration: "Veó mucho. Quizás demasiado, no sé. Pero veó. Harto. No voy a decirles cuántas películas veó a la semana" ("I watch a lot. Maybe too many, I don't know. But I watch. I'm not going to tell you how many movies I watch each week").

communication, “Se arrienda afiche,” 23 April 2018; “I think that Gastón has it because of Herrmann, although maybe also because by chance I had it”). In drawing a connection between Gastón and himself through the poster for *Obsession*, Fuguet highlights their shared cinematic tastes and supports the notion that the protagonist of *Se arrienda* is the filmmaker’s cinematic alter ego.

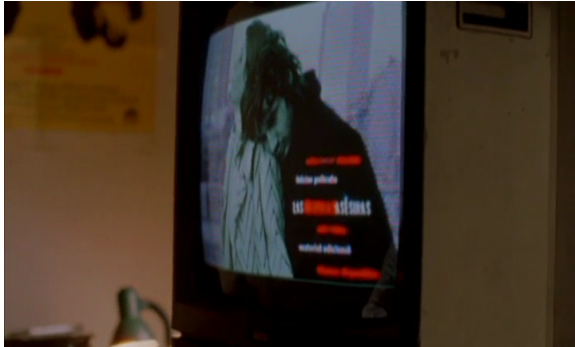


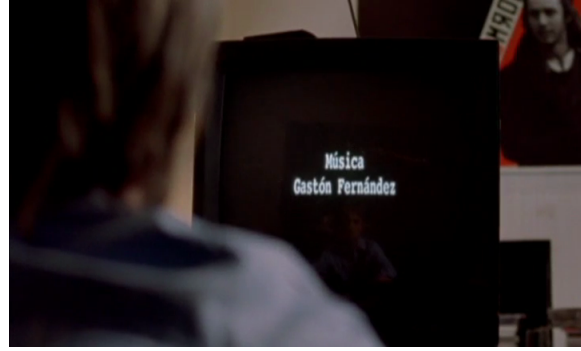
*Film posters in Gastón’s apartment*

The subsequent eleven shots of Gastón watching *Las hormigas asesinas* (00:56-02:02) further emphasize his cinephilia. In this sequence, the consumption of film is depicted as a fundamentally self-reflexive and personal act. After Gastón presses play, the camera cuts to a close-up of his face in shallow focus as he stares at the screen (00:56-01:02). This shot draws attention to the character’s interest in the film and establishes him as a spectator. The next shot is an over-the-shoulder shot of the television showing a scene from *Las hormigas asesinas*. Behind the television hangs a poster of the film. Like the previous image, this shot foregrounds Gastón’s identity as a spectator (01:02-01:07). After this over-the-shoulder shot, the camera cuts to the film playing on the television (01:07). This shift from Gastón to Paul Kazán, and from the primary narrative level to the diegesis of *Las hormigas asesinas* reflects the characters’ shared identity as cinephiles. After these four shots from *Las hormigas asesinas* of Paul eating his toenails and then walking through Santiago (01:07-01:39), the camera cuts out to another over-



the-shoulder shot of Gastón watching the television. A credit title appears on the screen listing Gastón Fernández under the heading of “Música” (“Music”) (01:39-01:41). The juxtaposition between this credit title and the footage from *Las hormigas asesinas* emphasizes the duality and self-reflexive nature of Gastón’s relationship to the film: he is both a viewer and creator of its soundtrack.





*Gastón watches Las hormigas asesinas*

The scene in which Gastón and his friends discuss the virtues of the Spanish singer-songwriter Julio Iglesias and the local band Los Prisioneros functions as a debate on the central features of McOndo: porous cultural consumption, an embrace of popular forms of culture, and a celebration of the globalized world economy (seg. 6b). This conversation occurs in the pizzeria in Mendoza, just after the Human Rights Now! concert. In the prologue to *McOndo*, Fuguet and Gómez describe their intention of opening up space for “lo bastardo, lo híbrido” (15; “the bastard, the hybrid”). The authors declare that Latin American culture is not limited to folkloric

productions, but encompasses a diverse range of culture productions: “Para nosotros, el Chapulín Colorado, Ricky Martin, Selena, Julio Iglesias y las telenovelas (o culebrones) son tan latinoamericanos como el candombe o el vallenato” (15; “For us, the Chapulín Colorado, Ricky Martin, Selena, Julio Iglesias, and telenovelas (or soap operas) are as Latin American as candombe or vallenato”). The Spanish-born Iglesias, who achieved global fame as a recording artist, exemplifies McOndo’s emphasis on popular culture and globalization.

In *Se arrienda*, Julio Iglesias is the polarizing focal point of the conversations between Gastón and his friends about the value of “bastard” and “hybrid” art and the global cultural marketplace. Gastón, in particular, is loath to recognize the value of “hybrid” and commercially successful art; preferring instead to present himself as an artist who pursues art for art’s sake. Gastón’s resistance to compromise as a composer sets the stage for his professional and artistic development later in the film, when he negotiates between his father’s desire that his son join the family business and his music career. The conversation about Julio Iglesias in the pizzeria in Mendoza begins with Gastón criticizing Sting’s performance at the concert. “Nobody can sing in a foreign language,” the protagonist declares (05:39-05:41). Cancino pushes back against Gastón’s statement: “Depends. Julio Iglesias sings in English and sells loads in the States. He tripled his world-wide sales” (05:41-05:46). Cancino argues that there is a direct correlation between Iglesias’s economic success and his celebrity. Chernovsky, however, rejects Cancino’s economics-based argument and declares that “Julio Iglesias is disgusting in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hebrew” (05:46-05:50). This tension between authenticity and commercial success also shapes Gastón’s artistic, professional, and personal development. Gastón’s friends poke fun at the protagonist’s insecurity by referring to him as “Danny Elfman,” the well-known Hollywood composer. Expressing his belief in the incompatibility of art and commerce, Gastón

asks: “Since when [does] being commercial mea[n] you’re good?” (05:57-05:58). In response, Luc Fernández, the budding film director, proffers Steven Spielberg as the ideal model of a cosmopolitan and commercially successful artist (06:01-06:05).

Notwithstanding his friends’ objections, Cancino is adamant that Iglesias deserves their admiration: “Julio Iglesias is a guy who made it into a difficult market, a real tough market. I think that’s an accomplishment” (06:23-06:27). Cancino’s focus on commercial success is anathema to Gastón and his friends. Balbo, who later becomes a commercially-successful music producer, declares: “Iglesias is just marketing; he’s just an invention, nothing else” (06:37-06:40). Gastón compares the Spanish balladeer favorably to the local rock band Los Prisioneros. First he remarks that “Julio Iglesias is less ‘admirable’ than Los Prisioneros. They are both just commercial artists” (06:31-06:34). He then points out, incorrectly, that Los Prisioneros are from the wealthy Santiago neighborhood of Providencia, not the middle-class commune of San Miguel, and declares: “At least Julio Iglesias doesn’t pretend to be something he is not” (06:47-06:49). Gastón’s views on Julio Iglesias and Los Prisioneros reflect his preoccupation with authenticity, and his uneasiness with the mixing of commerce and art. We should note, however, that Gastón’s affirmation about the falseness of Los Prisioneros is ironic. The trio is emblematic of the youth culture in Chile in the 1980s and a point of reference in the prologue to *McOndo* (9). In a 1985 interview in the magazine *La Bicicleta*, Jorge González, the bassist and lead singer of Los Prisioneros, describes himself as a middle class, city-dwelling, and a cosmopolitan consumer of culture—a kind of proto-McOndo artist. Questioned about his influences, González responds that he draws on from his middle-class surroundings for inspiration: “Nosotros somos tipos de clase media-media, de San Miguel, y allá no se escucha el folclor. Allá se escucha la radio, donde aparecen canciones en inglés, guitarras eléctricas, baterías, y con semejantes influencias

hacer otra cosa era poco lógico” (“We are middle-middle class guys, from San Miguel, and there you don’t hear folkloric music. There you listen to the radio, where there are songs in English, electric guitars, drums, and with influences like that doing something else wasn’t very logical” (20). Like González, Gastón draws on his surroundings and personal experiences as inspiration for *Departamentos vacíos*.



*“I’d do it for me”*

Towards the end of the discussion at the pizzeria, Gastón lays out his future plans in a monologue that reflects his idealism and his expansive artistic ambitions. In response to Luc Fernández’s question about whether he would produce an album for “a real lousy crooner” if he were paid millions of dollars (07:23-07:26), Gastón replies that to do so would violate his principles as an artist:

No . . . I’d say no, and not just to Julio Iglesias . . . I’d do it for me, I mean someday fifteen years later someone is going to read one of my interviews, because I’m gonna have released a record or somebody wants to work with me because of my background and I just don’t want my name associated with someone I look down on . . . I won’t sell out just because I’m going through a bad patch, that’s caving in. I’m never going to do something I don’t believe in. (08:06-08:37)

Gastón's declaration that he will never "sell out" is at odds with the porous and open approach to art and cultural consumption championed by Fuguet and Gómez in their prologue. Fifteen years later, the protagonist's narrow vision of art as the single-minded pursuit of authenticity and unblemished cultural prestige, all while being supported financially by his father, has borne little fruit. Ironically, it is only when he embraces his new circumstances as a real estate agent—an occupation which is the antithesis of the hip McOndo artist—that his creative impulses flourish in the form of his musical composition *Departamentos vacíos. Se arrienda* reveals the process of making art in early-21st-century Chile as one of messy compromise. As we shall see, the film presents a reality in which selling out or at least selling real estate can complement and coexist with the McOndo sensibility.

Like this scene in the pizzeria, two scenes in different kinds of restaurants—a McDonald's and a sushi restaurant—encapsulate the film's representation of the McOndo sensibility, with its mix of irony, self-awareness, and porosity. The scene in the McDonald's restaurant in which Cancino, Cancino's daughter, and Gastón meet for lunch exemplifies the film's ironic and self-aware engagement with the concept of McOndo (seg. 24). This Sunday encounter functions as a parody of McOndo, and in particular, its utopian vision of an interconnected world. In addition to being embedded in the name McOndo, McDonald's is a motif in Fuguet and Gómez's prologue: "En McOndo hay McDonald's, computadores Mac y condominios, amén de hoteles cinco estrellas construidos con dinero lavado y *malls* gigantescos" (15, authors' emphasis; "En McOndo there are McDonald's, Mac computers and condominiums, as well as five star hotels built with laundered money and giant *malls*").<sup>276</sup> Fuguet's embrace of

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<sup>276</sup> Fuguet and Gómez celebrated the release of *McOndo* in a McDonald's in Santiago. See "Is Magical Realism Dead?"

McDonald, the epitome of globalization and American capitalism, as a symbol of McOndo reflects the tongue-in-cheek irreverence of the sensibility. Fuguet and Gómez write that the name “McOndo” is itself a joke: “El nombre (¿marca-registrada?) McOndo es, claro, un chiste, una sátira, una talla” (15; “The name (registered-trademark?) McOndo is, of course, a joke, a satire, a prank”). This parodic tone of the scene in the McDonald’s in *Se arrienda* reflects the playful and self-aware qualities of the McOndo sensibility.

Inside the McDonald’s Gastón and his friend converse, while Cancino’s daughter draws with crayons. On the soundtrack, a piano repeats a minor key in a slow tempo. The music underscores the melancholic atmosphere of the scene, which stands in contrast to the cheery poster hanging on the wall depicting a young woman dancing and the brand’s mascot Ronald McDonald on either side of the slogan “Me encanta todo eso” (“I’m Lovin’ It”). After making small talk about Cordelia, Cancino—who is separated or divorced from the mother of his daughter—floats the idea of Gastón moving into the spare room in his house. However, the tone of their conversation shifts when Gastón expresses his anxiety to his friend about his return to Chile and the future: “I don’t know . . . It’s different down here, it’s more depressing, especially on Sundays. I think about the future, I sort of freak out!” (44:51-45:03). Gastón’s anxiety about the future stands in contrast to the self-assuredness and optimism he displays at the pizzeria in Mendoza. The film reinforces the protagonist’s sense of alienation through a series of five shots that depict, separately, Cancino, his daughter, Gastón, and two patrons of the restaurant (45:14-45:41). The volume of the non-diegetic music increases as the camera lingers on these three subjects, who are depicted eating alone. These shots are bookended by a shot of the drawing by Cancino’s daughter, which depicts an odd domestic scene of a girl holding hands with a taller man, perhaps her father, next to a small house. Above the house, floats a smaller figure with

“x’s” in the place of its eyes (45:41-45:45). The juxtaposition of this drawing of family life, which notably lacks a maternal figure, with the previous five shots, suggests a connection between the isolated patrons form an ephemeral family within the fast food restaurant.



*Alone in the McDonald's*

The theme of the McOndo ethos arises again during an argument between Gastón and Balbo, which extends across two scenes in the film (segs. 33 and 34). Their fight, which begins at a sushi restaurant and continues in a discotheque, centers on the complicated relationship between authenticity, commerce, and art in the early-21st century. In the years between 1988 and



2003, Balbo has led a successful and lucrative career as a music producer, working with popular artists like the Argentine rock star Gustavo Cerati and the popular Argentine band Los Babasónicos. Balbo also won a Grammy Award. Balbo confirms his prominent status within the music industry during a television interview Gastón watches on TV (seg. 18). The interlocutor asks whether he's "the person that saved Chilean music" (30:26-30:28) as a recent magazine profile suggests, Balbo responds: "Yes. I guess that in some way it's true" (30:37-30:40). Before the interview ends, Gastón throws a shoe at the TV, revealing his irritation with his friend whose career has surpassed his own.

At the sushi restaurant—a notably cosmopolitan site—Gastón and Balbo discuss their history together and the possibility of collaborating again. The scene in the restaurant is a long-take in which the two men are framed in profile sitting across from one another. The scene begins with Balbo asking Gastón to work with him and noting that during their university days "we had the best projects" (1:00:26-1:00:28). Gastón expresses skepticism about the proposal and tells his friend: "I don't even know who you are anymore" (1:00:38-1:00:40). Undeterred by his hostility, Balbo declares that Gastón is a "genius" and urges him not to give up composing music: "You have talent. I don't want you to throw it all away because of your stupid hang-ups" (1:00:46-1:00:51). Gastón demurs that he was "barely a promise" (1:00:54-1:00:56) and notes that Balbo with his Grammy is the one who triumphed. Balbo, however, downplays the significance of the award, observing that "A Grammy's nothing, that's not art. It's bureaucracy. You just have to lobby well. It's easy" (1:01:00-1:01:06). Balbo's arguments mirror Fuguet's own ambivalence about the economy of prestige, but also reflect the fundamental pragmatism of the McOndo artist, who embraces globalization and the business of art while maintaining his self-awareness and skepticism.



*Gastón and Balbo argue over art and commerce*

The conversation between Gastón and Balbo continues in a busy discotheque where Balbo meets his girlfriend (seg. 34). Whereas the bright environment of the restaurant reflects the earnest, if animated dialogue between the two friends, the dark lights and pulsating beat of the discotheque mirror the two friends' increasingly combative tone and unwillingness to listen to each other. Over the loud music, Balbo tells Gastón: "You're scared stiff, and it's evident. Everyone can tell. I've noticed. You've got to change" (1:02:31-1:02:37). Gastón, offended by his friend's suggestion, angrily responds: "Why? Do I have to be like you? Are you the [neoliberal] role model that I'm supposed to follow?" (1:02:37-1:02:42).<sup>277</sup> The camera cuts from a two-shot of the friends, to a close-up of Balbo as he smiles uncomfortably. Meanwhile, Gastón finishes his criticism of his friend's "free-market" (1:02:39-1:02:41) approach to art with language that mirrors his criticism of Julio Iglesias and Los Prisoneros some fifteen years earlier: "I'd rather be true to myself than be like you or one of your new best friends" (1:02:43-1:02:48). Gastón asks Balbo if he remembers that they used to call him J.J.C.C. or Julián Cristóbal Juventud Comunista (Julián Cristóbal Communist Youth), and remarks "Now I'd

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<sup>277</sup> In the original Spanish dialogue, Gastón uses the word "neoliberal," which is incorrectly translated as "free-market" in the English-language subtitles.

hardly recognize you. You've got a UFO hanging from your ear, dude! What happened?" (1:03:03-1:03:07).

Balbo's expression hardens as he listens to his friend criticize his decision to pursue a career motivated by a mix of artistic ambition, commercial interests, and fame. The Grammy-winner admits that he may have changed, but his public persona is an invention that he does not take too seriously. Balbo says that Gastón abandoned a career in music and settled for a career in real estate: "At least I'm not going around renting apartments. Stop all this real estate shit and start composing like . . . Danny Elfman again. That's what we used to call him. Hard to imagine, right, Elfman? (1:03:27-1:03:38). In referring to Gastón's nickname, Balbo asserts a shared intimacy, while emphasizing his belief that his friend has neglected his talent. Gastón, echoing the debate in the pizzeria some fifteen years earlier, rebukes his famous friend: "I'd rather do that than be a fucking sell-out asshole" (1:03:39-1:03:40). Balbo sees through Gastón's insecurities, and paints him as a frustrated McOndo artist, who would have relinquished his militant stance toward artistic purity for the right price, but the "problem is no one has ever made you an offer" (1:03:45-1:03:47). As we shall see, this "offer" never materializes, but Gastón, in true McOndo fashion, draws on his personal experiences as a "sell-out" real estate agent to create art.

The scene in which Gastón shares his composition *Departamentos vacíos* with Balbo (seg. 50) marks the protagonist's return to composing, his transformation into a McOndo artist, and his reconciliation with Balbo. Balbo and Gastón sit on the floor together and look through Gastón's album collection. They are positioned sitting side by side behind a table piled high with vinyl records and CDs. The record on top of the pile, KC and the Sunshine Band's 1976 album *Part 3*, features a small rainbow, an image that closely resembles the iconic rainbow symbol of the "No" campaign featured at the beginning of the film. Their placement in the frame reflects

their rekindled friendship and contrasts with the adversarial meeting in the sushi restaurant and discotheque. As Balbo looks at a record, Gastón hands him a CD with his new composition. As he passes Balbo the disc, an acoustic song plays on the soundtrack. Gastón tells Balbo that his new work is unique: “Well I don’t know if it’s very commercial but it has it[s] own style. They’re songs . . . I mean, tracks without words. Like short songs with no words (1:43:03-1:43:16). Although there is a stereo system behind the two men, the record does not begin playing until the next scene. The film employs a j-cut, using the music as a sound bridge into the next sequence, where Gastón and his father listen to the music on the car stereo as they pass through the car wash.



*Gastón reveals his new composition Departamentos vacíos*

The title *Departamentos vacíos* reflects the work’s thematic unity and its personal genesis: Gastón translates his transitory interactions with people searching for a home into brief musical pieces. The words of his cousin during his first day on the job—“Each customer’s a world of his own, you’ll never be totally prepared” (52:12-52:14)—serve as a manifesto for his project. His composition draws on the worlds of his clients, which range from the capricious fantasies of a wealthy young man who would turn the house of a religious order into his personal mansion (seg. 30) to the troubled Pancho Santander who seeks a rare four-bedroom apartment (seg. 48). The sequence (seg. 52) immediately after the car wash highlights the connection

between Gastón's work as a real estate agent and his new composition. This sequence features low-angle shots of various apartment and office buildings like the ones Gastón rents and sells for a living. The structure of Gastón's composition—short instrumental tracks—mirrors the varied and fleeting nature of his interactions with his clients. Just as Gastón's job as real estate agent is to fill empty apartments, his composition is an effort to populate these empty spaces with music. The composition reflects the mixture of intimacy, commerce, and art that define his work in real estate. In embracing his personal experiences as a real estate agent and transforming them into music, Gastón completes his metamorphosis into a McOndo artist who creates a porous art that draws on his own personal experiences.

While McOndo is not explicitly mentioned in the film, *Se arrienda* depicts the ethos and practice of McOndo through the character of Gastón. Although he initially rejects many of its core tenets (openness, flexibility, the celebration of globalization and popular culture), at the end of the film Gastón comes to embrace these values vis-à-vis his new composition. In this respect, *Se arrienda* is not, as Carlos Saavedra suggests “una historia en primera persona sobre el idealismo artístico de un músico burgués que termina defraudado” (93; “a first-person history of a bourgeois musician who ends up defrauded”); rather the film portrays the growth and development of Gastón from an artist with a rigid understanding of cultural purity to a composer who incorporates his own personal experiences and embraces a porous approach to art and cultural consumption.

### 3.3. *Las hormigas asesinas*: Art Cinema and Communicating Vessels

The cross-medium and fictional origins of *Las hormigas asesinas* exemplify the porous qualities of *Se arrienda* and its generic affiliation with art cinema. In this section, I analyze these

distinct, though interconnected manifestations of *Las hormigas asesinas*: the fictional version in *Por favor, rebobinar*, the 2005 stand-alone short film, and the fragments of *Las hormigas asesinas* within in *Se arrienda*. I also maintain that the sequences of *Las hormigas asesinas* interspersed throughout *Se arrienda* represent a distinct narrative level within *Se arrienda*. This secondary narrative level dialogues with the main level, which centers on Gastón before and after his life as an expatriate in the United States. There is a relationship of communicating vessels between these two narrative levels within *Se arrienda* through the use of juxtaposition and match cuts, as well as a shared emphasis on national allegory, cinephilia, the city, and film.

The origin of *Las hormigas asesinas* lies in Alberto Fuguet's novel *Por favor, rebobinar*. The novel presents a fragmented vision of life in Santiago at the end of the 20th century through the eyes of eight young men. The book is divided into eight chapters, each narrated by a different character. The fragmented narrative also features short articles and interviews from magazines between chapters. In the novel, the film *Las hormigas asesinas* is a collective work created by the model and actor Andoni Llovet, the novelist Baltasar Daza, the musician Gonzalo McClure, the filmmaker Luc Fernández, and the writer, rock star, and actor Pascal Barros. Alongside a short interview with Llovet and a review of the film, the various narrators present a mosaic-like portrait of the genesis, creation, and reception of *Las hormigas asesinas*.

*Las hormigas asesinas* is the brainchild of Llovet, who narrates the chapter of the novel "Una vida modelo" ("A Model Life") while holed-away in a thermal bath retreat. Llovet, whose name bears a close resemblance to Fuguet, functions as the author's alter ego—like Gastón in *Se arrienda*—and his narration provides the foundation for the second half of the novel. In his text, which doubles as the prologue to his as-yet-unpublished novel, Llovet describes his successful career as a model and television actor, his struggles with depression, and his troubled and tragic

family life. *Las hormigas asesinas*, which he envisions as a “muy ‘B’” (162; “very ‘B’”) movie, evolves over a series of conversations with his friends at a local nightclub. Llovet incorporates his personal experiences into the project—a theme consistent with the McOndo ethos: “a pesar de ser del género fantástico, era bastante personal, con hartas escenas reales, incluso autobiográficas” (162; “in spite of being of the fantastic genre, it was very personal with lots of real scenes, even autobiographical ones”). Although Llovet first conceives of the project as a novel, he accepts the suggestion of his friend Pascal Barros, who encourages him to develop the idea into a film. Llovet describes the work as: “una historia de amor” (163; “a love story”) that “cuenta la vida [de] Paul Kazán, un disc jockey que trabaja en una discoteque gótica llamada Insomnio, ubicada en las catacumbas del City Hotel” (164; “tells the story [of] Paul Kazán, a disc jockey who works in a gothic discoteque called Insomnio, located in the catacombs of the City Hotel”). Like Gastón, Paul is a cosmopolitan who struggles with his identity in adulthood: “Paul Kazán ya no vive, sólo vegeta. Ha vagado, ha viajado, ha consumido los años. Ya no es tan joven, ya no tiene tanto tiempo” (164; “Paul Kazán does not live, he only vegetates. He has wandered, traveled, consumed years. He’s not so young anymore, he does not have much time”).

In Llovet’s synopsis of the film, which is incorporated within the chapter, Paul inhabits a post-apocalyptic Santiago “devastado por tormentas, aludes, apagones y deslizamientos” (165; “devastated by storms, avalanches, blackouts and landslides”). A colony of killer ants, which sustains itself on the buried corpses of workers who were executed and buried alive by soldiers during “el Golpe” (165; “the Coup”), are dislodged by the overflowing Mapocho river and venture out into the city. The ants are selective in choosing their victims. They only attack “los que nunca han amado” (166; “those who have never loved”). While the ants leave a trail of “cadáveres carcomidos” (165; “chewed-out cadavers”) in their wake, “En la Insomnio la gente

baila, se droga y emborracha” (165; “In *Insomnio* people dance, take drugs, and get drunk”). Paul wakes from his apathy after running into his godfather, who encourages him to look for love. The disc jockey embarks on “una búsqueda desenfrenada” (166; “a frenzied search”) for love through Santiago. In Llovet’s account of the film’s ending—his friends offer distinct versions—, “Paul muere, en medio de la pista, mientras todos siguen bailando” (167; “Paul dies, in the middle of the dance floor, while everyone continues dancing). Although Llovet commits suicide before completing the script, his friends Pascal, Baltasar Daza, Gonzalo McClure, Luc Fernández, and Pascal Barros take up the project.

McClure, the composer of the soundtrack for *Las hormigas asesinas* and the narrator of the novel’s final chapter, describes the film as a collaborative and allegorical work: “*Las hormigas asesinas*, al final, fue un filme colectivo, un filme sobre nosotros” (403; “*Las hormigas asesinas*, in the end, was a collective film, a film about all of us”).<sup>278</sup> The allegorical elements extend to its representation of the September 11, 1973 coup and subsequent military dictatorship vis-à-vis the invasion of killer ants and the military’s attempts to fight the insects. After Llovet’s death, McClure collaborates with Luc Fernández, Baltasar Daza, and Barros, who stars as Paul, to complete the movie. Although the length of *Las hormigas asesinas* is not specified, based on comments by the narrator and film critic Lucas García Infante—“Quizás el filme se alarga más que la noche de clausura del Festival de Viña” (323; “Maybe the film drags on longer than the closing night of the Viña Festival”)—it is likely a feature-length production. Fernández and Daza write the screenplay, Fernández directs, and the globe-trotting rocker Barros stars as the disc

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<sup>278</sup> In *Por favor, rebobinar*, Lucas García Infante notes that the soundtrack for *Las hormigas asesinas* features a pop-aesthetic: “Respecto a la publicitada banda sonora, seleccionada con humor y certeza por el cada día más poderoso e influyente Gonzalo McClure, hay que señalar que es algo así como el *who’s-who* del rock-and-pop criollo” (327; “With respect to the well-publicized soundtrack, selected with humor and certainty by the everyday more powerful and influential Gonzalo McClure, you have to note that it is something like the *who’s-who* of criollo rock-and-pop”). The soundtrack of *Se arrienda* features popular music artists like Soda Stereo and Christina y los Subterráneos. Cristian Heyne, the musical director of *Se arrienda*, is the manager and producer of many popular bands in Chile.



jockey Paul Kazán. *Se arrienda* depicts a similarly collective effort, with characters featuring the same or similar names participating in the creation of their version of *Las hormigas asesinas*.

The novel details the process of adapting Llovet's vision for *Las hormigas asesinas* into a film, as well as the film's reception via the narrations of Barros and McClure, an interview with Baltasar Daza, and a review of the fictional film. Together, these narrative strands offer a picture of the film as a work of art cinema. A short interview with Daza offers an account of the making of the film. In the interview he describes the process of adapting the screenplay for the film with Luc Fernández from notes and recordings by the late Llovet (278). In his review of the film, Lucas García Infante provides the most comprehensive description of the finished film. García Infante, who narrates the novel's first chapter and presents himself as a fervent cinephile, describes *Las hormigas asesinas* as a work of art cinema. He emphasizes the film's appeal to cinephiles, its porosity, and its complex relationship to the country's national cinematic tradition. He calls the film a kind of paradox: "es una cinta con moral 'B' hecha con presupuesto 'A'" (323; "it is a movie with a 'B' moral made with an 'A' budget"). This dissonance between the film's budget and the film itself reflects the movie's unconventional narrative, but also its appeal to a cinephile audience. He remarks that the film is destined to become a marker of cinematic taste and identity for cinephiles: "sin querer-queriendo, se va a transformar en una cinta de culto. No apunta a los críticos; apunta a los cinéfilos. Por eso no sólo hay que apoyar esta película sino tomarla como bandera de lucha" (324; "without wanting-to-want, it will transform into a cult movie. It does not take aim at critics; it aims at cinephiles. That's why you not only have to support this film but take it as a rallying cry"). In anticipating the future cult status of the film and its appeal to cinephiles, the reviewer distinguishes the film as a work of art cinema.

García Infante also highlights the film's fluid relationship to genre: "*Las hormigas asesinas*, está claro, puede ser muchas cosas: cinta de aprendizaje, retrato neorrealista, fresco social, filme político, película de terror" (327; "*Las hormigas asesinas*, it's clear, can be many things: coming-of-age film, neorealist portrait, social fresco, political film, horror movie"). In highlighting the film's generic fluidity, García Infante characterizes the film as a work of art cinema. The film's heterogenous qualities extend to its cinematography. The author of the review remarks that the cinematographer Patricio Ruiz-Tagle "eyacula colores y va del realismo figurativo de Claudio Bravo a un surrealismo digno de Roberto Matta en la esquizofrénica secuencia final" (323; "ejaculates colors and goes from the figurative realism of Claudio Bravo to a surrealism worthy of Roberto Matta in the schizophrenic final sequence"). In comparing the cinematographer's work to two of Chile's most well-known post-war visual artists, García Infante reveals his cultural sensibilities and the film's dialogue with other works of art.

In addition to emphasizing *Las hormigas asesinas'* appeal to cinephiles and its porosity, García Infante highlights the movie's complex relationship to Chile's national cinema, while defining it against *costumbrista* films. To this end, he argues that the film represents a sea change in the country's cinema: "*Las hormigas asesinas* abre una nueva etapa en el cine chileno y si funciona bien es porque tiene pocos elementos locales" (323; "*Las hormigas asesinas* opens a new phase in Chilean cinema and if it works well it is because it has few local elements"). In language similar to that of critics writing about Chilean film at the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival and 2015 Berlinale, García remarks: "el cine chileno se va a dividir entre *antes* y *después* de esta notablemente extraña realización de Luc Fernández" (324-25, author's emphasis; "Chilean cinema will be divided into a *before* and *after* this notably strange work by Luc Fernández"). In pointing to the film's paucity of "local elements," García Infante presents the film as its opposite:

a cosmopolitan production that breaks away from cinematic tradition. However, the reviewer does not describe the film as existing apart from Chile's national cinema; rather, he argues that the film reflects a significant development in the country's cinema. He underscores this point when he declares: "A ratos la película es tan intrínsecamente chilena que da asco. Y escalofríos" (323; "Every now and then the movie is so intrinsically Chilean that it gives you nausea. And chills"). In his review, García Infante describes the film's appeal to cinephiles, its incorporation of the porous genre elements typical of art cinema, and its multifaceted relationship to Chilean national cinema.

In their respective narrations, Pascal Barros and Gonzalo McClure detail *Las hormigas asesinas*'s mixed reception and the process of exhibiting the film. Barros and McClure describe their attempts to screen the movie at film festivals—a key institutional space of art cinema. In a letter to Daza, the film's co-screenwriter, Barros notes that the Venice Film Festival and other festivals rejected the film for exhibition. According to Barros, the New York Film Festival "esperaba 'algo más Raúl Ruiz'" (298; "hoped for 'something more Raúl Ruiz'") while the Habana Film Festival "deseaba algo 'más en la línea de Littin'" (298; "desired something 'more along the lines of Littin'").<sup>279</sup> Notwithstanding these rejections, Barros remarks that "hay una leve chance de ir a Berlín" (298; "there is a small chance of making it to Berlin"). McClure notes that the film "no tuvo el éxito que todos esperábamos. Ni en Chile ni en el exterior" (404; "did not have the success we hoped for. Neither in Chile nor abroad"). McClure reveals that *Las hormigas asesinas* screened at the Berlinale, although critics there panned the film. However, he also points to its transformation into a cult movie in a multiplex in southern Santiago, where it

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<sup>279</sup> For more on the relationship between Ruiz and Littin and their distinct approaches to cinema see Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* (557-63). Fuguet, Víctor Briceño, Germán Liñero, and René Naranjo published an interview with Ruiz in the December 1986 issue of the film magazine *Enfoque*. See Ruiz, "El chiste y el mito" (34-36).

screened for ten weeks, before becoming a regular midnight-movie feature.<sup>280</sup> Barros and McClure's accounts of the exhibition of *Las hormigas asesinas* underscore the film's affiliation with art cinema. Despite the negative reaction of critics, the film screened at the prestigious Berlin Film Festival—one of the most significant film festivals and an institutional fixture of art cinema. Similarly, these midnight screenings epitomize the film's appeal to cinephiles and cult status.

The second-iteration of *Las hormigas asesinas* is a nineteen-minute film (for purposes of clarity, I will refer to this particular production as the “short” or “short film”). The short film was shot in Santiago in 2004 and released in 2005. Fuguet shot the short before *Se arrienda*, albeit with the intention of incorporating sequences from the short film into his feature-length production. In a 2009 interview Fuguet compares his decision to adapt *Las hormigas asesinas* into a film to the sexual impulses of an adolescent: “I think that it is sort of like masturbation. I am creative enough not to adapt myself and my own work. But I also think it was tongue-in-cheek, like a joke. Since *Hormigas asesinas* [*sic*] appears in different works of mine as a cult movie, it was also an irresistible opportunity. But I do think that it is more like a teenage irresistible urge” (“On Pirate Cinema” 207). Fuguet's comments on the “tongue-in-cheek” nature of the adaptation reflect its self-reflexive and metafictional qualities.

The short film version of *Las hormigas asesinas* largely hews to the synopsis presented by Llovet in *Por favor, rebobinar*: Paul Kazán (Benjamín Vicuña), a disc jockey at the Insomnio nightclub, searches for love to avoid being eaten by the killer ants that have invaded Santiago. Despite the broad similarities of their plots, the short film does not seek to replicate the film described in the novel. Fuguet remarks that he shot the short with an eye towards its inclusion

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<sup>280</sup> Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo* (1970) is generally credited with starting the fad of midnight movies in the early-1970s. See Greenspun, “‘El Topo’ Emerges: Jodorowsky's Feature Begins Regular Run.”

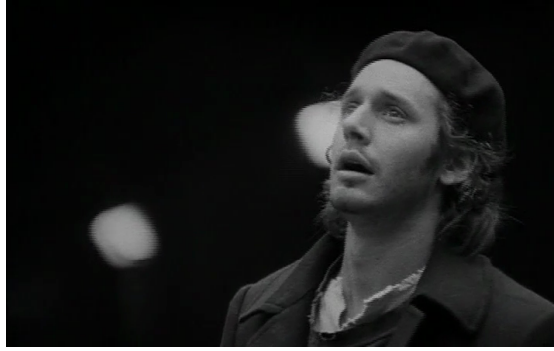
within *Se arrienda*: “What appeared in the book was a very bad movie; so bad that I could not film it because it would have ruined the aesthetic of *Se arrienda*” (“On Pirate Cinema” 207). The short film’s narrative is fragmented and only features a few brief instances of dialogue. It uses intertitles as a primary means of narration and exposition. The narrative is split between scenes depicting Paul at home in his messy apartment, Paul wandering the empty streets of Santiago, and Paul in the *Insomnio* nightclub. The short features the same porous genre qualities as those described by characters in *Por favor, rebobinar*. There are elements of science fiction (the invasion by killer ants), horror (most notably in a shot of Gastón in a bath tub whose water turns black), action (Paul running through the streets), and a perverse city symphony film (reflected in the representation of Paul’s daily routine in his apartment).

Unlike the colorful production described in the novel, Fuguet and director of photography Jorge González—who also worked as cinematographer on *Se arrienda*—shot *Las hormigas asesinas* on 16 millimeter black-and-white film stock. The short’s monochrome color palette, its use of intertitles, and limited dialogue exemplifies its self-reflexive tone and parodical representation of the stereotypical art film. The use of black and white film also serves a thematic and symbolic function, heightening the sense of desolation in its representation of a post-apocalyptic Santiago.<sup>281</sup> This black-and-white color palette also marks *Las hormigas asesinas* as a narrative level distinct from the main narrative level, which is presented in color.

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<sup>281</sup> In *Apuntes autistas*, Fuguet writes about one of the settings of *Las hormigas asesinas*, Santiago’s City Hotel: “En 2005 filmé otro corto, *Las hormigas asesinas* en un hotel llamado City. El hotel era considerado clásico, con onda, con historia, decadente. Era decadente. Estaba viejo, abandonado, casi nadie alojaba en él. El hotel City data de 1939. Se cerró el año 2008” (91; “In 2005 I filmed another short, *Las hormigas asesinas* in a hotel called City. The hotel was considered classic, with a vibe, with history, decadent. It was old, abandoned, almost nobody stayed there. The City hotel dates back to 1939. It closed in 2008”). Fuguet is slightly off with the date. The City Hotel actually dates to 1938. See *La Tercera*, “El millonario que convertirá el City Hotel en un ‘seis estrellas.’”

The short film's mise-en-scène and metacinematic references exemplify its appeal to cinephiles. Its representation of the nearly empty metropolis also invites comparisons to other cinematic works. The short evokes Danny Boyle's zombie film *28 Days Later . . .* (2002), which depicts London in the aftermath of a global pandemic, and Wim Wenders' *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*, 1987), which is set in a divided Berlin at the end of the Cold War and features a famous sequence in a nightclub much like *Insomnio*. In a 2009 interview Fuguet describes how the film's mise-en-scène and costumes were inspired by mid-20th-century French and Polish New Wave films: "The references were from Polish movies, New Wave movies. The characters are dressed like the kids from [Louis Malle's] *Au revoir, les enfants*. Basically, I wanted them to look French with coats and berets, or with a much more Central European look. I wanted to make it look, even though we were filming in the same city as *Se arrienda*, as if it were filmed in Eastern Europe. I wanted to make Santiago look like Krakow" ("On Pirate Cinema" 207). During a panel at UCLA in 2016, Fuguet described the short film and its relationship to art cinema in slightly different terms. He commented that in the process of making *Las hormigas asesinas* he envisioned the short as a "parodia" ("parody") of an art film. I think that the short film accommodates both of these interpretations precisely because of its self-reflexivity and porosity. It features a fluid relationship to genre, and, as we shall see, its includes metacinematic elements which emphasize its appeal to a cinephile audience.



*Paul Kazán, the New Wave protagonist of Las hormigas asesinas*

Within the short film there are multiple allusions to cinema, which epitomize the work's metacinematic qualities and its appeal to a cinephile audience. The name of the film's protagonist, Paul Kazán, is a reference to the director of *Viva Zapata!* (1952) and *On the Waterfront* (1954). In the short film, this reference to Elia Kazan is made explicit by the presence of a Spanish-language translation of the Hollywood director's autobiography, *Elia Kazan: A Life* (1988) in Paul's apartment (this shot does not appear in *Se arrienda*). The protagonist's interest in his namesake reflects his own cinephilia.<sup>282</sup> There are also two posters in Paul's apartment which reflect his diverse cinematic tastes. A French-language poster for Robert Bresson's prison-escape film set in occupied France during the Second World War, *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé ou Le vent soufflé où il veut* (*A Man Escaped*, 1956), hangs above Paul's bed (this is only visible in the stand-alone short film). In an email, Fuguet tells me that the films of Bresson were an inspiration for *Las hormigas asesinas*

Me atraen sus personajes solitarios y creo que algunos de los míos tienen algo [de eso].

Traté de vestir al actor como el protagonista de *Diario de un cura rural* de Bresson. Quería que la cinta tuviera un look francés sacado de *Pickpocket* y de *Diario. Un condenado a*

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<sup>282</sup> Fuguet tells me that he sees “poca relación” (email communication, “Bresson, Kazan y Rumble Fish,” 22 May 2018; “little relation”) between the Hollywood director and the protagonist of *Las hormigas asesinas*.

*muerte* es una cinta de cárcel, pero sin duda que el tema de *Las hormigas asesinas* es estar encarcelado ensimismado preso. No sé si se es para enfatizar lo del golpe, creo que no, aunque sin duda que *Las hormigas asesinas* transcurre en un mundo tipo post golpe dictadura apocalíptica. (email communication, “Bresson, Kazan y Rumble Fish,” 22 May 2018; His solitary characters attract me and I think that some of mine have some [of that]. I tried to dress the actor like the protagonist of Bresson’s *Diary of a Country Priest*. I wanted the movie to have a French look taken from *Pickpocket* and *Diary. A Man Escaped* is a prison movie, but without a doubt the theme of *Las hormigas asesinas* is being imprisoned within oneself. I don’t know if that is to emphasize the coup, I don’t think so, although without a doubt *Las hormigas asesinas* takes place in a post-coup apocalyptic dictatorship kind of world)

A poster for Francis Ford Coppola’s *Rumble Fish* (1983), the subject of his Fuguet’s essay film *Locaciones: Buscando a Rusty James* (2013), lies on its side on the floor. In *VHS (unas memorias)* (2017), Fuguet calls *Rumble Fish* “la película de mi vida y, más importante aún, el filme que me cambió la vida. Es el filme que me incitó a escribir” (336; “the movie of my life, and even more importantly, the film that changed my life. It is the film that spurred me to write”). Fuguet tells me that in addition to their black and white color palette, *Rumble Fish* and *Las hormigas asesinas* “claramente conversan, o mejor dicho: claramente robé de *Rumble Fish* as always” (“clearly dialogue, or rather: I clearly robbed from *Rumble Fish* as always”).

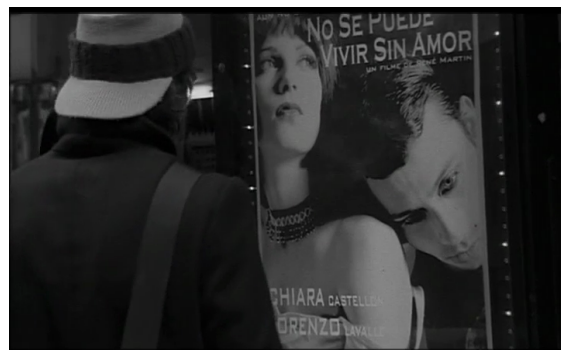
The metacinematic references in the short film extend to Paul’s visit to a cinema showing the apocryphal film *No se puede vivir sin amor*, directed by the real-life Chilean director and Fuguet collaborator René Martín.<sup>283</sup> A similar kind of boundary blurring between the fictional

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<sup>283</sup> Martín appears as an extra in the scene at the McDonald’s. He is credited on the film’s IMDB page as the “Loser at McDonald’s.”



and the real occurs in *Se arrienda*'s depiction of the process of making *Las hormigas asesinas*. Finally, the short also features a literary reference that reflects the production's cosmopolitan qualities and alludes to the connection between literary modernism and art cinema.<sup>284</sup> The text in question is Fyodor Dostoevsky's self-reflexive novella *Notes from Underground* (1864). The novella appears twice, first on a table in Paul's apartment and a second time in the hands of a woman in a subway station.<sup>285</sup>



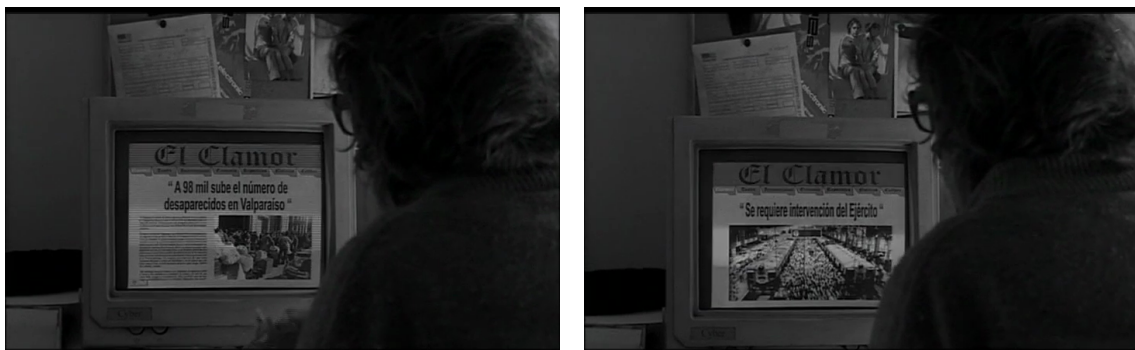
### *Cinephilia in Las hormigas asesinas*

In addition to its porous genre qualities and metacinematic references, the short film *Las hormigas asesinas* also features elements of national allegory. The production presents the invasion of Santiago by killer ants as a thinly-veiled allegory of the September 11, 1973 coup

<sup>284</sup> The critics André Bazin and David Bordwell point to the connection between literary modernism and art cinema. See Bazin, "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism" (19-21) and Bordwell, "Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice" (151-52).

<sup>285</sup> In *Por favor, rebobinar* Pascal Barros, writing in English, mentions Dostoevsky's novella in a letter to another character: "Believe it or not, I've been reading Dostoevski. *Notes from the Underground*, which (by the way) is a great title for an album. I've underlined it a lot" (291).

and the Pinochet dictatorship. The film makes this allegorical representation explicit when Gastón, using a computer, views articles discussing the invasion. The headline on the first of these articles from the fictional newspaper *El Clamor* reads “A 98 mil sube el número de desaparecidos en Valparaíso” (2:42-2:46; “The number of disappeared in Valparaíso rises to 98 thousand”). The inclusion of “disappeared” in the article’s title is an allusion to the systematic kidnapping, torture, and murder of thousands of people by the military government between 1973 and 1990. While this reference to the missing is in part historic in nature, it is also darkly satiric in tone, as evidenced by the high number of missing. The second article, “Se requiere intervención del Ejército” (2:56-2:58; “Army intervention needed”), is accompanied by a photo of a sea of passengers at a train station. The title of this second article parodically echoes the military coup of September 11, 1973, in which the Armed Forces and the Carabineros forcefully overthrew Salvador Allende’s democratically-elected government. In 1973, the military justified the coup as a necessary act: “the Armed Forces has assumed the moral duty imposed upon it by the Fatherland” (“In the Eyes of God and History” 452). The short film implies that this justification for intervention against a democratically elected government is the same one that the military would use to quell an invasion by mutant insects.



*Las hormigas asesinas as an allegory of the 1973 coup*

This third iteration of *Las hormigas asesinas* is the filmic creation of Gastón and his friends in *Se arrienda*. In his 2009 interview Fuguet remarks on the connection between *Se arrienda* and his literature: “One of the things that I don't like about *Se arrienda* is that it quotes my books. I think that it was a bad idea. But I like *Se arrienda* and I am going to defend it” (“On Pirate Cinema” 206). This third version of *Las hormigas asesinas* is comprised of segments from the short film presented in a fragmentary and non-sequential fashion within *Se arrienda*. These fragmentary sequences from the short film *Las hormigas asesinas* comprise a distinct narrative level based not in reality, but in cinema. In addition to the post-title sequence of *Se arrienda* (seg. 2), there are seven sequences (segs. 10, 19, 32, 38, 41, 44, and 53) in which fragments from *Las hormigas asesinas* appear. However, this distinct narrative level is intertwined with the rest of the film. The representation of *Las hormigas asesinas* in *Se arrienda* functions as a central component of the communicating vessel narrative structure of *Se arrienda*.

In *Les vases communicants* (*Communicating Vessels*, 1932), André Breton describes the search for connections between objects as a central feature of Surrealism: “I hope it will be considered as having tried nothing better than to cast a *conduction wire* between the far too distant worlds of waking and sleep, exterior and interior reality, reason and madness, the assurance of knowledge and of love, of life for life and the revolution, and so on” (86; author's emphasis). Mario Vargas Llosa notes that “a system of communicating vessels operates when the sum of an episode is something more than its parts” (*Letters to a Young Novelist* 121). Vargas Llosa defines communicating vessels as episodes within the same narrative that when considered together acquire a deeper and more complex meaning than when considered in isolation:

Two or more episodes that occur at different times, in different places, or on different levels of reality but are linked by the narrator so that their proximity or mingling causes

them to modify each other, lending each, among other qualities, a different meaning, tone, or symbolic value than they might have possessed if they were narrated separately: these are communicating vessels. Their mere juxtaposition is not enough, of course, for the procedure to work. The decisive factor is a “communication” between two episodes set side by side or merged in the text by the narrator. (124)

Although Vargas Llosa describes communicating vessels as a literary phenomenon, it is also a cinematic one. Within *Se arrienda*, there are multiple communicating vessel relationships. As we have seen, there is a dialogue between the reality-based episodes set in Chile in the late 1980s and those set in 2003. Together, these temporally divided sequences establish an allegorical portrait of Transition-era Chile as an unfulfilled promise of solidarity and socio-economic mobility. The second communicating vessel relationship traverses both narrative levels and planes of reality. This relationship encompasses the dialogue between the cinematic universe of *Las hormigas asesinas* and the film’s primary narrative level, which comprises the sequences from late 1980s and 2003 Chile. This second instance of communicating vessels is the focus of this section. The active juxtaposition of these narrative levels underscores *Se arrienda*’s allegorical themes as well as its emphasis on cinephilia. As we shall see, *Se arrienda* utilizes the editing technique of match cuts and parallel editing to establish connections between these two narrative levels as well and the respective protagonists of each film.

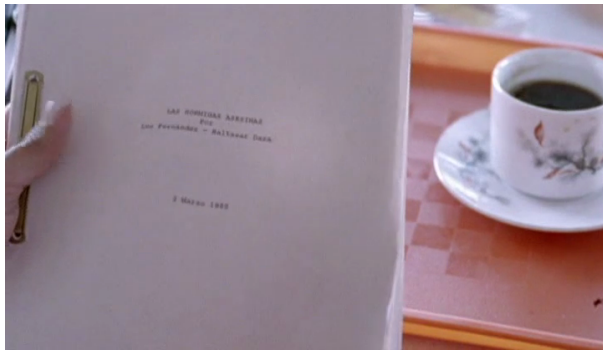
The depiction of the creative genesis and production of *Las hormigas asesinas* functions as a bridge between the film’s two narrative levels and establishes their interconnected nature. In a 2016 interview Fuguet highlights their interrelated relationship: “*Se arrienda* y *Las hormigas asesinas* son películas hermanas, al final una sola película, aunque en ambas se caminan por ciudades distintas” (“Rebobinando” 141; “*Se arrienda* and *Las hormigas asesinas* are sister

movies, in the end one single movie, although both walk through different cities”). *Las hormigas asesinas* takes shape in the university cafeteria (seg. 9), shortly after Gastón and his friends return from the concert in Mendoza. Gastón joins Balbo at the table after ordering breakfast. Showing off his cinematic bonafides and presaging the turn their conversation will take, Gastón dons a t-shirt emblazoned with a reproduction of the poster for Werner Herzog’s 1979 film *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht* (*Nosferatu the Vampyre*), a remake of the F.W. Murnau’s 1922 classic horror film *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (*Nosferatu, a Symphony of Horror*), underneath his plaid shirt.<sup>286</sup> Like Murnau and Herzog’s films, *Las hormigas asesinas* features an invasion, although instead of a vampire and plague-carrying rats, Santiago is invaded by man-eating ants. As their friends join them, Balbo hands Gastón a script for the film, written by Luc Fernández and Baltasar Daza and dated March 3, 1989. The screenplay is thick, suggesting that this iteration of *Las hormigas asesinas* is a feature-length production, although its precise length is not specified by the characters. Balbo makes the case for Gastón’s participation: “We’ll all be in it together” (20:04-20:05). Mirroring the collaborative impulse behind the film, Balbo, Cancino, and Cordelia take turns describing the plot, which dovetails with the standalone short film and the version depicted in *Por favor, rebobinar*. Balbo begins: “It’s about this DJ that works in a club. The city is empty” (20:13). Cancino then tells how the Mapocho river overflows, releasing the killer ants into the city, and Balbo interjects: “and these ants eat people who can’t love, that’s why the city’s empty, there’s nobody around” (20:25-20:29). Cordelia concludes the plot description by alluding to her own relationship with Gastón: “Because in this city there are only a few who are able to love. Just like us” (20:30-20:33). Gastón responds with incredulity to the film’s plot, remarking: “You’ve got to be kidding!” (20:37-20:39).

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<sup>286</sup> Gastón wears this same shirt earlier in the film while shoplifting at the record store (seg. 4). The repeat instances of this shirt reflect the character’s close connection to Herzog’s film and its iconic star, Klaus Kinski.

The conversation in the cafeteria takes a metacinematic turn when Chernovsky satirizes the film's plot, and, in response, Balbo, Cancino, and Cordelia offer various interpretations of its meaning. After listening to her friends discuss the plot of *Las hormigas asesinas*, Chernovsky ironically remarks: "Look, it would be much more interesting to make a movie on ants eating self-obsessed people who want to make a movie on ants eating loveless people" (20:39-20:45). In drawing attention to the apparent absurdity of the premise, Chernovsky metacinematically alludes to the action unfolding on-screen. This metacinematic commentary continues as Balbo, Cancino, and Cordelia argue that the film has a deeper meaning. Balbo rejects Chernovsky's comments, remarking: "Shit, the film's not about ants" (20:46-20:48). Cancino chimes in, calling the film "a metaphor" (20:48-20:49). Cordelia elaborates: "A metaphor about how it's impossible to live without love" (20:49-20:52). In their analyses of the script, these characters assert themselves as critics and active spectators.



*Las hormigas asesinas takes shape*

The allegorical connections between these two narrative levels in *Se arrienda* extend to the representation of Santiago. Within the film's primary narrative level, Santiago is depicted as a vibrant metropolis. Gastón's work as a real estate agent, the sequence of low-angle shots of apartment buildings (seg. 52), and Gastón's musical composition—inspired by his interactions with his fellow Santiaguinos—reflect this vision of a bustling city. The sequences from *Las hormigas asesinas* present a vision of Santiago which both overlaps with and diverges from the main narrative level. The black-and-white sequences depicting a desolate and nearly empty city stand in stark contrast to the vibrant and colorful metropolis of the principal narrative level. Likewise, the subterranean discotheque *Insomnio* serves as a visual counterpoint to the high-rises that are the setting for much of the film's main narrative level. Through these juxtapositions, the film presents Santiago as a multidimensional city.

*Se arrienda* juxtaposes its two narrative levels through two primary editing techniques: match cuts and parallel editing. According to James Monaco, a match cut "links two disparate scenes by the repetition of an action or a form" (219). Adapting Susan Hayward's definition, I define parallel editing as the "the paralleling of two related actions that are occurring" across different times, spaces, or narrative planes (*Cinema Studies* 78). In *Se arrienda*, the use of match cuts and parallel editing emphasizes the film's focus on urban space and draws connections between Gastón and Paul's relationship with the city. For instance, the sequence in which Gastón and Elisa ride the funicular to the top of Cerro San Cristóbal (seg. 43) is followed by match cut to a shot from *Las hormigas asesinas* in which Paul and a woman kiss on a rooftop with panoramic views of Santiago (seg. 44). A similar match cut occurs at the end of segment of low-angle shots of apartment and office buildings later in the film (seg. 52). The camera cuts from a shot of a stone façade of an apartment building at 84 Merced Street designed by the 20th-century

Chilean architect Luciano Kulczewski (1:44:28-1:44:31), to a low-angle shot of high-rise buildings from a fragment of *Las hormigas asesinas* (1:44:31-1:44:34).<sup>287</sup> Uniting these shots is the architect Kulczewski. The Chilean architect is referenced multiple times in *Se arrienda*. The first is a poster advertising an exhibit on Kulczewski next to a bus stop (28:53-29:11). In addition to the building at 84 Merced Street (completed in 1928), Kulczewski designed the landmark Cerro San Cristóbal funicular station (completed in 1924), which evokes a medieval castle in miniature (although it is not shown in the film, Gastón and Elisa would have boarded the funicular at this building). In linking Kulczewski with Gastón and Paul's experiences of the city, *Se arrienda* emphasizes the connection between architecture, urban space, and film.



<sup>287</sup> Kulczewski (1896-1972) was one of the most significant Chilean architects of the 20th century. The son of Polish immigrants, Kulczewski is known for his art deco and art nouveau designs, as well as his incorporation of modernism and his fanciful imagination. Kulczewski's most notable work is the current site of the Colegio de Arquitectos, completed in 1920. The socialist Kulczewski served as President Pedro Aguirre Cerda's campaign director and then as a functionary in Aguirre Cerda's Popular Front government (1938-1941). See Sepúlveda, *La arquitectura de Luciano Kulczewski*. Thank you to Paula Thomas for pointing out the connections between Kulczewski and *Se arrienda*.





*Kulczewski, architecture, and the city*

In addition to reinforcing its allegorical qualities, the communicating vessel relationship between the narrative levels of *Se arrienda* exemplifies its art cinema qualities. As occurs in *Por favor rebobinar*, *Las hormigas asesinas* is depicted as a cult film that appeals to cinephiles across the world. The Polish-language poster for *Las hormigas asesinas* that hangs behind the TV in Gastón's apartment reflects the film's small, but global reach (32:35-32:39).<sup>288</sup> This Polish connection extends to Gastón's conversation with his father shortly after he returns to Chile from the U.S. The composer tells his father that *Las hormigas asesinas* became a "cult film" in Poland and that he received a royalty check for seven dollars from the country, although he never cashed it (34:04-34:30).<sup>289</sup> Like other art films, which are defined as such in part because of their exhibition abroad, *Las hormigas asesinas*'s minor box-office success in Poland ironically reflects its status as art cinema.

The characters of Elisa and her boyfriend Renzo (Diego Muñoz) also exemplify the cinephile appeal and cult status of *Las hormigas asesinas*. Elisa and Renzo, who wears a t-shirt inscribed with the film's title, use the pretense of looking for an apartment to meet Gastón (seg. 31). Their appearance unsettles the neat division Gastón has established between his job as a real

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<sup>288</sup> The film's title in Polish is *Mordercze Mrowki*. See Fuguet, "Polska --Do wynajęcia."

<sup>289</sup> *Las hormigas asesinas* screened at the 2006 Warsaw International Film Festival.

estate agent and his past work as a composer. Likewise, Elisa's appeal as a romantic partner is bound up in her cinephilia, and, specifically, her love of the soundtrack of *Las hormigas asesinas*. The symbolic union of the cinephile and the film soundtrack composer, which unfolds in the second half of the film, embodies the dual nature of cinephilia as a practice encompassing the consumption and creation of cinema. Their relationship, which is built upon a film Gastón worked on fourteen years ago, likewise has its own generative power. Gastón's return to composing music coincides with and draws inspiration from his affair with this young cinephile.



*Las hormigas asesinas super fans*

The communicating vessel relationship between the narrative levels in *Se arrienda* also establishes a parallel between Gastón and his counterpart, the DJ Paul Kazán. In establishing this connection between these two characters, both of whom are musicians, the film augments Gastón's identity as a cinephile and frames his character within the context of a tradition of art cinema. The first sequence of *Se arrienda*, in which Gastón watches *Las hormigas asesinas* on television, underscores the characters' parallel identities (seg. 2). Although they inhabit different narrative planes—one in color and set in the recent past, the other a black and white film set in a fantastic world—the two characters are celluloid reflections of one another. The juxtaposition of the two characters through parallel editing and match cuts emphasize their connection to one another. The first of these match cuts are not immediately contiguous, but nevertheless function

as mirror images. In the first shot (00:20-00:56), Gastón drinks from a coffee mug while sitting in front of the television, just before he presses play on the remote control to watch *Las hormigas asesinas*. Two subsequent shots mirror these images of Gastón drinking. The first of these is an over the shoulder shot behind Gastón watching *Las hormigas asesinas* (01:02-01:07) and the second within the diegesis of the black and white film (01:08-01:18). Paul raises his foot to his mouth and chews on his toe nails. These three shots depict consumption, and, more specifically, self-consumption. Gastón consumes the coffee and the film, while Paul grotesquely eats part of himself and then takes a drag off a cigarette. These shots establish a link between Gastón and Paul across narrative levels.



*Gastón and Paul consuming themselves*

Some of the juxtapositions between Gastón and Paul across narrative levels are immediately contiguous, while others are not. Two shots from adjacent sequences early in the film (segs. 10 and 11) exemplify the parallels between these two characters. In the first of these

shots, Paul, framed in a long shot, descends a staircase in an empty subway station (23:32-23:37). His footsteps echo in the vacant atrium, an aural manifestation of the city’s emptiness. The first shot of the subsequent sequence is an inverse match cut of the shot of Paul going down the stairs. Gastón emerges alone from a subway station beneath the Metropolitan Cathedral around Santiago’s old city center, the Plaza de Armas (24:11-24:36). The title “15 años después” (“15 years later”) appears superimposed over the images, delineating the time elapsed since the sequences set in late 1988 and early 1989. Meanwhile, the non-diegetic soundtrack of playing the spare song “Celda” (“Cell”) functions as a sound bridge, linking both sequences.<sup>290</sup> Gastón emerging alone from the subway station reflects his isolation upon his return to Chile. These two shots set in a metro station are also inverse images of the later sequences of Gastón and Elisa visiting San Cristóbal (seg. 43) and the scene of Paul kissing a woman on a rooftop above Santiago (seg. 44).



*Paul and Gastón: inverse images*

Another juxtapositions that draws a connection via a similar visual motif shows Paul and Gastón during their daily routine. In the first sequence (seg. 19), Paul drinks the Nestlé powdered milk brand Nido straight out of the can, washing it down with water (32:11-32:27). The camera

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<sup>290</sup> This song was co-written by Fuguet and performed by Cristián Heyne. The song’s lyrics “mi cuerpo es una celda” (“my body is a cage”) are the title of the 2008 autobiography of Andrés Caicedo, edited by Fuguet.

cuts to Gastón in his kitchen cleaning a coffee mug and preparing what appears to be coffee (seg. 20). The composer then takes a spoon of the liquid and tastes it (32:27-32:35). The juxtaposition of these two sequences highlights the similarities between the two characters and links their daily routines. In these respects, Paul and Gastón are cinematic twins, who despite their separation across narrative levels, are united through their actions.



*The morning routines of Paul and Gastón*

Two additional juxtapositions across these two narrative levels reflect Paul and Gastón's shared identities as cinephiles. The first pair of sequences are not contiguous, but nonetheless the film establishes a clear connection between them. Gastón stands outside of the Cine Arte Normandie, one of Santiago's premier art cinemas (seg. 45).<sup>291</sup> Framed at first in a long shot and then in a close-up, Gastón anxiously waits for Elisa, who does not show up (1:25:36-1:22:52).

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<sup>291</sup> The Cine Arte Normandie was founded in 1982 on the main Alameda boulevard in Santiago. It relocated to its current location on Tarapacá street in 1991 (Cine Arte Normandie "Sobre nosotros"). Fuguet saw *Rumble Fish* for the first time at the theater (*VHS (unas memorias)* 336-38).

Another sequence later in the film from the narrative plane of *Las hormigas asesinas* features a similar tableau (seg. 53a). Paul visits a cinema showing the apocryphal film *No se puede vivir sin amor*. This scene is also framed in a long shot, before cutting into a shot of Paul reading the poster outside the theater (1:44:39-1:45:04). The theater Paul visits is the movie theater Cines Nilo y Milo (the two theaters share a box office), which are located near the Plaza de Armas. In depicting these real-life movie theaters, *Se arrienda* draws attention to its own cinephile themes. These cinemas represent an integral part of Gastón and Paul's experience of and relationship to the city.



*Gastón and Paul visit the cinema*

Finally, there are two sets of communicating vessels across the twin narrative levels of *Se arrienda* which reflect the film's connection to two seminal works of art cinema. The first of

these is a direct visual allusion to Chris Marker's 1962 science-fiction art film *La Jetée*.<sup>292</sup> This juxtaposition begins with Paul descending into the night club *Insomnio* with two friends (seg. 38). As they walk down the staircase, the lights flicker on and off. This darkness marks the transition between narrative levels. The camera cuts to the film's principal narrative level as the screen goes black, revealing Gastón's emerging out the darkness (1:08:40). Gastón enters the atrium of the National Museum of Natural History, with its iconic baleen whale fossil perched above the entry hall.<sup>293</sup> Inside the museum, Gastón encounters his university friends. After speaking briefly with Balbo and Luc Fernández (who is now a famous director), Gastón enters the exhibition space, pausing in front of a model of a high-altitude Andean habitat featuring a llama and flamingos. Elisa approaches him from off-screen, and the two begin a conversation about apartments, Elisa's career, and the soundtrack to *Las hormigas asesinas*. They walk through the exhibit, pausing in front of various exhibits full of recreations of flora and taxidermized fauna. Juan Pablo Vilches notes that the setting and *mise-en-scène* of this sequence alludes to the sequence in *La Jetée*, in which the male protagonist and a woman rendezvous at a natural history museum brimming with stuffed animals (62). In *La Jetée*, the meeting at the museum also marks the beginning of the courtship between the nameless man and woman. Fuguet and Marker's films also share a divided temporal structure, in which both films alternate between distinct temporal levels. In referencing *La Jetée*, *Se arrienda* highlights cinema as a means of traveling through time.<sup>294</sup> In addition to these similarities in narrative, *mise-en-scène*,

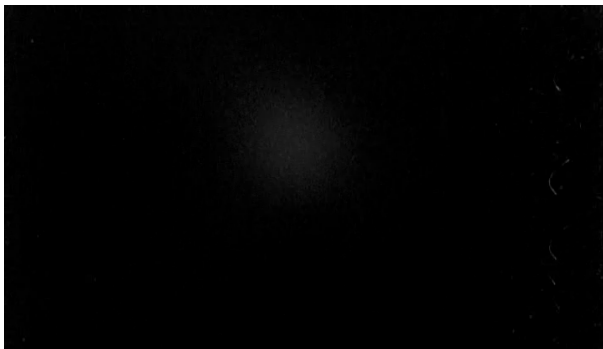
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<sup>292</sup> In the film's credits, Marker labels *La Jetté* a "photo-roman," a reference to the work's blurring of the boundaries between cinema and photography—apart from a brief scene, the film is comprised of a set of still photographs or frames shown sequentially and linked by a voice-over narration.

<sup>293</sup> See Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, "Ballena del MNHN oculta un siglo su identidad."

<sup>294</sup> Thank you to Jorge Marturano for this observation.

and temporal structure, *La Jetée* and *Se arrienda* feature elements of science fiction: time travel in *La Jetée* and an invasion of alien killer ants in *Se arrienda*.







*Gastón and Elisa in the Natural History Museum*

The second of these cross-narrative-level allusions to a work of art cinema occurs at the end of *Se arrienda*. The two juxtaposed sequences are a visual reference to Woody Allen's 1979 black-and-white film *Manhattan*. In the final sequence from the narrative plane of *Las hormigas asesinas* (seg. 53c), Paul runs through empty streets as the camera tracks his movements while tilting down towards his feet (1:45:14-1:46:03). The camera cuts (1:46:03) to a shot of Gastón's feet and legs as he runs down the street on his way to Elisa's apartment. This match cut emphasizes the connection between the characters and narrative levels. As Fuguet relates in *Apuntes autistas (Autistic Notes)*, these sequences of Paul and Gastón running are a direct allusion to *Manhattan*: “ver correr a Woody Allen cuerdas y cuerdas hasta alcanzar a la Hemingway era impresionantemente romántico (se coló claramente en *Se arrienda*, mi primera película)” (32; “watching Woody Allen run for blocks and blocks until he reached Hemingway was impressively romantic (it clearly slipped into *Se arrienda*, my first movie)”). This use of

communicating vessels combined with the visual motif of a man running towards love, links Paul, Gastón, and Isaac (Allen's character in *Manhattan*) together. Through these two juxtapositions across narrative levels, the film invites viewers to assume an active role and draw connections between *Se arrienda*, *La Jetée*, and *Manhattan*.



*Paul and Gastón on the run*

### 3.4. Segment Summary

Copy utilized: DVD, distributed by Bazuca Films.

(The beginning and end time, as well as the duration of each segment are noted in parentheses)

#### Part 1: Reflections on the Beginning of the Transition to Democracy

Seg. 01	(00:00-00:20)	Title credits and epigraph	(0'20'')
Seg. 02	(00:20-02:02)	Gastón watches <i>Las hormigas asesinas</i>	(1'42'')
Seg. 03	(02:02-02:12)	Title credits part two	(0'10'')
Seg. 04	(02:12-03:15)	1988: Gastón shoplifts at the record store	(1'03'')
Seg. 05	(03:15-04:39)	Gastón and friends on the bus at the Argentina-Chile border	(1'24'')
Seg. 06	(04:39-09:19)	Human Rights Now! and Pizza a) Human Rights Now! concert on TV (4:39-4:56) b) Dinner with friends and a discussion of Julio Iglesias and Los Prisioneros (4:56-9:19)	(4'40'')
Seg. 07	(09:19-14:09)	Gastón pursues Cordelia in Mendoza	(4'50'')
Seg. 08	(14:09-15:55)	Lying in the grass, forgetting	(1'46'')
Seg. 09	(15:55-23:23)	Discussing <i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> in the cafeteria	(7'28'')
Seg. 10	(23:23-24:11)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> : in the metro station	(0'48'')

#### Part 2: Confronting Adulthood and Family Capitalism

Seg. 11	(24:11-24:59)	15 years later: Gastón in the streets of Santiago	(0'48'')
Seg. 12	(24:59-26:05)	Gastón at the doctor's office	(1'06'')
Seg. 13	(26:05-27:29)	Gastón and his father visit the cemetery	(1'24'')
Seg. 14	(27:29-27:39)	Shots of downtown Santiago	(0'10'')
Seg. 15	(27:39-28:09)	Chernovsky at the bus ticket office	(0'30'')
Seg. 16	(28:09-29:15)	Gastón meets Cancino and Paula for a concert	(1'06'')
Seg. 17	(29:15-29:47)	Gastón calls Cordelia	(0'32'')
Seg. 18	(29:47-31:06)	Gastón returns home and watches Balbo on TV	(1'19'')
Seg. 19	(31:06-32:27)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas: Notes from Underground</i> and Nido	(1'21'')
Seg. 20	(32:27-32:47)	Gastón drinks coffee and travels to his father's office	(0'20'')
Seg. 21	(32:47-35:59)	Gastón and his father talk finances and Gastón's future at the office	(3'12'')
Seg. 22	(35:59-39:03)	Gastón encounters Balbo in the pharmacy	(3'04'')
Seg. 23	(39:03-43:28)	Gastón and Cordelia wake up together	(4'25'')
Seg. 24	(43:28-45:45)	At McDonald's with Cancino and his daughter	(2'17'')
Seg. 25	(45:45-46:00)	Interlude: streets of Santiago	(0'15'')
Seg. 26	(46:00-50:10)	Balbo, Cancino, and Gastón discuss Chernovsky's misfortunes	(3'10'')
Seg. 27	(50:10-51:51)	Gastón goes home on the bus	(1'41'')

### Part 3: Towards Reconciliation

Seg. 28	(51:51-54:44)	Gastón's first day at work a) For sale billboards (51:51-52:07) b) Gastón in the office (52:08-53:09) c) At the mechanic (53:09-54:29) d) Driving to the apartment (54:29-54:44)	(2'53'')
Seg. 29	(54:44-57:00)	Gastón shows Pancho an apartment	(2'16'')
Seg. 30	(57:00-58:35)	Gastón shows former house of religious order to a wealthy young man	(1'35'')
Seg. 31	(58:36-59:55)	Gastón shows apartment to Elisa and her boyfriend	(1'19'')
Seg. 32	(59:55-1:00:21)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> : walking in tandem	(0'26'')
Seg. 33	(1:00:21-1:01:29)	Gastón and Balbo discuss collaborating together over sushi	(1'08'')
Seg. 34	(1:01:29-1:04:00)	Gastón and Balbo continue their discussion in the discotheque	(2'31'')
Seg. 35	(1:04:00-1:04:54)	Gastón discusses the problems of a cash deal with two clients	(0'54'')
Seg. 36	(1:04:54-1:06:18)	Cordelia tells Gastón her boyfriend proposed	(1'24'')
Seg. 37	(1:06:18-1:07:54)	Gastón encounters Pancho in the supermarket	(1'36'')
Seg. 38	(1:07:54-1:08:40)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> : City Hotel and descent to the Insomnio discotheque	(0'46'')
Seg. 39	(1:08:40-1:19:53)	Balbo's birthday party at the Museum of Natural History a) Reencounter with Luc (1:08:40-1:13:56) b) Gastón and Elisa in the galleries (1:13:56-1:19:53)	(11'13'')
Seg. 40	(1:19:53-1:20:02)	Gastón stares at a computer	(0'09'')
Seg. 41	(1:20:02-1:20:35)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> : <i>El Clamor</i> and swimming pool	(0'33'')
Seg. 42	(1:20:35-1:21:52)	Gastón and Elisa meet outside the apartment	(1'17'')
Seg. 43	(1:21:52-1:25:05)	Gastón and Elisa visit Cerro San Cristóbal	(3'13'')
Seg. 44	(1:25:05-1:25:36)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> : rooftop kiss	(0'31'')
Seg. 45	(1:25:36-1:27:31)	Gastón waits fruitlessly for Elisa at the cinema	(1'55'')
Seg. 46	(1:27:31-1:31:25)	Elisa and Gastón discuss the previous night, while a woman looks at an apartment	(3'54'')
Seg. 47	(1:31:25-1:32:13)	Gastón in the car with his father and cousin	(0'48'')
Seg. 48	(1:32:13-1:41:47)	Gastón and Pancho discuss careers, music, fathers	(9'34'')
Seg. 49	(1:41:47-1:42:41)	Gastón and his cousin visit a prospective property	(0'54'')
Seg. 50	(1:42:41-1:43:33)	Gastón and Balbo discuss music, Gastón's new composition <i>Departamentos vacíos</i>	(0'52'')
Seg. 51	(1:43:33-1:44:12)	Gastón and his father listen to <i>Departamentos vacíos</i> as they go through the car wash	(0'39'')
Seg. 52	(1:44:12-1:44:31)	Shots of skyscrapers and apartment buildings	(0'19'')
Seg. 53	(1:44:31-1:46:03)	<i>Las hormigas asesinas</i> : "Programas Muy Especiales"	(1'32'')

		a) <i>No se puede vivir sin amor</i> (1:44:31-1:45:04)	
		b) Bathtub (1:45:05-1:45:14)	
		c) Paul runs through streets (1:45:14-1:46:03)	
Seg. 54	(1:46:03-1:47:11)	Gastón runs to Elisa's apartment	(1'08'')
Seg. 55	(1:47:11-1:49:35)	Gastón and Elisa reconcile	(2'24'')
Seg. 56	(1:49:35-1:54:48)	End credits	(5'13'')

### 3.5. Technical Summary

Country: Chile

Language: Spanish

Year: 2005

Shooting Format: Super 16mm, Color and Black and White

Running Time: 114'48''

Director:	Alberto Fuguet
Screenplay:	Alberto Fuguet and Francisco Ortega
Sound Design:	David Miranda
Original Music:	Cristián Heyne and Andrés Valdivia
Art Director:	Daniela Jordán
Editor:	Teresa Viera-Gallo
Director of Photography:	Jorge González
Producer:	Luigi Araneda
Executive Producer:	Diego Valenzuela
Producer:	Luigi Araneda
Associate Producers:	Alejandro Burr, Álvaro Corvera, Luciano Cruz-Coke
Musical Producer:	Cristián Heyne
Assistant Director:	René Martín
Unit Production Manager:	Carolina Carter
Cast:	Luciano Cruz-Coke (Gastón Fernández), Felipe Braun (Julián Balbo), Francisca Lewin (Elisa), Jaime Vadell (Gastón's Father), Ignacia Allamand (Cordelia), Diego Casanueva (Pancho Santander), Cristóbal Gumucio (Cancino), Nicolás Saavedra (Luc Fernández), Eliana Furman (Chernovsky), Maite Pascal (Fernanda), Nayra Ilic (Morgana), Julio Fuentes (Ivo), Nathalie Soublette (Cecilia), Luis Alonso (Gato), Nicole (Vanessa Voss), Benjamín Vicuña (Paul Kazán), Ariel Levy (David), Diego Muñoz (Renzo), Blanca Mallol (Bernardita), Sonia Mena (Sra. Becerra), Javier Maldonado (Sr. Becerra), Myriam Riveros (Evangelical Renter), Javiera Díaz de Valdés (Cata), Catalina Zahri (Tania), Francisca Peró (Doctor's Assistant), Cristina Peña y Lillo (Vania), Paula Santa Ana (Chiara), María Ignacia Baeza (Argentine Waiter), Mariela Morales (Pharmacist), Camila Bórquez (Carla), Marcos

	Araya (Mechanic), Karolina Lama (Paula), Max Boza (Gerardo), Matías Jordán (Bartender), Tiburcio de la Cárcova (Record Store Clerk), Carla Cristi, and René Martín
Second Assistant Director:	Rosario Gallino
Continuity:	Rocío Rivera
Focus Puller:	Cristóbal Portaluppi
Second Camera Assistant:	Rodrigo Belmar
Video Assistant:	Eduardo Contreras
Production Coordinator:	Javiera Pascal
Art Production:	Estefanía Larraín
Production Design:	Constanza Meza-Lopehandia
Costume:	Carolina Espina
Makeup:	Mercedes Marambio
Stylist and Hair:	Edgardo Navarro
Props:	Ángel Marín
Props and Rigging:	Roberto Castro
Post-Production Director:	Tomás Roca
Post-Production:	Vértigo
Post-Production Team:	Daniela Ossa, Sergio Rodríguez, Miguel Parra, Julián Carrasco, Matías Echeverría
Direct Sound:	Boris Herrera
Boom:	Boris Herrera
Post-Production and Sound Mixing:	Filmosonido
Sound Supervisor:	Marcos de Aguirre
Sound Design and 5.1 Mix:	David Miranda
Dialogue Editor:	Nadine Voulliéme
Foley Recorder:	Iván Quiroz
Foley Artist:	Roberto Espinoza
Sound Effects Editor:	Marcela Riveroz
Steadycam:	Manuel Rojas
English-language Subtitles:	Paula Salazar
Production Companies:	Cinépata, GOA, El Asombro, Lastarria 90
Associate Production Company:	Cine Sur
Distributor:	Bazuca Films
Funding:	BancoEstado, Ópticas Rotter y Krauss, HP, Farmacias Ahumada, Líder, Smartcom, Pisco Mistral, Reebok, McDonald's, Blockbuster, <i>El Mercurio</i>
Premiere:	October 1, 2005 (2005 Valdivia Film Festival)
Theatrical Release:	October 6, 2005 (Chile)
Spectators:	93,153 (Chile)

Shot in Santiago and Mendoza between January and February 2005

#### 4. Night Fever: Myopic Cinephilia in Pablo Larraín's *Tony Manero*

*I got fire in my mind  
I get higher in my walkin'  
And I'm glowin' in the dark  
I give you warnin'*

—Bee Gees

Pablo Larraín's *Tony Manero* (2008) exemplifies the porous qualities of art cinema. A Chilean-Brazilian co-production, the film incorporates the Hollywood blockbuster *Saturday Night Fever* into its narrative, engages self-reflexively with the film musical genre, and features elements of national allegory. *Tony Manero* was Larraín's breakthrough work. It premiered at Cannes in the Directors' Fortnight section and garnered critical acclaim while circulating at film festivals around the world. Set in late 1979, the movie follows Raúl Peralta (Alfredo Castro) as he prepares for a live revue show at the boardinghouse-cum-restaurant and a televised dance contest. In both instances he performs as John Travolta's working-class, disco-loving character from the 1977 film *Saturday Night Fever*.<sup>295</sup> Although Raúl lives thousands of miles away from Tony's working-class neighborhood of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, he dedicates himself to emulating and recreating his celluloid idol, an endeavor that culminates in his participation in the "Igualito a..." ("Just like...") lookalike contest on a popular daytime television variety show. The film depicts Raúl's fevered and murderous pursuit to embody Tony Manero as a manifestation of myopic cinephilia. This circumscribed cinephilia eschews the omnivorous and voracious appetite of the typical cinephile in favor of an obsessive relationship with a single film.

This chapter is divided into two halves. The first half contextualizes the historical and allegorical elements of *Tony Manero*. I situate the film within a seminal historical period in which the Pinochet government enacted a series of far-reaching neoliberal economic reforms

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<sup>295</sup> For more on Alfredo Castro's career in theater and film see Kemp, "Stardom in Spanish America" (39-41).

amid ongoing state repression. The film emphasizes its allegorical representation of this period of far-reaching economic change, through its setting in late 1979 amid the implementation of significant economic reforms, the underscoring of a connection between dance and the nation, the allusion to the Beagle Channel Dispute, the portrayal of the protagonist's makeshift family, and the depiction of Raúl's myopic cinephilia. The second half presents a comparative analysis of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Tony Manero*. I maintain that both films are cosmopolitan, porous, and transnational productions, which feature a complex relationship to the genre of the film musical. Additionally, I highlight Tony and Raúl's identities as working-class artists and cinephiles, Raúl's obsessive viewing of *Saturday Night Fever*, and the protagonists' violent treatment of women as points of connection between the two works.

#### 4.1. Disco and the Dictatorship

*Tony Manero* is the first in a trilogy of feature-length films by Pablo Larraín set during three distinct stages of the 1973-1990 military dictatorship. *Tony Manero* unfolds in the middle of the dictatorship, while the director's two subsequent feature films bookend this period: *Post Mortem* (2010) is set during the September 11, 1973 military coup and its immediate aftermath, while the action in *No* (2012) takes place in the run-up to and day of the 1988 plebiscite. In addition to their shared historical setting, all three films feature prominent characters who are artists or creators: Raúl in *Tony Manero*; Nancy Puelma (Antonia Zegers) a dancer at a Santiago burlesque club in *Post Mortem*; and René Saavedra (Gael García Bernal) a marketing consultant who supervises the ad campaign for the "No" coalition.

In the title to his 2013 interview with Pablo Larraín in *The New York Times*, Larry Rohter labels *Tony Manero*, *Post Mortem*, and *No* an "unintentional trilogy" ("Pablo Larraín and His



Unintentional Trilogy”). In the interview Larraín remarks on the inadvertent creation of this cinematic trilogy:

When the movie [*No*] was set up, that’s when I realized that I was going to make a third movie about the subject. I realized that I had made one about the first days of the dictatorship, the coup of Sept. 11, 1973. Then I made one that was in ’78 or ’79, in the middle, and now I was going to make this other one, from the last days of the dictatorship. Not exactly the last days, but the day we decided to go back to democracy. And I keep wondering, how do these movies connect to each other? I think there are a few bridges you could build, to see how the movies have a dialogue between them. But I never planned it.

This “unintentional trilogy” is a seminal work of early-21st-century Chilean cinema, not only because of the critical acclaim of these films and box-office success of *No*, but also because these films contributed significantly to the prestige and visibility of Chilean cinema.

*Tony Manero*, *Post Mortem*, and *No* form part of a corpus of films by Chilean and non-Chilean directors that depicts the state-sponsored terror and oppression of the Pinochet dictatorship and which spans decades, including Sergio Castilla’s *Prisioneros desaparecidos* (1979), Constantin Costa-Gavras’s *Missing* (1982), and Ricardo Larraín’s *La frontera* (1991).<sup>296</sup> Larraín’s trilogy is among the limited number of fictional films released between 2005-2015 that

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<sup>296</sup> These three films are transnational productions. Castilla’s *Prisioneros desaparecidos* is a Swedish-Cuban co-production. It was shot in Cuba under the aegis of ICAIC, Cuba’s national film institute. Castilla’s film stars Nelson Villagra and other notable Chilean actors who went into exile after the 1973 coup. Villagra plays the role of a secret police agent. A title in the end credits describes *Prisioneros desaparecidos* as “Un film basado en testimonios de hombres y mujeres chilenos que luchan contra el fascismo” (“A film based on the testimonies of Chilean men and women who fight against fascism”). The Greek director Costa-Gavras’s *Missing* tells the story of the kidnapping and murder of an American journalist in the aftermath of the 1973 coup. *Missing* was produced by the British-American company PolyGram and distributed by Universal. The film stars American actors Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek and was shot on location in Mexico. *La frontera* is the story of a mathematics professor who is sent into internal exile after denouncing the disappearance of a colleague. *La frontera* is a Chile-Spain co-production.

are set during the Pinochet regime or featuring characters or themes connected to this historical period. These films include Alex Bowen's *Mi mejor enemigo* (2005), which is set during the climax of the Beagle Channel Dispute between Argentina and Chile in 1978; Miguel Littin's *Dawson, Isla 10* (2009), which depicts a prison camp for political prisoners; Littin's *Allende en su laberinto* (2014), which portrays Allende's last hours in the La Moneda Palace during the September 11, 1973 military coup; and Sebastián Lelio's *Gloria* (2013), which features a character who served in the Navy during the dictatorship. In contrast to the relative dearth of fiction films dealing with the dictatorship, various documentaries explore this historical period. Among the documentaries that focus on the Pinochet dictatorship and its legacy are Germán Berger-Hertz's *Mi vida con Carlos* (2010), Lorena Manríquez and Miguel Picker's *La odisea de Ulises* (2014), and Patricio Guzmán's *Nostalgia de la luz* (2010) and *El botón de nácar* (2015). Another significant cinematic representation of the dictatorship is Andrés Wood's 2004 domestic box-office hit *Machuca*, which just predates the period under study here.<sup>297</sup> In addition to its setting during the dictatorship, *Tony Manero* also fits into a tradition of contemporary Chilean films that feature working-class or marginalized characters like Alicia Scherson's *Play* (2005), Elisa Eliash's *Mami te amo* (2008), Alejandro Fernández-Almendras's *Huacho* (2009), and Julio Jorquera's *Mi último round* (2011).<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> *Machuca* is set during the final year of Allende's Popular Unity government and depicts the political and economic unrest of the period from the point of view of two children from distinct socio-economic backgrounds.

<sup>298</sup> These films are all set in the post-Transition period. Carolina Urrutia highlights the prominence of these marginal figures in Transition-era films: "las principales películas de la década de los noventa tienen en común la representación del 'otro': del lumpen, el drogadicto, el marginal como es el caso de *Caluga o menta*, de Gonzalo Justiniano (1990); del delincuente, en *Johnny Cine Pesos*, de Gustavo Graef-Marino (1994), y *Taxi para tres*, de Orlando Lübbert (2001)" (*Un cine centrifugo* 37; "the principal films of the nineties have in common the representation of the 'other': the lumpen, the drug addict, the marginal figure as is the case with *Caluga o menta*, Gonzalo Justiniano (1990); to the delinquent in *Johnny Cien Pesos*, by Gustavo Graef-Marino (1994), and *Taxi para tres*, by Orlando Lübbert (2001)").

*Tony Manero*'s setting in late 1979 is a central facet of the film's allegorical qualities. There are several significant indices of the narrative's temporal setting: the reference to the designation of the cueca as the country's national dance (seg. 6), the allusion to the Beagle Channel Dispute (seg. 46a), and cinematic markers like *Saturday Night Fever* (released in 1977), Randal Kleiser's *Grease* (1978), and Bernardo Bertolucci's *Luna* (1979). Nike Jung describes *Tony Manero* as a "historical film" (118). While the film is set during the recent past of the military dictatorship, it represents this period within the context of contemporary Chile, whose economy and society are profoundly marked by the cultural, economic, political, and social policies implemented by the military regime. In a 2009 interview Larraín comments on the significance of the historical context of the film:

Para mí *Tony Manero* es una película que está instalada en el momento que se produce el verdadero cambio. Porque para mí el verdadero cambio no fecha en el '73, el año del golpe. El momento esencial es cuando Pinochet introduce a los *chicago boys*, cinco economistas formados en EE.UU que Pinochet los llevó al Ministerio de Hacienda y Economía, y es ahí en donde empieza este nuevo sistema. ("Bailando por una pesadilla"; For me *Tony Manero* is a film that is set in a moment that produces true change. Because for me the real change is not '73, the year of the coup. The essential moment is when Pinochet introduces the *Chicago boys*, five economists formed in the U.S. that Pinochet brought to the Ministry of Finance and Economy, and it's there where the new system begins)

I argue that in setting the action during the implementation of these neoliberal economic reforms, the film underscores their enduring significance in post-Transition Chile. Larraín emphasizes the importance of cultivating engaged viewers: "I think that cinema really works when you have an

active audience” (“The Capacity to Create Mystery” 464). He encourages audiences to make connections between the socio-economic circumstances of Raúl and the highly unequal nature of Chilean society after the dictatorship.

As Larraín notes, the neoliberal economic reforms instituted in the years after the military coup were the brainchild of a group of Chilean economists known as the “Chicago Boys.” According to Brian Loveman, the Chicago Boys were a “group of economists influenced by conservative academics in the United States. They received advanced professional education at the University of Chicago or studied in Chile under Chicago-influenced professors as part of an exchange program with the Universidad Católica in Santiago established in the 1950s” (314). These economists, many of whom trained under the American economist Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago, played a key role in restructuring Chile’s economy following a period of hyperinflation and recession (1973-1975). The Chicago Boys codified their economic vision for the country in a collectively-authored document titled *El ladrillo* (*The Brick*, 1973). The authors of *El ladrillo*, which was not published until 1992, advocated for a “política de descentralización” (62; “decentralization policy”) in which the government adopted an approach to the economy that favored private enterprise, free trade, and limited state intervention. In 1975, amid hyper-inflation and recession, the military regime embarked on an anti-inflationary economic “shock program,” implementing many of the anti-inflationary, free market reforms advocated in *El ladrillo* (Loveman 318). Between 1974 and 1979, the Chilean government, led by Sergio de Castro, who served as Economy Minister from 1974 to 1975 and then Finance Minister until 1982, privatized hundreds of state-owned companies, reduced import tariffs (1974), instituted a goods and services tax (1974), liberalized foreign investment (1974 and 1977), reformed the currency (1975), established a fixed exchange rate (1979), implemented a

new labor code that restricted the bargaining power of trade unions (1979), and “drastically reduced government expenditures and employment in the public sector” (Loveman 318).<sup>299</sup> The reforms were successful in reducing inflation, but the country’s deep-rooted social inequality persisted.<sup>300</sup> According to a household budget survey conducted in Santiago in 1978, the lowest 60 percent of income earners, which would likely include Raúl and his companions, accounted for only 28.1 percent of total household expenditures (French-Davis 182). Meanwhile real wages and social expenditures in 1979 were lower than during the pre-coup period, a statistic that reflects the limited social safety net for Chileans like Raúl (Collier and Sater 367-72).

In his annual state of the union speech on September 11, 1979, Pinochet outlined a vision of a prosperous Chile built on these neoliberal economic reforms:

Este sexto aniversario de la Liberación Nacional encuentra a Chile avanzando seguro hacia un porvenir de grandeza, por un camino que está permitiendo forjar un nuevo estilo de vida para todos los chilenos, donde reina verdadera paz, justicia y progreso, y donde a cada hijo de esta tierra se le abren las puertas para que tenga las mejores opciones y alcance así su anhelo de perfección espiritual y material bajo el amparo de una Patria respetada, libre y soberana. (*Mensaje Presidencial 3*; This sixth anniversary of National Liberation finds Chile advancing confidently towards a future of greatness, on a path which is allowing the creation of a new life style for every Chilean, where true peace, justice, and progress reign, and where the doors open for every child on this earth so that he may have better options and in this way attain his desire for spiritual and material perfection beneath the protection of a respected, free, and sovereign Fatherland)

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<sup>299</sup> See Loveman (310-61) and Collier and Sater (364-76).

<sup>300</sup> Chile’s annual inflation rate declined from 343.2 percent in 1975 to 38 percent in 1979 (Collier and Sater 367).

The economic reforms implemented by the military government fundamentally altered the economy. However, the “better options” promised by Pinochet were not available or accessible to all Chileans. *Tony Manero* focuses on a stratum of society—the underemployed working-class—which would have received limited material benefit from these economic reforms. Raúl, who holds a job in the informal sector as a performer, would likely be counted among the unemployed, who comprised 17.3 percent of the country’s population in 1979 (Collier and Sater 373).<sup>301</sup> Many of the outward symbols of prosperity like credit cards (the Diner’s Club Card was introduced in Chile in 1979) and automobiles (the number of cars in the country tripled between 1975 and 1982) would be out of reach for Raúl and his fellow inhabitants of the boardinghouse (Collier and Sater 370).



*“This is my capital”*

Michèle Arrué, Juan Poblete, and David Sippelle observe that Raúl’s efforts to emulate Travolta’s character represents an allegory of Chile’s neoliberal economy.<sup>302</sup> Expanding on the work of these critics, I maintain that *Tony Manero* portrays Chile’s economy and politics during the military dictatorship through a critical lens. I argue that the film depicts a working-class milieu that derives limited benefit from the military government’s economic reforms. Two

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<sup>301</sup> This statistic includes those employed in the Programa de Empleo Mínimo (Minimum Employment Program or PEM) established in 1976.

<sup>302</sup> See Arrué (149), Poblete (10), and Sippelle (47).

episodes exemplify this film's focus on the neoliberal economy and the limited opportunities it offers for economic and social mobility. The first of these is the conversation between the Romanian (Marcelo Alonso) and Raúl about the purchase of additional glass tiles. The Romanian, whose nickname suggests his status as a foreigner, personifies the opening of the Chilean economy to foreign business and investment in the second-half of the 1970s (Collier and Sater 366). Recognizing his interlocutor's immediate need for the tiles, the Romanian seeks to create more advantageous terms for himself. He offers a stone-faced Raúl a lesson on inflation and the laws of supply and demand: "This is my capital. The money you gave me is your capital. Well . . . you know, it's not easy. Prices went up, ok? You'll have to take fewer glass bricks for the same money" (57:35-57:51).<sup>303</sup> This brief and condescending economics lesson exemplifies the film's portrayal of the newly-implemented neoliberal economic reforms as a model which offers little protection or stability for someone from Raúl's socio-economic background. Likewise, the television look-alike contest at the end of the film (seg. 46) reflects the limited opportunities of socio-economic advancement for Raúl and fellow members of the working-class. In addition to their fifteen seconds of fame, the participants receive gifts from the show's sponsors: the winner of the contest gets a blender and the other contestants go home with a poncho, guitar, and packet of Salsital tomato sauce.

*Tony Manero* portrays these economic changes with a tone of self-aware skepticism. Raúl is acutely aware of his own limited resources and bargaining power. To offset his lack of capital and skills, the protagonist employs entrepreneurial violence, or violence directed towards the realization of his efforts to transform himself into Tony Manero and win the look-alike contest. His murder of the Air Force officer's widow (seg. 6), robbery of the corpse by the Mapocho river

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<sup>303</sup> All Spanish-language dialogue in *Tony Manero* is quoted from the English-language subtitles by the company Titra.

(seg. 23), and bludgeoning of the Romanian (seg. 33) are acts of entrepreneurial violence. The *Saturday Night Fever*-obsessed protagonist, operates both inside and outside of the market and the law. His violence is not wanton; rather he takes advantage of a perceived weakness or happenstance—assaulting and robbing the elderly widow after he sees her being beaten (segs. 5 and 6), pilfering the corpse of the man with the satchel after he is shot by agents of the secret police (seg. 23), stealing the *Saturday Night Fever* film reels (seg. 27d), and using the stolen watch taken from the man with the satchel to buy meat to distract the dogs at the junkyard before killing and robbing the Romanian (seg. 33).

In his bloody resourcefulness, Raúl shares much in common with the archetypal Chilean figure of the *roto*. In his 1862 volume on Chilean agriculture, Claudio Gay, the French naturalist and state-appointed chronicler of Chile, identifies the *roto* with the urban laborer.<sup>304</sup> Gay observes that the *roto* is unclean and uncouth: “Si las personas para quienes trabaja no le permiten pasar la noche en el pajar, se acuesta en el suelo en cualquier parte sin desnudarse jamás; lo que explica la suciedad y permanente mal estado de su vestido, que le ha valido muy generalmente el dictado de *roto*” (137, author’s emphasis; “If the people he works for do not allow him to spend the night in the hay loft, he lays down anywhere on the floor without ever taking off his clothes; which explains the filth and permanent poor state of his dress, which has very often earned him the name of *roto*”).<sup>305</sup> Loveman defines the *roto* as an ambiguous character: “The *roto* is the Chilean worker, courageous, strong, persistent, quick to take advantage of a favorable opportunity (*Vivo!*). But *roto* also means ‘broken one’” (43; author’s

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<sup>304</sup> In 1830, Gay was contracted by the Chilean government to undertake an investigation of the country’s natural history, geography, politics, economy, and customs. He traveled throughout Chile from 1830 to 1842. As part of his investigation, he published two volumes on Chilean agriculture in 1862 and 1865, respectively. These form part of his twenty-eight volume *Historia física y política de Chile (Physical and Political History of Chile)*, which was published from 1844 to 1865. See Sagredo, “El *Atlas* de Gay: La representación de una nación” (ix-lxxv).

<sup>305</sup> Joaquín Edwards Bello’s 1920 novel *El roto* is a seminal literary representation of the *roto*.



emphasis). Raúl's determined efforts at upward social mobility via the Tony Manero look-alike contest are consistent with the cunning and resourcefulness of the *roto*; however, his use of violence, though motivated by a desire for self-advancement, goes beyond the *roto*'s opportunistic hustling. Raúl does not shy away from employing assault, sabotage, and murder in his efforts to fashion himself into Tony Manero and win the television contest. These crimes of opportunity are limited in their premeditation and contrast with the systemic violence and oppression employed by the military government. Additionally, Raúl's violence lacks the ideological motivations of the virulently anti-Marxist military government. The victims of this aspiring Tony Manero span the political spectrum, from the Pinochet-supporting Air Force officer's widow to the left-wing Goyo.

Notwithstanding Raúl's targeting of both Pinochet supporters and political dissidents, there are parallels between Raúl's entrepreneurial violence and the military dictatorship. Mariana Johnson labels the film's protagonist "an extreme symptom of a rotten political system that suffuses the film's atmosphere" (206-07). Expanding on this connection between Raúl and the regime, they both carry out violence with impunity and possesses a strong instinct for self-preservation. The cinematography and sound design underscore the connection between the use of violence by Raúl and the government. Michèle Arrué observes that the film utilizes a recurring framing device to represent the violence perpetrated by Raúl and the agents of the secret police: "es de notar que la violencia aparece casi siempre fuera de campo; tanto la violencia originada por las fuerzas represivas del gobierno, como dos de los cuatro crímenes cometidos por el protagonista" (148; "it is worth noting that violence almost always appears off-screen; both the violence committed by the repressive government forces, and two of the four crimes committed by the protagonist"). The sequences showing Raúl's assault of the Air Force

Officer's widow (seg. 6), the secret police agents' summary execution of the man by the Mapocho river (seg. 23), and Raúl's bludgeoning of the Romanian (seg. 33) utilize obstructed framing during these acts of violence or leave them out of the frame completely. Additionally, these sequences couple "off-screen violence" with "off-screen sound," which reveals the brutality of the acts occurring just outside of the frame (Johnson, "Political Trauma, Intimacy, and Off-Screen Space" 200). In representing this violence through sound while using blocking to visually obstruct Raúl's actions, the film underscores the impunity with which Raúl and the secret police operate.



*Off-screen violence*

The military government's neoliberal economic reforms were implemented amid a repressive political environment in which dissent was suppressed, political parties were outlawed (a ban codified in a March 1977 decree), the right of assembly was restricted, and thousands were imprisoned, tortured, disappeared, and murdered by the military and the country's intelligence services. *Tony Manero* is set during a "state of emergency," which was implemented

in 1978 to replace the even more restrictive “state of siege” imposed after the 1973 coup. The action in the film also unfolds in the aftermath of an April 1978 decree, known as Law 2191, which granted amnesty to agents of the state who committed crimes while enforcing the state of siege in place between 1973 and 1978.<sup>306</sup> In a speech at Cerro Chacarillas on July 9, 1977, the Day of Youth, before a crowd of torch-bearing supporters, Pinochet promised to move towards a new kind of democracy: “advertimos nítidamente que nuestro deber es dar forma a una nueva democracia que sea autoritaria, protegida, integradora, tecnicada y de auténtica participación social” (“Discurso en Cerro Chacarillas” 13; “we see clearly that our duty is to give shape to a new democracy that is authoritarian, protected, unifying, technical, and of authentic social participation”). Despite Pinochet’s call for “authentic social participation,” multiparty democracy would not return for another thirteen years. In 1978, in an effort to assert its legitimacy and shore up its political position, the government held a national referendum on a resolution expressing support for the regime “in the face of the international aggression unleashed against the government of the fatherland” (Loveman 325). The regime’s efforts to institutionalize legal authority climaxed with the establishment of a new constitution in 1980 following a national plebiscite on the issue (339-44). *Tony Manero* takes place amid these concerted efforts by the regime to consolidate power through a combination of legal and extra-judicial measures.

*Tony Manero* represents the insidious nature of state repression. The film’s first sequence (seg. 2) alludes directly to government censorship. The television producer (Antonia Zegers) describes the station’s policy towards speech to the Chuck Norris contestants gathered backstage: “A few tips before we go into the studio . . . Dirty jokes are not allowed, no political talk, and no

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<sup>306</sup> See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, “Concede amnistía a las personas que indica por los delitos que señala.”

cursing. Three basic rules” (03:52-04:04). In addition to articulating the state’s restrictive policy towards speech, these rules are also metacinematic and ironic in nature. The film itself breaks all three of these rules. Raúl’s defecating on Goyo’s suit is a literal “dirty joke” (seg. 41), Goyo’s anti-government activism contravenes the order to avoid “political talk,” and the abundance of explicit language and sexuality in the film undermine the producer’s dictate against “cursing” and obscenity. Furthermore, allowing the audience to determine the winner of the contest with its applause (seg. 46c), represents an instance of democratic practice, albeit a carefully managed and constrained version. This instance of narrow democracy parallels the limited nature of Raúl’s cinephilia.

In addition to this metacinematic representation of censorship, the film depicts the government’s implementation of a state of emergency through a range of visual motifs. These include the mandatory curfew, which Wilma alludes to when asking the patrons to leave after the show (seg. 36); troops patrolling the streets (segs. 7 and 29); and the appearances by two unnamed plainclothes agents of the Central Nacional de Informaciones (National Informations Center or CNI), the country’s secret police.<sup>307</sup> These men, played by Rodrigo Pérez and Francisco González, are listed as “CNI Agent #1” and “CNI Agent #2” in the end credits. They appear in three sequences: they harass Goyo while he pedals his bicycle-cart down the street with Raúl (seg. 13); kill one of Goyo’s companions after he reveals Goyo’s identity (seg. 23); and detain Cony, Goyo, Pauli, and Wilma at the restaurant just before the Festival de la Una contest (seg. 43). In all of these instances, the agents act with impunity, detaining, intimidating, and murdering their targets.

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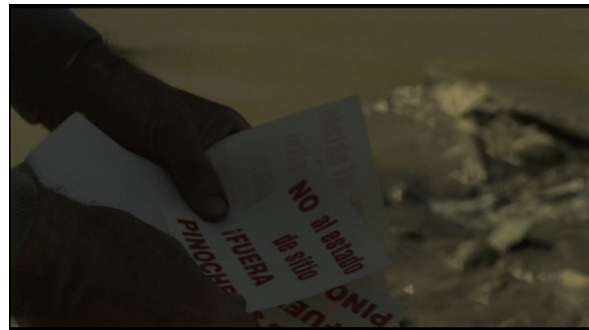
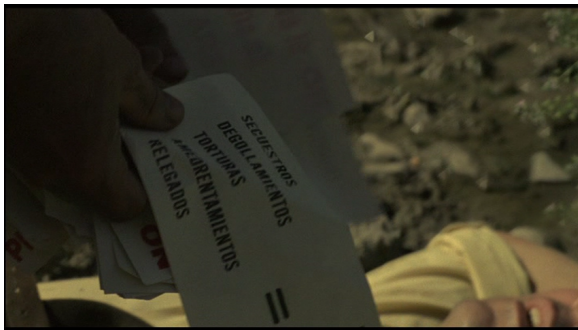
<sup>307</sup> Under international pressure for its human rights abuses, the military government reconstituted the secret police as the Central Nacional de Informaciones in 1977. Between 1974 and 1977, the state intelligence agency was known as the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (Directorate of National Intelligence or DINAs).



*The secret police*

Alongside these manifestations of state repression, signs of opposition to the regime appear throughout the film. After Raúl runs off with the Air Force widow's television set, the camera tracks the protagonist as he walks down a street strewn with flyers carrying the stolen TV (seg. 7). In this same shot, Raúl passes by fragments of posters plastered on the wall. These posters, which have been torn apart and whitewashed, are manifestations of political opposition to the dictatorship. The first batch of posters each feature faint outlines of faces, depicting, perhaps, a person who was forcibly disappeared by the regime. On others, the words "lucha" ("struggle") and "asesino" ("murderer") are faintly visible (12:23-12:50). In a later sequence (seg. 23), Raúl discovers anti-Pinochet flyers in the satchel of the man murdered by CNI agents on the banks of the Mapocho river (41:35-41:51). These flyers, which read "NO al estado de sitio ¡FUERA PINOCHET!" ("NO to the state of siege PINOCHET OUT!") and "SECUESTROS DEGOLLAMIENTOS TORTURAS AMEDRENTAMIENTOS RELEGADOS – PINOCHET" ("KIDNAPPINGS BEHEADINGS TORTURE SCARE-TACTICS EXILES – PINOCHET")

reflect strong sentiments of opposition to the military junta. In another sequence (seg. 29), Raúl passes by the graffitied declaration “MUERA EL ASESINO” (“DEATH TO THE MURDERER”) covering a wall in an abandoned lot (56:13-56:16). In addition to these signs of resistance, the character of Goyo, who Cony derisively refers to as “compañero Goyo” (15:24-15:26; “comrade Goyo”), embodies the struggle and the high cost of resistance against the military government. The full extent of the repressive power of the state is underlined at the end of the film when Goyo, Wilma, Cony, and Pauli are detained by members of the secret police (seg. 43).



*Signs of resistance*

There are two additional historical markers that indicate the film's temporal setting and underscore its allegorical qualities. The first of these is a news report on television describing a decree proclaiming cueca as the country's national dance (seg. 6). This sequence occurs after Raúl accompanies an elderly woman back to her house after she is assaulted on the street by a group of men trying to steal her bag of groceries (seg. 5). The woman, the widow of an Air Force officer, welcomes Raúl into her home and thanks him for helping her by offering him an expired can of food. Throughout most of the sequence the camera remains positioned behind the two characters, underscoring the intrusive and menacing nature of Raúl's visit. The action occurs inside the woman's living room, adorned with a sword on the wall (a visual symbol of the military career of her deceased husband) and statues of biblical figures on top of a chest (a manifestation of traditional Catholicism). The television is situated in the background of the frame and its diegetic sound is eclipsed by the woman making conversation with Raúl, who remains largely silent. Michèle Arrué notes that placement of the television, which is tuned to the news, exemplifies Larraín's representation of historical context in "segundo plano" (146; "the background") in his trilogy of films set during the dictatorship. Arrué argues that *Tony Manero*, *Post Mortem*, and *No* encourage viewers to assume the role of active spectators: "Esta forma de filmar la Historia en segundo plano, a lo lejos, o fuera de campo, obliga a que el espectador desempeñe un papel activo" (149; "This form of filming History in the background, from afar, or outside of the frame, forces the spectator to take up an active role"). Although the television is in the background of the shot, the device—which is situated in the upper-center of the frame—is central to the action that unfolds in the sequence, as well as the film's representation of the nation.

In the news segment on the television, the reporter announces that Pinochet will sign a decree that establishes the cueca as the country's national dance: "El Presidente de la República en este mes de las fiestas patrias firma el decreto que declara que el baile nacional es nuestra cueca. La cueca que representa los sentimientos del alma criolla y de la voluntad popular" (10:04-10:18; "The President of the Republic in this month of national independence celebrations signs the decree that declares the cueca our national dance. The cueca represents the sentiments of the criollo soul and the popular will"). This news report refers to "Decreto 23" ("Decree 23") promulgated on September 18, 1979, Chile's independence day. This decree designates the cueca as the country's national dance, which it calls "la más genuina expresión del alma nacional" (1; "the most genuine expression of the national soul").



*Proclaiming the cueca Chile's national dance*

The cueca, which is both a type of music and dance, is derived from a variety of influences including Arabic-Andalusian and indigenous traditions, as well as popular oral traditions.<sup>308</sup> The cueca features a 6/8 time signature and is often accompanied by a guitar, harp, piano, and drums (Claro 41-54). It is often performed by two dancers—usually a man and a woman—who “se mueven ondulante en la forma de un 8” (Zubicueta 126; “move undulating in the form of an 8”). The “letras . . . románticas y costumbristas” (“La cueca”; “romantic and

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<sup>308</sup> See Claro (21-22) and Memoria Chilena, “La cueca.”



costumbrista . . . lyrics”) of the cueca reflect the music and dance’s vernacular quality. The cueca is frequently performed as part of festivities marking the nation’s independence during national holidays in mid-September, most notably at gatherings known as *fondas* or *chinganas*. In popular culture, the cueca is often depicted as a dance of seduction and a showcase of masculinity. The male cueca dancer is linked to two archetypes of Chilean popular culture, the *huaso*, the hardworking campesino, and the *roto*, the crafty working-class city-dweller.<sup>309</sup> In an article published in the magazine *En Viaje* in 1962, the unnamed author emphasizes the cueca’s connection to national identity, masculine strength, and idealized feminine virtue: “La cueca es un baile viril, decisivo y voluntarioso. El huaso, el varón que lo baila, avanza con valentía. La compañera debe ser coqueta y saber a la vez defenderse de la conquista fácil que pretende y busca el macho” (53; “The cueca is a virile, decisive, and headstrong dance. The huaso, the man that dances it, advances with courage. The female partner should be coquettish and know how to defend herself from the easy conquest that the macho expects and seeks out”). In declaring the cueca the country’s national dance, the military government aimed to cement the status of the dance as a unifying symbol of nationhood across social classes. The cueca’s perceived emphasis on traditional gender roles and appeals to a shared sense of *mestizo* history made it a useful vehicle for the government’s conservative ideology.<sup>310</sup> In incorporating this declaration of cueca as the country’s national dance, *Tony Manero* draws attention to the regime’s focus on traditional culture and values. However, the reference to the cueca also underscores the symbolic connections between dance and the nation.

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<sup>309</sup> For more on the *huaso* and the *roto* see Loveman (42-43).

<sup>310</sup> The Air Force officer’s widow refers to the *mestizo* identity of many Chileans when referencing Pinochet’s eye color: “Did you know that General Pinochet has blue eyes? . . . Strange! With so many Mapuche Indians. It’s strange” (10:30-10:44).

In *Tony Manero*, Raúl embraces disco and *Saturday Night Fever*, while literally and symbolically rejecting the cueca, a dance which embodies ideals of tradition, purity, and national pride espoused by the military junta. Raúl's violent bludgeoning of the Air Force officer's widow as the news report about the proclamation of the cueca as the country's national dance plays on the TV represents a symbolic rejection of the newly decreed national dance. Just before Raúl bludgeons the woman, Pinochet appears on the television dressed as a *huaso*. The leader of the junta remarks on "la sangre generosamente derramada de sus hijos" (10:51-10:54; "the blood generously spilled by her children") on behalf of the nation. Juxtaposed with Raúl's violent act, Pinochet's statement acquires an ironic significance. "The blood generously spilled" by the Air Force officer's widow is not a sacrifice for the nation, but a means of enabling Raúl's efforts to recreate the multicolored dancefloor of *Saturday Night Fever*'s 2001 Odyssey discotheque. The final shot of the scene in the widow's house similarly underscores the connection between the television, cueca, and disco. The scene concludes with a point-of-view close-up shot of the television set. A news report about a marathon in Santiago plays on the screen. In the next shot, the camera cuts (12:23) to a shot of Raúl holding the stolen television close to his head as he carries it down the sidewalk back to the boardinghouse. This match cut underscores the connection between Raúl, the screen, and the television set. In highlighting these relationships, this match cut ironically highlights the television's spatial placement in the background of the scene at the Air Force officer widow's house. The television is not just a piece of furniture or background noise; rather the device is key to Raúl's efforts to transform himself into Tony Manero. He trades the TV for glass tiles to create a replica of the floor of the 2001 Odyssey and at the end of the film he himself appears on television in the lookalike contest. This violent robbery and the subsequent transaction between the Romanian and Raúl represent a literal and

metaphorical displacement of the national cueca in favor of the global and foreign phenomena of disco.



*Match cut: the runners*

Another significant marker of the historical period in the film with symbolic resonance is an oblique reference to the Beagle Channel Dispute during the El Festival de la Una program at the end of the film (seg. 46a).<sup>311</sup> El Festival de la Una was a television variety show which aired between 1978 and 1988 on Televisión Nacional, Chile's public television channel.<sup>312</sup> In an act of metafictional casting, the host of the show, Enrique Maluenda, plays himself.<sup>313</sup> Maluenda makes reference to the Beagle Channel Dispute while Raúl looks on from backstage. Framed in a long shot over Raúl's shoulder, Maluenda stands next to his model companion just in front of the

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<sup>311</sup> Alex Bowen's film *Mi mejor enemigo* (2005) portrays Argentine and Chilean soldiers as they face off at the height of the Beagle Channel Dispute in late 1978.

<sup>312</sup> See *El Mercurio*, "El festival de la una celebra en grande" los 30 años de su primera emisión."

<sup>313</sup> In a 2009 interview Larraín describes his decision to cast Maluenda: "Nosotros pudimos recrear ese programa, que se llamaba Festival de la Una, emitido desde 1978 al 88. Salía al aire de una 13 a 15hs. Se lo denominaba el estelar del mediodía. Era un programa de la televisión pública fantástico, que operaba como una herramienta propagandística en la que se mostraba un país progresista y alegre, mientras que lo que sucedía en la calle era terrible. Entonces logramos contactar a Enrique Maluenda, emblema de aquella televisión que lleva 20 años fuera de la televisión, y él se animó a participar en el film y se reconstruyó tal cual aquel programa. Y aunque los espectadores extranjeros no lo sepan, es muy importante, pues ésa era exactamente la vibra y la experiencia que tocaban" ("Bailando por una pesadilla"; "We could recreate this program called Festival de la Una, broadcast from 1978 to 88. It aired between 1 and 3 p.m. It was called the prime time of midday. It was a fantastic public television program, that operated as a propaganda tool in which they showed a progressive and happy country, while what was happening in the streets was terrible. Then we were able to contact Enrique Maluenda, emblem of that kind of television who had been off screen for 20 years, and he decided to participate in the film and to reconstruct the show as it was. And although the foreign viewers don't know it, it is very important, because that was exactly the vibe and the experience that was playing"). In *No*, President Patricio Aylwin and other notable cultural figures from the "No" campaign play their younger selves.

audience. After wrapping his arm around her, the host says: “Dear, I have something important to tell you. Last year, we almost went to war against Argentina because of a diplomatic incident. Luckily, everything is OK now. To express our wish for peace, we’ve hired Vanessa, a beautiful Argentinean model!” (1:25:26-1:25:45). The “diplomatic incident” Maluenda refers to is the Beagle Channel Dispute, a long-running conflict between Chile and Argentina over an area in Southern Patagonia encompassing the 125-mile long Beagle Channel.<sup>314</sup> The dispute centered on an 1881 treaty, which granted all territory south of the channel to Chile. James Garrett notes that “Although the treaty’s terms were unambiguous, the two nations did not agree on the exact position of the channel and thus disagreed on which territory was ‘south’” (82). Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries the territorial dispute remained a source of conflict in the countries’ diplomatic relations. In May 1977, following a protracted international legal battle, a British arbitration committee granted three contested islands to Chile. Argentina rejected the arbitration decision, and tensions between the two South American countries quickly escalated. After Argentina moved military forces into the area of the Beagle Channel on December 9, 1978, Pope John Paul II intervened to stave off war. On December 11, 1978, the Pope “sent a personal note to both presidents requesting a peaceful resolution of the problem” (Garrett 96). The Act of Montevideo, signed by Chile and Argentina in early 1979, established both countries’ commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Chile and Argentina formally settled the dispute on May 2, 1985, with a treaty that established their territorial boundaries in and around the channel.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Garrett offers the following description of the Beagle Channel’s geography: “The 125-mile long Beagle Channel, named after the ship which took Charles Darwin through the waterway in the 1830s, both links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and separates Tierra del Fuego from the small islands that dot the way south to Cape Horn” (82).

<sup>315</sup> The May 2, 1985 treaty was preceded by a nation-wide plebiscite on the issue in Argentina on November 25, 1984. The treaty also codified each country’s maritime rights in the channel.



*The diplomatic incident*

The reference to Beagle Channel Dispute within the film opens a window onto the regional and geopolitical history of the time period—particularly the tension between the military governments of Chile and Argentina amid the Cold War. Moreover, the reference to this long-running conflict mirrors the conflict between Raúl and Goyo. This dispute between two neighboring countries with interwoven history and cultural traditions parallels the internecine strife between the two John Travolta wannabees. Like the conflict between Chile and Argentina, Raúl and Goyo work, dance, and share affections for Pauli. Their conflict boils over when Raúl learns that Goyo also plans to compete in the televised Tony Manero lookalike competition. As in the Beagle Channel Dispute, an outside force intervenes in the dispute between Raúl and Goyo. However, in this case it is the secret police, not the Pope, who put an end to the conflict. The CNI invoke the power of the state and detain Goyo, forcefully ending the dispute between the two men. Finally, like the earlier allusion to the cueca in the film, the reference to the Beagle Channel Dispute—with its implications of national sovereignty and national pride—just prior to the dance contest underscores the connection between dance and the nation.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Pinochet argued that the balance of power on the international stage favored nations which projected power: “however much one wants to think of law as an equalizing element among categories of nations, one always confronts the hard reality that the strongest country . . . has an advantage in the litigation of frontiers” (Pinochet qtd. Garrett 84).

Like the allusions to the cueca and the Beagle Channel Dispute, the representation of Raúl's family—his cohorts in the boardinghouse—epitomizes the film's allegorical representation of the nation. The integrity and purity of the Chilean family, both as a nation and the individual family unit, was a central concern of the junta. Loveman highlights two government documents which underscore the military government's conception of the family as the building block of Chilean society: the 1975 report *Objetivo Nacional del Gobierno de Chile* (*National Objective of the Government of Chile*) and the Constitution of 1980. In the 1975 report "the junta declared that a new political system would require 'formation of new generations steeped in the concept of love of God, the Fatherland and the family'" (qtd. Loveman 313). The Constitution of 1980 "explicitly emphasized the role of the patriarchal family as the basic unit of a hierarchically organized society" (343). *Tony Manero* portrays Raúl and his cohorts at the boardinghouse and restaurant as a non-traditional family, who exist in an ambivalent relationship to the junta's idealized family. In this vein, the film presents an ambiguous portrait of the relationships between characters. For instance, the exact nature of Raúl's relationship to young Tomás (Nicolás Mosso) is unclear. However, viewers may infer from Raúl's efforts to help him fashion a disco ball out of a soccer ball and a mirror (seg. 26) and Wilma's suggestion that she, Tomás, and Raúl "leave this place" (46:54-46:57), that Tomás is the pair's child. The ambiguous composition of this family is not wholly unique; rather Raúl's family constitutes a fluid version of *compadrazgo*, a form of "fictive kinship" that is a defining feature of social relations in Chile (Loveman 159).

Though fractious and flawed, this makeshift family is united around a stage adaptation of *Saturday Night Fever*. The lack of a clear separation between work and personal life in the boardinghouse-cum-restaurant underscores the centrality of the performance for the protagonist's

family. For Raúl and his fellow performers, Badham’s transnational film serves as an object and means of common conversation, as well as an artistic model. Their collective engagement with *Saturday Night Fever* constitutes cinephilic *compadrazgo*. In addition to its cosmopolitan nature, the revue show is a display of solidarity amid an oppressive political environment. Just before they step on stage for their performance, Goyo, surrounded by the rest of the troupe just off to the side of the stage, acknowledges their mutual obligations: “We’re going on stage and we’re going to dance better than ever. Like a real family. United. Because today, life is giving us a chance. A chance to stand out” (1:04:27-1:04:42). Although Cony reacts impatiently to Goyo’s uplifting speech—“Shut up, Goyo! You sound like a priest!” (1:04:42-1:04:46)—, their performance is a show of unity, in which they momentarily transcend their rivalries and divisions.



*Goyo’s pep talk*

The military junta also promoted culture as a unifying force. In a 1975 report titled *Política cultural de Chile (Cultural Policy of Chile)*, the regime lays out its embrace of culture as a unifying force: “La cultura es un elemento indispensable del desarrollo social y es necesario entenderla no sólo como expresión de la creación artística, sino como elemento condicionante de la convivencia social de los individuos” (74; “Culture is an indispensable element of social development and it is necessary to understand it not only as an expression of artistic creation, but also as a conditioning element of the coexistence of individuals”). For the junta, national culture

was a means of establishing a cohesive nation. The report observes that no one is better at exporting culture than the Americans: “La expansión económica y cultural de los Estados Unidos de América ha sido posible gracias a la previa y exitosa campaña que hiciera en el mundo para imponer el ‘American Way of Life’” (18; “The economic and cultural expansion of the United States of America has been possible thanks to the previous and successful campaign that they staged across the world to impose the ‘American Way of Life’”). A fundamental irony of *Tony Manero*, amid its depiction of a society and government fixated on national identity, is that Badham’s film, not a Chilean cultural production, unifies the inhabitants of the boarding house. However, as Raúl’s escape over the roof reveals, this makeshift family is fragile.

Despite the unorthodox nature of Raúl’s family, his own role within the household mirrors the authoritarianism of Chilean leaders like Diego Portales, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, and Augusto Pinochet (Arrué 150). Although the violent, temperamental behavior of Raúl contrasts with the benevolent paternalism of Gastón’s father in *Se arrienda*, both characters embody a similar power dynamic of male authority. In his review of *Tony Manero*, James Hoberman describes Raúl as “a miniature Pinochet—reproducing the brutality of the state in his willingness to steal, exploit, betray, and kill in the service of a fantasy” (“Larraín’s Tony Manero Turns Fantasies to Nightmares”). In addition to employing violence as an entrepreneurial means of facilitating his transformation into Tony Manero, Raúl also employs a more personal and misogynistic form of violence motivated by a desire for control.

Within the boardinghouse, Raúl employs violence to assert and maintain his authority over the inhabitants. Mariana Johnson argues that Raúl utilizes violence as a means of asserting his control over his fellow family members, and in particular, the women with whom he cohabitates (204). Raúl’s emotional and physical assault on Cony, whom he assaults during sex



(seg. 16), exemplify his tyrannical relationship to the female inhabitants. His lack of reciprocity during sex similarly reflects the limits of his interest in and empathy for the women in the house (he receives oral sex with Cony (seg. 16) and engages in mutual masturbation with Pauli (seg. 37)). Likewise, the incestuous nature of his relationships with Cony and her daughter Pauli reflects the insidious and fluid nature of his power within the household. Leah Kemp maintains that Raúl's "disfunción sexual" ("sexual dysfunction") epitomizes the film's representation of "disfuncionalidad social" ("La amoralidad del individualismo" 218; "social dysfunction").

Alongside Raúl's violent relationship with the women in the household, the protagonist maintains a contentious relationship with his younger, politically-active male counterpart Goyo. Like Raúl, Goyo aspires to be named the Chilean Tony Manero. Raúl's efforts to thwart his younger competitor culminate in a deliberate and symbolic act of sabotage—defecating on Goyo's white suit (seg. 41)—that exemplifies his desire to assert his supremacy within the household. Goyo, who devises his own choreography for the revue show with Pauli, which Raúl subsequently rejects (seg. 28), challenges Raúl's sexual and creative control.

The intersection between Raúl's entrepreneurial violence and his use of violence as a means of control within the household intersect through the glass tiles. The protagonist uses violence to acquire the glass tiles for the stage and thereby facilitate the realization of the revue show (Raúl also requisitions some of them for a personal stage in his room). Raúl's bloody acquisition of the glass tiles exemplifies the ambiguous nature of violence in the film. Obtaining the glass tiles serves both the protagonist's interests and the family's collaborative artistic endeavor. Kemp argues that *Tony Manero* depicts Raúl as a criminal and situates the film within a cinematic tradition that "asoci[a] la amoralidad con la falta de participación en la vida colectiva" ("La amoralidad del individualismo" 217; "associates amorality with the lack of

participation in collective life”).<sup>317</sup> However, Raúl does participate in the household’s collective life as set designer, choreographer, director, and producer. The one condition his troupe must abide by is to never question their boss.



*Sex, destruction, and power*

Just as Raúl’s authoritarian relationship to his family mirrors the military dictatorship, his myopic cinephilia also parallels the repressive environment of 1979 Chile.<sup>318</sup> Whereas cinephilia embodies the cosmopolitanism’s emphasis on “openness” (Hannerz 29) and its practice via “common conversations” (Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* 258), Tony’s narrow fixation on

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<sup>317</sup> Kemp maintains that *Tony Manero* exists in dialogue with three earlier Chilean films: Littin’s *El chacal de Nahueltoro* (1970), Justiniano’s *Caluga o menta* (1990) and Graef Marino’s *Johnny Cien Pesos* (1993). She notes that these films “han usado la figura del criminal para indagar temas relacionados con la ciudadanía” (209; “have used the figure of the criminal to delve into themes related to citizenship”).

<sup>318</sup> Wesley Costa de Moraes posits a parallel between Raúl’s behavior and the dictatorship: “Se puede concluir que el objetivo de Larraín, sin embargo, es establecer otro nivel de semejanzas: de este juego de apariencias con la ideología de la dictadura chilena, de la conducta criminal de Raúl con la violencia del régimen, del Tony Manero imitado con el imperialismo económico y cultural del Norte global desarrollado” (122; “One could conclude that Larraín’s objective, however, is to establish another level of similarities: between this play of appearances with the ideology of the Chilean dictatorship, an imitated Tony Manero with economic imperialism and the culture of the global developed North).

*Saturday Night Fever* represents an ironic and paradoxical manifestation of cosmopolitanism and cinephilia. Although Raúl's relationship with Badham's film reflects an intense kind of cinematic love, his embrace of *Saturday Night Fever* at the exclusion of others represents an inversion of the ideals of cosmopolitanism. Raúl's narrow cinephilia manifests itself in his desire on recreating Tony's character and replicating sequences from the film with obsessive detail (he fixates on the question of the number of buttons on Tony's pants, for instance), and resorting to subterfuge and violence to win the lookalike competition. His efforts to embody Tony Manero likewise represent an analogue to cinematic creation. His visits to the cinema (segs. 4, 18, and 37) underscore the inward-looking nature of his cinephilia. In an empty theater, he imitates the dialogue from *Saturday Night Fever* (segs. 4 and 18), engaging in an interior monologue with himself. And when *Grease* replaces *Saturday Night Fever* (seg. 27), Raúl enters into a murderous rage, unwilling to accept its disappearance from the marquee.

In addition to Raúl's repeat viewings of *Saturday Night Fever*, *Tony Manero* manifests the constrained qualities of the protagonist's cinephilia through its use of a handheld camera and muddy color palette. Nike Jung notes that the film's cinematography reflects Raúl's fevered mental state and tunnel vision: "The camera focuses almost entirely on Raúl; his face and body fill the frame in a claustrophobic way, conveying the lack of a community as well as suggesting his diminished range of perception" (122-23). Raúl's constricted cinephilia and diminished range of perception parallel the dictatorship inasmuch as they are based in paranoia (evident in his relationship with Goyo), the strict maintenance of control (exemplified by his authoritarian role in the household), and a rejection of uncontrollable foreign influences (reflected in his violent response to *Grease*). However, the connection between Raúl's cinephilia and the dictatorship is undermined by the lengths he goes to realize his artistic ambition. Raúl's decision to abandon the

boardinghouse after the detention of his housemates (seg. 43), though cowardly, is also an act of resistance. Raúl pursues his dream of stardom at all costs.

#### 4.2. Tony Manero and Raúl Peralta: Working-Class Artists and Cinephiles

*Tony Manero* engages in a self-reflexive dialogue with *Saturday Night Fever*.<sup>319</sup> Larraín describes the relationship between these two films as “an intertwined game” (“Director’s Intention”). I dispute Paola Ibarra’s assertion that “Raúl’s cultural identity appropriation symbolizes a form of involuntary complicity with the United States and, thus, with the oppressive regime” (74). Rather, the protagonist’s fixation with his counterpart in *Saturday Night Fever* reflects his conception of himself as a working-class artist. Some of the connections to Badham’s film are explicit, like the inclusion of segments from *Saturday Night Fever* during two of Raúl’s visits to the cinema (segs. 4 and 18), and the *Saturday Night Fever* film reels, which Raúl steals from the theater (seg. 27d). The other references to Badham’s film include the title *Tony Manero*, the revue show, the glass-tiled floor, Raúl’s costume, and the televised lookalike dance contest. Through the incorporation of *Saturday Night Fever* into its narrative, *Tony*

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<sup>319</sup> In a 2009 interview Larraín tells of sending Travolta a copy of the film to secure the rights to use *Saturday Night Fever*. According to Larraín, Travolta agreed to grant him the rights for a minimal cost and also congratulated him on the film: “Así fue que le mandamos la película y Travolta nos envió una carta en la que expresaba que le había gustado, que nos felicitaba, sin hacer comentarios estilísticos sobre la película. Más tarde fui a Los Ángeles, pues existía la posibilidad que nos encontráramos, en parte, para apoyar a la película en esa extraña campaña de los Oscar, pues así se propuso en Chile y lo más absurdo es que sabemos que casi quedamos nominados. Pero en ese momento, justo se murió el hijo de Travolta, y eso impidió el encuentro. Travolta vio la película e hizo buenos comentarios. Nos cobró el mínimo que se cobra en estos casos, 600 dólares. Estaba muy contento de haber inspirado una película. Eso fue lo que él decía en su carta, lo que no respondí, pues no es exactamente así. Yo no diría que él nos inspiró a hacer la película. Pero que él lo crea me pareció notable” (“Bailando por una pesadilla”; “So we sent him the movie and Travolta sent us a letter in which he said the he liked it, that he congratulated us, without making stylistic commentaries on the movie. Later I went to Los Angeles, and since there was the possibility that we would meet each other, in part, to support the movie in that weird Oscar campaign, since that’s what was proposed in Chile and the most absurd thing is that we know that we were almost nominated. But in that moment, the Travolta’s son just died and that impeded the meeting. Travolta saw the movie and offered positive comments. He charged us the minimum amount that they charge in these cases, 600 dollars. He was happy to have inspired the movie. That’s what he said in his letter, which I did not respond to, since it wasn’t exactly like that. I wouldn’t say that he inspired us to make the movie. But the fact that he thinks that seems notable to me”).

*Manero* appeals to a cinephile audience and underscores its porous qualities. Moreover, both films incorporate elements of the movie musical, particularly an emphasis on performance, while incorporating genre elements outside of the musical genre. Additionally, the juxtaposition of Raúl with John Travolta's character Tony Manero exemplifies the close relationship between the two films. Both Tony and Raúl are working-class, city-dwelling cinephiles who embrace disco as a means of artistic expression and socio-economic mobility. Taking into account the similarities between these two characters, I argue that the intensity of Raúl's cinephilic relationship with Tony Manero is not just the result of admiration for Tony's talent on the dancefloor; Raúl sees himself reflected in the disco-loving, working-class adolescent from New York City.

*Saturday Night Fever* centers on the character of Tony Manero, a working-class Italian-American youth from Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Norman Wexler adapted the film's screenplay from an essay by Nik Cohn published in the June 7, 1976 issue of *New York* magazine. Cohn's piece, "Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night," portrays the lives of a group of working-class Italian-American youths in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, who call themselves "the Faces" as they dance, fight, and chase women.<sup>320</sup> Years later, Cohn admitted that the essay was a work of fiction.<sup>321</sup> The plot

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<sup>320</sup> In the article, Cohn describes the Faces as self-anointed practitioners of street-wise cool: "Faces. According to Vincent himself, they were simply the elite. All over Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, even as far away as New Jersey, spread across America, there were millions and millions of kids who were nothing special. Just kids. Zombies. Professional dummies, going through the motions, following like sheep. School, jobs, routines. A vast faceless blob. And then there were the Faces. The Vincents and Eugenes and Joeys. A tiny minority, maybe two in every hundred, who knew how to dress and how to move, how to float, how to fly. Sharpness, grace, a certain distinction in every gesture. And some strange instinct for rightness, beyond words, deep down in their blood: 'The way I feel,' Vincent said, 'it's like we have been chosen.'"

<sup>321</sup> "Tribal Rites" opens with the disclaimer: "*Everything described in this article is factual and was either witnessed by me or told to me directly by the people involved. Only the names of the main characters have been changed*" (author's emphasis). In an article published in 2011 in *The New York Times Magazine*, Mark Rozzo describes the genesis of Cohn's piece and its impact on its author: "Vincent and his Bay Ridge posse were composites, based on the mods he knew in London a decade before. Cohn—who appears in the article as a shadowy figure in a tweed suit—never did spend much time at the 2001 Odyssey disco. That 'Saturday Night' struck a deep nerve was not particularly comforting to its creator. 'I found it very difficult to function,' he says of the aftermath, not overjoyed to be talking about it. 'I completely lost my way and had enormous self-contempt. It knocked me off my trolley, and my trolley has never been the solidest base in the universe'" ("Nik Cohn's Fever Dream").

of Badham's cinematographic adaptation largely hews to Cohen's 1976 article. The film follows Tony as he prepares for a dance competition at the 2001 Odyssey disco. Tony lives at home with his disabled and violent father and religious mother. He spends his weekdays working in a hardware store. On the weekend he goes out disco dancing with his friends at the 2001 Odyssey discotheque. At the club, Tony meets Stephanie (Karen Lynn Gorney), an independent, lower-middle-class woman who lives in Manhattan and works as a secretary. Although Stephanie rebuffs Tony's sexual advances, including an attempted rape, the two agree to become dance partners. The film climaxes with the dance competition at 2001 Odyssey in which Tony and Stephanie win first prize. However, Tony refuses to accept the award, and instead gives it to a Puerto Rican couple who he says are more deserving. Following the death of his friend Bobby, Tony travels to Stephanie's apartment in Manhattan. The film ends with the protagonist asking Stephanie to be his friend and he vows not to return to Brooklyn.

Badham's film was a global phenomenon upon its release in 1977. During its initial run, the film grossed ninety-four million dollars at the U.S. box-office and 142 million dollars outside of the U.S. (Box Office Mojo, "Saturday Night Fever (1977)").<sup>322</sup> Travolta was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor for his role. The film's best-selling soundtrack, featuring original music by the Bee Gees, was key to its commercial success and enduring legacy.<sup>323</sup> Alice Echols highlights the film's transnational nature: "*Saturday Night Fever* tells an American story, but from its inception the movie was a transatlantic undertaking. Its cast of characters included British writer Nik Cohn, Australian-born London-based music impresario Robert Stigwood, and his clients the Gibb brothers, who were born in Britain and raised in Australia" (159). The film's

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<sup>322</sup> Badham's film spawned the less commercially-successful sequel *Staying Alive* (1983), which was directed by Sylvester Stallone.

<sup>323</sup> The Bee Gees were comprised of brothers Barry, Robin, and Maurice Gibb.

setting in New York City, which is depicted as a culturally diverse, though segregated city, augments its cosmopolitan qualities. Although Raúl may not be familiar with the details of the production of *Saturday Night Fever*, he underscores its cosmopolitan and transnational qualities when, in his response to the Romanian's question about whether there is "Chilean music in the show," Raúl says: "No, it's international" (56:46-56:54).

*Saturday Night Fever's* incorporation of disco culture, from its soundtrack to settings like *Odyssey 2001*, is an integral part of its cosmopolitan character. Echols describes disco as a global phenomenon: "Promiscuous and omnivorous, disco absorbed sounds and styles from all over, and in the process accelerated the transnational flow of musical ideas and idioms" (xxiv). African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Italian Americans like Tony all grace the dance floors of *2001 Odyssey*, although the communal atmosphere of the club does not preclude Travolta's character from claiming the dance floor to himself. This cosmopolitan music and the diverse crowd it attracts at the discotheque contrast with Tony's traditional family life and his limited means of economic and social mobility.

Critics are divided on *Saturday Night Fever's* representation of race and sexuality. Whereas Echols calls the movie "unambiguously antiracist" (191), Marshall Crenshaw critiques the film's depiction of race: "*Saturday Night Fever* gave white, straight America a visual guide" (196-97). Although the cast is predominantly white, *Saturday Night Fever* does allude to disco's association with gay, black, and Latino club culture, most notably via Monti Rock III, who plays the deejay at *2001 Odyssey*, and the choreographer Lester Wilson, who created Travolta's dance sequences (Echols 191-93).<sup>324</sup> Although the racial and social contexts of the United States in the late 1970s mark *Saturday Night Fever* and should inform a critical analysis of the film, these

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<sup>324</sup> For more on the origins of disco and its links to black, gay, and Latino culture see Echols (1-70).

facets of the film are not central to the experience of a viewer like Raúl. As we shall see, for the protagonist of *Tony Manero*, the appeal of Travolta's character lies in his working-class identity, his entrepreneurial ambition, and his skills as dancer.

*Saturday Night Fever*'s incorporation of disco culture encompasses music, choreography, and a key setting of the film, the 2001 Odyssey discotheque. Despite the lack of singing in the film, many critics correctly label Badham's film a movie musical.<sup>325</sup> At the core of the movie musical is an emphasis on musical performance, typically both singing and dancing, as both a narrative device and a central feature of characters' identities. Notwithstanding the centrality of music and dance in the film, *Saturday Night Fever* has an ambiguous relationship to the movie musical genre. Timothy Scheurer calls the movie musical "a highly stylized representation of life where the reality is not revealed through the actions we normally associate with everyday living, but where a different mode of reality, the inner reality of feelings, emotions, and instincts are given metaphoric and symbolic expression through the means of music and dance. The musical is not so much a reflection of life as it is an *interpretation* of life" (308; author's emphasis). The juxtaposition between reality and what Scheurer calls "the inner reality of feelings" is a common trope of the conventional movie musical. However, non-conventional musicals like *Saturday Night Fever* eschew the incorporation of two parallel, distinctive narrative modes and levels, and instead depict performance within a single, unitary narrative plane.

*Saturday Night Fever* differs in significant ways from conventional movie musicals like Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise's *West Side Story* (1961). *Saturday Night Fever* shares much in common with Robbins and Wise's film, including their settings in a racially divided New York,

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<sup>325</sup> See Jordan, "Gender and Class Mobility in *Saturday Night Fever* and *Flashdance*"; Yanc, "More Than a Woman": Music, Masculinity and Male Spectacle in *Saturday Night Fever* and *Staying Alive*"; and Telotte, "A Sober Celebration."



their depiction of ambitious working-class protagonists, and their opening aerial shots of New York City. However, unlike *West Side Story*, Badham's film does not feature the "dual-focus narrative" of traditional Hollywood musicals (Altman, *The American Film Musical* 16). Instead of alternating its focus between two lovers, as occurs with the representation of Maria (Natalie Wood) and Tony (Richard Beymer) in *West Side Story*, *Saturday Night Fever* maintains its focus on Travolta's character. Although the relationship between Stephanie and Tony is core to the film's plot, their relationship is not presented via the archetypal boy-meets-girl plot that culminates in a monogamous romantic relationship.<sup>326</sup>

Another difference between *West Side Story* and *Saturday Night Fever* is the way in which the two films depict musical performance (singing and dancing) within their narratives. *West Side Story* features two narrative modes: a realist narrative mode (reflected in the use of dialogue) and "the expressive" narrative mode (exemplified by the use of song and dance) (Telotte 3). The sequences of song and dance in *West Side Story* epitomize the conventional musical's "highly stylized representation of life" (Scherurer 308). In *Saturday Night Fever*, performance coexists within the same narrative mode as the rest of the film and is delineated spatially via the setting of the 2001 Odyssey disco and the dance studio.<sup>327</sup> J.P. Telotte argues that by "clearly demarcating" (3) music and dance within a single narrative plane, musicals like *Saturday Night Fever* "do admit that there is a 'place' for song and dance in our lives, but by underscoring the limited potential of music, they also affirm that we can no longer withdraw

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<sup>326</sup> Before the dance contest, Tony attempts to rape Stephanie. Later he seeks her forgiveness and they participate in the contest together. The film ends with Tony asking Stephanie if he can be her friend.

<sup>327</sup> Telotte describes *Tony Manero* as part of a new generation of musicals released in the late 1970s: "Movies like *American Hot Wax*, *The Buddy Holly Story*, *Saturday Night Fever*, and *The Last Waltz* are pointedly *about* the role of music and dance in our lives, yet they obviously treat these expressive elements, the very staples of the musical as well as a primary source of their attraction, with a very detached air. Here the expressive is clearly demarcated from the main narrative, even while realistically arising from it. In fact, any songs and dances these films contain are usually identified as performances, bound by the natural limitations which normally attend such formal presentations" (3; author's emphasis).

from the real world to fully immerse ourselves in that expressive one” (6). While dance is an essential part of Tony’s identity, does not pervade every aspect of his world, nor is dance the only means through which Tony communicates his feelings and thoughts. Tony’s conversations with Stephanie, in which he reveals his aspirations and doubts, provides a counterpoint to his confident strutting on the disco floor.

Although *Saturday Night Fever* and *Tony Manero* are two very different kinds of films—Badham’s is a Hollywood movie musical set in Brooklyn, while Larraín’s is a Chilean art film set during the Pinochet dictatorship—both films share a porous and self-reflexive relationship with the movie musical and each other. *Tony Manero* mirrors *Saturday Night Fever*’s ambivalent relationship to the movie musical through its incorporation of elements outside of the traditional boundaries of the genre. Larraín’s film incorporates two of the features *Saturday Night Fever* which exist outside of the traditional movie musical, namely its singular narrative focus on one protagonist and its depiction of performance within its unitary realist narrative mode, rather than comprising a separate expressive narrative mode. By utilizing these non-conventional generic qualities, *Tony Manero* underscores its porous nature and its connection to *Saturday Night Fever*.

*Tony Manero* is not the first Chilean film to depict a character who dedicates himself to imitating a Hollywood movie star. Carlos Flores del Pino’s 1984 documentary *Idénticamente igual (el Charles Bronson Chileno) (Exactly the Same (The Chilean Charles Bronson))*<sup>328</sup> follows Fenelón Guajardo López, a man who, as the title suggests, looks very much like the Hollywood action star Charles Bronson.<sup>329</sup> Guajardo gained modest fame as the winner of the “Igualito a . . .” lookalike contest on the long-running television variety show *Sábado Gigante* in

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<sup>328</sup> Carlos Flores is listed in the “Agradecimientos” (“Acknowledgments”) in *Tony Manero*’s end credits.

<sup>329</sup> Guajardo López passed away in 2013. See Soto, “El Charles Bronson Chileno (o Idénticamente igual), de Carlos Flores”; *Radio Cooperativa*, “Charles Bronson chileno: ‘Creía que yo iba a morir primero’”; and *La Cuarta*, “Falleció el Charles Bronson Chileno.”

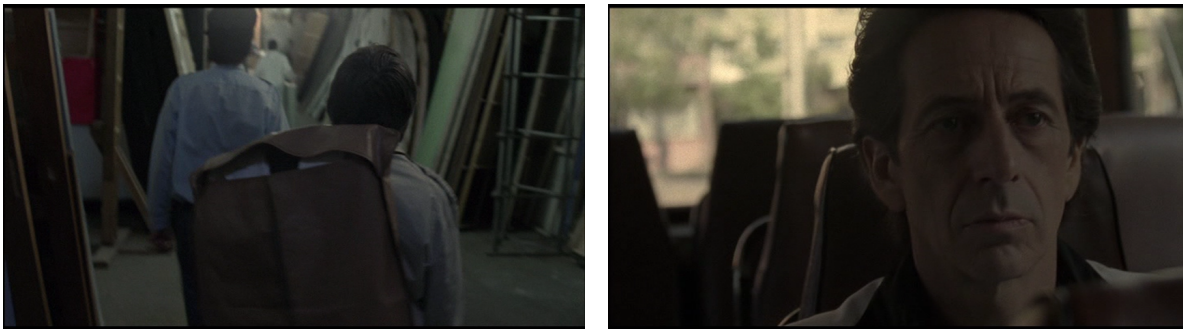
1975.<sup>330</sup> In the film, Guajardo recounts his peripatetic life and interacts with Santiaguinos on the street and outside of a cinema. The film's final sequence is a metacinematic experiment in which Guajardo directs his own short film about a brawl in a Western movie-style saloon. Jacqueline Mousesca observes that Flores's film documents a larger sociocultural phenomenon: "*El Charles Bronson* (1984) es un largometraje construido alrededor de un tema que inquieta obsesivamente a su realizador: 'la manía chilena de la copia, de querer ser "parecido a", tic sociocultural siempre de moda', y que Flores desarrolla a partir de la encuesta realizada con un chileno que es la réplica física bastante exacta del actor norteamericano" (qtd. Mousesca 167-68; "*El Charles Bronson* (1984) is a feature film constructed around a theme that obsessively troubles its creators: 'the Chilean mania of the copy, of wanting to "look like," sociocultural tic that's always in fashion,' and which Flores develops via an interview with the Chilean who is the very exact physical copy of the North American actor"). This "mania" for imitation and fixation also forms the basis of *Tony Manero*. Like Guajardo, Raúl's identity is bound up with his Hollywood idol.

Like *Saturday Night Fever*, Larraín's film presents a singular focus on its protagonist, rather than dividing the film into multiple narrative strands. Raúl appears in every scene of the film, while shots of Raúl, a tracking medium-shot from behind the character as he enters the television studio and frontal close-up of the protagonist sitting on the bus, bookend the film. The cinematography by Sergio Armstrong, a frequent collaborator of Larraín and Sebastián Silva, emphasizes the film's focus on Raúl. The film is largely comprised of hand-held tracking shots.

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<sup>330</sup> The host of *Sábado Gigante* (*Giant Saturday*), Don Francisco, is a cultural icon in Chile and Latin America. Don Francisco is the stage name of Mario Kreutzberger. The son of German Jewish parents, Kreutzberger hosted *Sábado Gigante* for fifty-three years, from August 1962 until September 2015. He moved the show's taping from Santiago to Miami in 1986. In 1978, he hosted his first telethon for disabled children, a tradition which continues to the present. Alberto Fuguet recalls Don Francisco and *Sábado Gigante* fondly: "Don Francisco represents a kinder, gentler time, even though those were the worst years, the Pinochet years. His show was a family thing that everyone watched, because on Saturday there was only his show. He was the local icon, the guy who invented pop culture and gave what you discussed around the water cooler on Monday morning" (Rohter, "For 100 Million, He Is Saturday Night").

Jonathan Romney observes that the film's cinematography complements the plot's focus on Raúl: "Larraín and DoP Sergio Armstrong maintain a tone of claustrophobic realism through the use of grainy stock and muddy hues. The shooting style . . . echoes the Dardenne brothers, with the camera hanging close on Raúl, capturing his nervy physical presence while his features remain impassive" ("Staying alive"). This "claustrophobic realism" produced by the film's cinematography also underscores Raúl's myopic cinephilia.



*Shots of Raúl bookend the film*

*Tony Manero*, like *Saturday Night Fever*, depicts performance as part of the film's reality-based narrative world situated, rather than a separate but parallel expressive mode, exemplified by the song and dance sequences in *West Side Story*. Raúl's desire to emulate Tony Manero may be extreme, but it is unremarkable in a place where look-alike contests air on the television and the local cinema shows *Saturday Night Fever*. Just as *Saturday Night Fever* portrays Tony's love of disco as a passion shared by his friends and others at the 2001 Odyssey, Larraín's film depicts Raúl's obsession with Tony Manero as a mania shared by others in 1979 Chile. However, a key point of departure from *Saturday Night Fever* is the way in which *Tony Manero* blurs the boundaries of performance. Raúl's performances before audiences (the revue show and the televised dance contest) and his actions outside of the stage, like defecating on Goyo's suit and his visits to *Saturday Night Fever* at the cinema, are all part of his efforts to emulate his on-screen idol. As Raúl tells the host of Festival de la Una, "this"—becoming Tony

Manero—is his life (1:28:17). Although the extent and nature of performance differs in both films, Tony and Raúl each experience the limitations of performance as a means of social mobility and respectability. Despite Raúl’s best efforts to emulate Tony Manero, he only attains second place in the televised dance contest.



*Raúl claims second place*

One episode encapsulates *Tony Manero*’s self-reflexive and ambivalent relationship to the genre of the movie musical: Raúl’s violent response to *Saturday Night Fever*’s replacement by *Grease* (1978) at the neighborhood cinema. *Grease*, directed by Randal Kleiser and starring Travolta, is a conventional movie musical, more akin to *West Side Story* than *Saturday Night Fever*. *Grease* features a dual-focus narrative, epitomized by its depiction of the romance between Travolta’s rebellious Danny and Sandy (Olivia Newton-John), an Australian immigrant new to Rydell High School. *Grease* utilizes a stylized expressive mode of song and dance sequence that exist alongside a melodramatic, non-expressive narrative mode. Raúl’s visceral rejection of *Grease*, which culminates in his assault on the theater’s projectionist, exemplifies *Tony Manero*’s ambivalent and self-reflexive relationship to the movie musical (seg. 27). Additionally, the contrast between the protagonist’s obsession with *Saturday Night Fever* and his anger when it is replaced by *Grease*, epitomizes *Tony Manero*’s self-reflexive engagement with the movie musical genre. Although *Tony Manero* is not a movie musical, Larraín’s film shares the genre’s focus on performance. Moreover, consistent with its porous qualities, *Tony Manero*

incorporates two significant non-conventional movie musical genre elements of *Saturday Night Fever*: a singular focus on its protagonist and the representation of performance within its realist and unitary non-expressive narrative mode.

In addition to sharing a complex relationship to the genre of the movie musical, *Saturday Night Fever* and *Tony Manero* feature working-class protagonists who are artists and cinephiles.<sup>331</sup> The two characters come from modest backgrounds and strive to achieve a measure of prestige and respectability through dance. Additionally, the two protagonists consume films and idolize working-class characters, and, in Tony's case, the actors who play them. Although Tony's diet of cinema is more diverse than Raúl's single-minded obsession with *Saturday Night Fever*, movies shape both characters' engagement with the world and their self-perception. For both protagonists, cinephilia is an intimate practice.

Raúl's fixation with the protagonist of *Saturday Night Fever* derives from a feeling of shared affinity and identity with Tony. Despite the cultural, social, and age differences between them, Raúl sees in Tony a fellow working-class artist and cinephile who strives to achieve both respect and social mobility. Raúl's attachment to and identification with Tony coincides with Travolta's rise to stardom. The success of *Saturday Night Fever* transformed Travolta into a

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<sup>331</sup> Like Tony and Raúl, Larraín is a cinephile. In a 2013 interview he describes how a teacher at his school piqued his interest in cinema. The teacher, Cecilia MacKay, would project the films onto a wall in the cafeteria. Captivated, Larraín sought out movies to watch at home, but found them difficult to come by: "Las únicas películas que se podían arrendar en ese minuto en Chile, en 16 mm, eran las del Goethe Institut. Entonces estaba todo el cine alemán. Al año me hice socio del Goethe y empecé a arrendar películas. Ese es el proyector (lo apunta en el suelo de su oficina) y esa es una película del Goethe que nunca devolví. Con ese proyector me metía a mi pieza y proyectaba las películas. Empecé a hacer un mundo propio dentro de mi casa y de mi entorno, basado en las películas. Y como las únicas películas que había en ese minuto y que yo podía proyectar en mi proyector eran del cine alemán, me formé viendo a Fritz Lang, a Herzog, las primeras películas de Wenders, a Murnau" ("Entendiendo a Pablo Larraín"; "The only films that you could rent at that time in Chile, in 16 mm, were those from the Goethe Institut. So everything was German cinema. Within the year I became a member of Goethe and I began to rent movies. That is the projector (he points to it on the floor of his office) and that is a movie from the Goethe that I never returned. With that projector I would go into my room and project films. I began to create my own world within my house and my surroundings, based on movies. And because the only movies there were at the time and that I could project in my projector were German films, I educated myself watching Fritz Lang, Herzog, the first films by Wenders, Murnau").

Hollywood star and ambiguous sex icon.<sup>332</sup> Jeff Yanc observes that with the release of *Saturday Night Fever* in 1977: “Travolta became an icon of the seventies disco ‘look,’ falling somewhere between the androgynously pretty looks of male disco stars such as Andy Gibb and the exaggerated camp masculinity of acts like the Village People” (46). Tony Manero is a malleable and multifaceted figure, who is at once camp icon, an archetype of working-class masculinity, a misogynist and homophobe, and a personification of racial and social anxieties. In his 1978 review of the film, published in the magazine *APSI*, José Román links *Saturday Night Fever* and its protagonist to a Hollywood tradition of teenage rebels. Román describes Badham’s film as a pale imitation of earlier Hollywood films with rebellious adolescent protagonists like *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *Easy Rider* (1969): “La fiebre Travolta pretende ser, por una parte, un reflejo de los desasosiegos e inquietudes juveniles, y por la otra, una agrídulce visión de la competitividad y destreza en un *medio* juvenil, si no aséptico, al menos conformista, despolitizado y alienado en su pobreza material e intelectual” (5; author’s emphasis; “The *Travolta fever* claims to be, on the one hand, a reflection of youthful unease and anxieties, and on the other, a bittersweet vision of competitiveness and skill in a youthful environment, if not aseptic, at least conformist and alienated in its material and intellectual poverty”). The complexities of Travolta’s character are reflected in the tension between his daytime occupation—he works as clerk at the Brothers Hardware and Paints—and his nocturnal visits to the dance studio and discotheque. For Raúl, Tony’s identity as a rebellious working-class artist is a key part of his appeal.

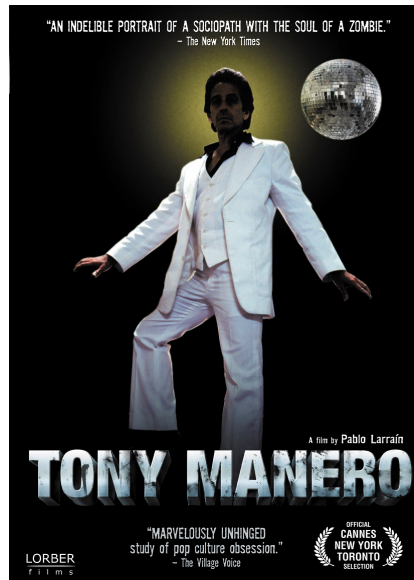
The title, poster, and cover-art for *Tony Manero* emphasize the connection between Tony and Raúl. The title of Larraín’s film is an explicit reference to the protagonist of *Saturday Night*

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<sup>332</sup> Prior to *Saturday Night Fever*, Travolta was most well-known for his role on the sitcom *Welcome Back, Kotter* (1975-1979). After *Saturday Night Fever*, he appeared as lead actor in a string of successful films including *Grease* and *Urban Cowboy* (1980).

*Fever* and, as such, encourages viewers to consider their connections. However, the title of Larrain's film also presumes that viewers are familiar with *Saturday Night Fever* and Travolta's character. In this regard, the title appeals to art film spectators inasmuch as it rewards cinephilia and knowledge of film history. The poster and DVD cover of *Tony Manero* likewise allude to Raúl's connection to Travolta's *Saturday Night Fever* character. On the poster and DVD cover, actor Alfredo Castro wears a replica of Tony Manero's iconic white polyester suit against a black background. Castro's hands are outstretched and his right leg is bent at the knee in a posture that echoes Travolta's pose on the poster for *Saturday Night Fever*. "TONY MANERO," spelled out in chunky silver-colored typeface splashed with black appears beneath Castro. The actor's face is faintly lit and a yellow halo surrounds his head, suggesting he is a kind of patron saint (or fiend) of disco. A disco ball hangs above Castro in the upper-left-hand-corner of the frame. The chiaroscuro composition evokes a baroque painting and reflects the film's dark tone and violent themes, as well as its singular focus on its protagonist. Likewise, the depiction of Raúl's face in shadows reflects the entanglement of his identity with that of his celluloid hero. The additional text and images on the poster highlight the film's art cinema qualities. Text sandwiched by two laurels in the lower left-hand corner of the poster labels the film as an official selection of the Cannes, New York, and Toronto film festivals. The blurb from Stephen Holden's review in *The New York Times* emphasizes the horror-film qualities of the movie ("An indelible portrait of a sociopath with the soul of a zombie"), while the quote from James Hoberman review in *The Village Voice* underscores the cinephilic qualities of the film ("Marvelously unhinged study of pop culture obsession").





### *Raúl, Tony, and Travolta*

Badham describes *Saturday Night Fever* as a portrait of self-improvement and advancement:

It might say something about the kind of material I tend to like and get involved with; it seems to have this idea of people looking to grow and improve themselves in one way or another. It's not a major concern of mine, but obviously there's some interest in it. One thing I liked about *Saturday Night Fever* was that it was about a guy who's trying to get out, who first of all doesn't know that he wants to get out, then gets up the courage to move himself into a different situation. (5)

Notwithstanding the setting and cultural differences between Tony and Raúl, *Saturday Night Fever*'s narrative of upward mobility and the American Dream resonates with Raúl.<sup>333</sup> Despite the linguistic, cultural, and geographic distance between them, Raúl sees himself and his ambitions personified in the character of Tony Manero. Both protagonists embrace dance as a passion, as well as a means of social, and to a lesser extent, economic mobility. By participating in the dance competitions, the two characters aim to acquire social capital and prestige within an environment that offers few opportunities for working-class men like Tony and Raúl. I highlight several qualities that exemplify the connections between these two protagonists: the characters' working-class cinephilia; the explicit depiction of *Saturday Night Fever* within *Tony Manero*; and, finally, Tony and Raúl's violent treatment of women.

Cinema is a central facet of Tony and Raúl's identities. In addition to being cinematic creations themselves, both characters are working-class cinephiles. Although they do not have a broad knowledge or interest of cinema, they engage intensely with cinema and have clearly defined tastes in film. Tony and Raúl's cinephilia constitutes "working class cosmopolitanism" (Webner 23) and exemplifies what Michèle Lamont and Sada Aksartova call "ordinary cosmopolitanisms," which they define as "the strategies used by ordinary people to bridge boundaries with people who are different from them" (1). For Tony and Raúl, cinema is an economical and accessible means of facilitating their engagement with other cultures and making sense of their own circumstances and identities.

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<sup>333</sup> J.P. Telotte observes that the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, which appears several times in *Saturday Night Fever*, embodies Tony's desire to improve his socio-economic position: "To underscore Tony's increasing sense of confinement within the disco scene and his Bay Ridge neighborhood, the film repeatedly invokes the image of the Verrazano Bridge, a literal connector between his limited world and the limitless possibilities which the rest of New York seems to hold out" (8).

Although Tony does not visit the cinema in *Saturday Night Fever*, the film highlights his interest in cinema through the representation of the film posters that hang in his bedroom. These posters, which feature individual films and actors, frame Tony's engagement with cinema as an intimate experience linked to his working-class identity. Among the film-related posters in his room are an image of the Chinese-American martial artist and film star Bruce Lee wielding nunchaku; a headshot of Al Pacino from Sidney Lumet's detective film *Serpico* (1973)<sup>334</sup>; a poster for John Avildsen's boxing blockbuster *Rocky* (1976) which features an image of Sylvester Stallone as the titular star; and a poster of Farrah Fawcett in an orange bathing suit.<sup>335</sup> The images of male action stars and working-class heroes reflect Tony's image of himself as a striving and aspirational working-class man who aims to attain women and status through his prowess on the dance floor. In her glamour shot, Fawcett appears as an object of sexual desire and an object of reverence—the rare woman who bridges the divide between a “nice girl” and a “cunt.”<sup>336</sup> Like secular saints, these images of Hollywood stars watch over Tony from the intimacy of his bedroom. They are an alternative to the devotional images in the house, most notably the photograph of Frank Junior dressed as a priest, which sits on the mantelpiece in the dining room.<sup>337</sup>

A scene early in *Saturday Night Fever* underscores the connection between the posters, Tony, and the intimacy of his bedroom—a space which Al Auster and Leonard Quart describe as “a haven where [Tony] conjures up images of disco highs” (36). As the Bee Gee's “Night Fever”

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<sup>334</sup> *Serpico*, like *Saturday Night Fever*, was written by Norman Wexler.

<sup>335</sup> Avildsen was Stigwood's original choice to direct *Saturday Night Fever*. After Avildsen dropped out in pre-production, Badham took over directing duties.

<sup>336</sup> Tony's dichotomous vision of women is reflected in the question he poses to Annette: “What are you anyway? You a nice girl or a cunt?” And, in a rare moment of shared intimacy, Fawcett's image attracts the approval of his father, as denoted by a point-of-view shot of the actress's breast. See Kelly (443).

<sup>337</sup> The film offers a clue as to the limits of Tony's taste in and knowledge of cinema: he is unfamiliar with Laurence Olivier.

fills Tony's room, the camera cuts between images of Tony in his bedroom surrounded by these film-related posters as he coifs his hair in front of the mirror and dresses for a night at the disco; images of dancers on the smoke-filled floor of 2001 Odyssey discotheque; and close-ups of the images of Bruce Lee and Farah Fawcett, fragments of which appear during Raúl's second visit to the cinema (seg. 18). This scene establishes a connection between fashion, film, and dance, all of which are central to Tony's identity as a working-class cinephile and artist. The film-related posters, which are also visible in the mirror, reveal Tony's working-class and self-reflexive cinematographic sensibilities. Tony's cinematic tastes center on aspirational, but recognizable reflection of himself as a striving young dancer. Bruce Lee, Rocky, and Serpico are working-class icons who embody strength and a dogged up-by-your-bootstraps ethos. Travolta draws on these same ideals in his quest to win the dance competition and in his decision at the end of the film to move to Manhattan. Moreover, these characters and the actors that play them are associated with the figure of the underdog who fights against structural and social obstacles (the corruption-fighting and Italian-American detective Serpico), succeed against all odds from their humble origins (the Italian-American boxer Rocky), or defeat dozens of enemies through determination and physical prowess (Bruce Lee). The reference to the underdog in these posters is also a metacinematic device: Tony himself is an underdog who confronts both tradition (embodied by his violent father and pious mother) and prejudice (exemplified by Tony's rejection of the first-place prize he and Stephanie win in the dance competition). The inclusion of shots from this bedroom scene in *Saturday Night Fever* during Raúl's second visit to the cinema underlines Raúl's own efforts to fashion himself into Tony and establishes the parallel between both characters, who treat both film and fashion as a key part of their reinvention. A later scene

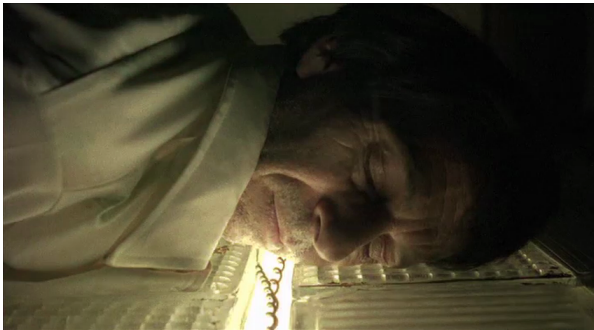
in *Tony Manero* recreates this sequence from *Saturday Night Fever*, as Raúl dances in front of a mirror in his underwear (seg. 21).



*Tony in front of the mirror*

Just as Tony sees himself in the film stars on his wall, so does Raúl see himself in Tony Manero. Raúl's relationship with *Saturday Night Fever* takes the form of myopic cinephilia. Although his cinephilia is narrow in that it encompasses a single film, it is also an intimate practice. Hoberman observes that Raúl's visits to the cinema take on the qualities of a religious pilgrimage: "Raúl Peralta attends his favorite movie as if it were Sunday mass—sometimes bringing along his talismanic white suit as though it, too, needed to study Travolta's moves" ("Larraín's Tony Manero Turns Fantasies"). In his obsessive and devotional embrace of *Saturday Night Fever*, Raúl transforms it into a cult film. Timothy Corrigan notes that "cult films become part of an audience's private space, and in this embracing of public images as private space, they become much like furnishings or material acquisitions" ("Film and the Culture of Cult" 26). As with Tony, Raúl's cinephilia unfolds in his bedroom, where he reconstructs, in

miniature, the glass floor from 2001 Odyssey. This homemade replica, which is lit underneath with fluorescent lights, allows Raúl to practice his cinephilia in private, parallels the posters that line the walls of Tony's bedroom. In a rare moment of outward emotional expression, Raúl lovingly embraces his creation before dancing atop it (seg. 34). Cony draws a comparison between these tiles and Raúl's sexuality, quipping: "You can't even get a hard-on. It gets swollen, but not hard. The glass floor is the only thing that turns you on" (31:34-31:42). Raúl's myopic cinephilia leaves the character turning inwards rather than outwards towards the world.



*Raúl fashions himself into Tony Manero and his room into the 2001 Odyssey*

A key point of difference in Raúl and Tony's cinephilia is the extent to which they manifest themselves through filmic creation. In *Saturday Night Fever*, the movie posters on the wall of Tony's bedroom serve a metacinematic function, reflecting and bringing attention to Tony's status as an archetypal cinematic underdog like Rocky or Serpico. However, Raúl's cinephilia encompasses the consumption and creation of cinema. Raúl's engagement with film is not limited to his visits to the cinema to watch *Saturday Night Fever*; he also seeks to fashion

himself into Tony and replicate his dance routines. In his complementary roles as spectator and creator, Raúl exemplifies the close relationship between cinephilia and filmmaking. Raúl's desire to both consume and embody Tony blurs the lines between spectatorship and creation. For Raúl, embodying Tony, or at least Raúl's conception of Tony, is inextricable from his own identity. Raúl's embrace of Tony goes beyond fandom; Raúl's cinephilia is an intimate exercise in self-reflection and self-creation.

It is interesting to consider the relationship between the actor Al Pacino, the protagonists of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Tony Manero*, and the actor Alfredo Castro. The connections between Tony and Al Pacino include their Italian-American heritage and their identities as underdogs—an association, which in Pacino's case, is augmented by his roles as Serpico, but also as the hapless bank robber Sonny in *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975). *Saturday Night Fever* makes explicit references between Tony's character and Al Pacino. In a scene at 2001 Odyssey disco, Stephanie facetiously remarks "I just kissed Al Pacino" after Tony kisses her.<sup>338</sup> The next morning, Tony, appearing to contemplate Stephanie's sarcastic comment, stands in front of the mirror in his bedroom wearing only his underwear. The poster with a headshot of Al Pacino, sporting a full beard and hanging on the opposite wall, occupies the right-side of the mirror next to Tony. The camera, positioned over the character's shoulder, shows Tony looking at Al Pacino, their stares locked in an eye-line match. The camera cuts to a shot of the poster itself and pushes in as Tony says "Al Pacino. I don't look like Al Pacino." The camera cuts back to the mirror. The protagonist, in a moment of metacinema, alternates between looking at the poster and the camera itself while declaring, "Well I could look like him. Al Pacino. Yeah, Al Pacino."<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> This scene is based on an incident described in Nik Cohn's article: "'Oooh,' said the girl, sighing, almost swooning, 'I just kissed Al Pacino'" ("Tribal Rites").

<sup>339</sup> Cohn describes a similar scene: "whenever he gazed into the mirror, it was always Pacino who gazed back. A

Although the clean-shaven and nearly-naked Tony bears a limited resemblance to Pacino, in juxtaposing Tony with Pacino the film suggests that their similarities extend to their shared identities as underdogs. The metacinematic device of the mirror and the character's glances at the camera, also suggests a self-reflexive reference to Travolta's own status at the time as an up-and-coming actor who aspired to greater fame and bigger roles.

*Tony Manero* channels this juxtaposition between Tony, Travolta, and Pacino in *Saturday Night Fever* through the actor Alfredo Castro. Critics note the physical similarities between Castro, a Chilean of European descent, and Pacino. In his review of *Tony Manero*, A.O. Scott calls Castro "a zombie Al Pacino" ("A Quiet File Clerk"). And Kemp notes that "Castro is in his home country most often compared to Al Pacino in terms of appearance" ("Stardom in Spanish America" 47). Through the casting of Castro in the role of Raúl, *Tony Manero* ironically enacts Tony's fantasy of being Al Pacino. The process of inhabiting a role and a character, of becoming someone else, is part of both films' representations of their protagonists' working-class cinephilia.

In *Tony Manero*, Tony and Raúl's relationship plays out, both literally and figuratively, on screen. The opening sequences of *Tony Manero* alludes to the famous sequence early in *Saturday Night Fever* in which Tony walks down a Brooklyn street on his way to the job at the hardware store as the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive" plays on the soundtrack. The camera moves vertically from Tony's red shoes up to his visage as he struts self-confidently. The opening scene of *Tony Manero* likewise depicts its protagonist walking, albeit down a narrow alleyway past props to the back entrance of the television studio. Unlike Travolta's cool and composed walk, which invites the viewer to take in his costume and physique, Raúl is hunched over and he

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killer, and a star. Heroic in reflection" ("Tribal Rites").



struggles to keep up with his security guard escort (seg. 2). As he moves towards the back entrance where the assembled Chuck Norris impersonators stand (Raúl has arrived a week early), the protagonist looks around at his unfamiliar surroundings. While moving around Santiago in sequences later in the film (segs. 3, 11, 17, 29), Raúl is similarly furtive and out of his element as he traverses streets monitored by military patrols and intelligence agents. In alluding to the early sequence of *Saturday Night Fever* via the action, cinematography, and setting of its opening scene, *Tony Manero* establishes its metacinematic character and dialogue with Badham's film.

Raúl's regular visits to the cinema to watch *Saturday Night Fever* exemplify the centrality of this Hollywood movie in his daily life (segs. 4, 18, and 27). These three segments establish an explicit dialogue between Larraín and Badham's films and underscore the myopic nature of Raúl's cinephilia. Additionally, the first two visits to the cinema underscore the extent to which Raúl's attraction to *Saturday Night Fever* derives from feelings of empathy and recognition with *Tony Manero*. In the first of his visits to the cinema (seg. 4), Raúl, carrying his replica of *Tony Manero*'s white polyester suit over his shoulder, pauses to look at a poster for *Saturday Night Fever* before purchasing his ticket for the film (05:43-06:04).<sup>340</sup> He proceeds to steal food from the concession stand before walking into the darkened, empty theater as the camera tracks him from behind (06:04-06:28). The red lights in the threshold between the lobby and the theater underscore the distinction between the world of the cinema passage and the outside world (06:28-06:32). Just as the *Odyssey* is a "true sanctuary" for the Faces (Cohn "Tribal Rites"), the cinema is a refuge for Raúl where he can indulge his cinephilia with some freedom from the outside world.

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<sup>340</sup> The sequences in the cinema were shot in the Cine Arte Normandie and Cine Capri. Both are located in downtown Santiago. In *VHS (unas memorias)*, Fuguet reflects on a 1986 chronicle he wrote about the Cine Capri as a site for cruising (375-94).

After entering the cinema, a scene plays from roughly the mid-point of *Saturday Night Fever*: Tony dances to the Bee Gees song “You Should Be Dancing” on the illuminated polychrome dancefloor at the 2001 Odyssey—the club’s name is a reference to Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (06:32-06:46). William Kelly observes that at 2001 Odyssey Tony acquires the respect and prestige that he lacks as a hardware store clerk: “Dancing affords Tony the dignity and identity absent in his working life. Elaborately dressed and coiffed, Tony is the king of the local discotheque. Once they enter this fantasy world, aptly named 2001, Tony and his friends are no longer clerks and apprentices whose futures promise only the extension of their present monotony” (242). Onstage in front of the patrons at the boardinghouse-cum-restaurant (seg. 24) and during the Festival de la Una program (seg. 46), Raúl experiences or at least imagines he is experiencing, a similar kind of transformation into the center of attention. Imitating his celluloid hero, Raúl dances along to the music before taking a seat.

After he sits down, the camera cuts between shots of the large theater screen with Raúl’s head in the foreground, and reverse shots of Raúl in close-up (06:46-07:38). The action on screen cuts to an earlier scene from *Saturday Night Fever* in which Tony approaches Stephanie at the dance studio. As Raúl watches this scene, he repeats the English-language dialogue (the movie is exhibited with Spanish-language subtitles). Raúl repeats Tony’s compliment to Stephanie, “you’re a very good dancer” (07:18-07:19). In repeating these lines, Raúl not only recreates the film; he also engages in a dialogue with himself. Overlooking his own limitations as a performer, Raúl channels Tony’s comment to Stephanie, declaring himself to be “a very good dancer.” Amid the echo chamber of the empty cinema, *Saturday Night Fever* superimposes itself over Raúl’s life in 1979 Chile.



*Raúl's first visit to the cinema*

Significantly, the onscreen dance performance (06:33-07:06) is the same dance sequence Raúl adapts for the revue show and incorporates into his televised performance. The cinematography of this dance sequence from *Saturday Night Fever* serves as another point of connection between the two films. Badham and director of photography Ralf Bode utilized a swooping camera perched on a crane to shoot this and other dance sequences.<sup>341</sup> During Raúl's

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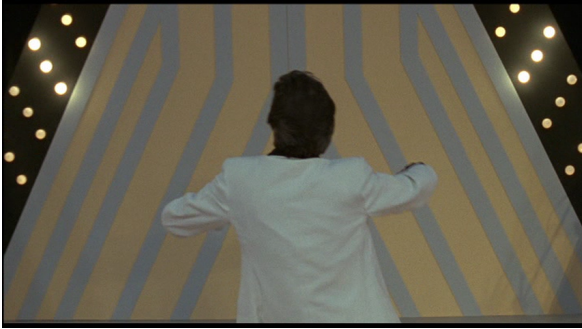
<sup>341</sup> In an interview with *Cinéaste* magazine, Badham comments on the agile camerawork in *Saturday Night Fever* and cites *West Side Story* as an inspiration: "The style of shooting was to use a very fluid and mobile camera. We nearly always had the camera on a crane so that it could float and move with the dancers and get a real kinesthetic feeling to the dance. I don't believe in shooting dance the way it is shot in *A Turning Point*, for example, where you set the camera down and let the dancer go, and the camera never moves. To my way of thinking, that's like

performance during the lookalike contest (seg. 46b) Larraín and Armstrong employ an ambulatory camera. The handheld camera trails Raúl across the dancefloor, establishing a symbiotic relationship between the protagonist's performance and the movement of the camera. At one moment, Raúl stops mid-dance and the camera circles around him before moving away (1:29:02-1:29:06).<sup>342</sup> Scheurer notes that inserting an active and mobile camera within dance sequences is common trope of movie musicals: "By choreographing the camera as such the filmmaker and choreographer give it the stature of a participant in the dance" (316). By employing the camera as a co-protagonist into Raúl's televised performance, *Tony Manero* establishes a visual and generic connection between the televised contest and the dance sequences in *Saturday Night Fever*.

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documenting a dance—it gives you a very objective record, but there's not a lot of visual excitement beyond what the dancer's doing. My point of view is more related to the style of Busby Berkeley's films and Jerry Robbins' *West Side Story*, where the fluid, mobile camera *participates* in the dance with the dancer—there's a synergistic action that happens, where the cinematic result is greater than just the dance or the camera movements by themselves" ("Lost in the Hustle" 3; author's emphasis).

<sup>342</sup> The actor Nelson Villagra describes a similar sequence in Miguel Littin's *El chacal de Nahueltoro* in which his character, José, begins to realize the magnitude of the crime he has committed in murdering of Rosa and her children: "Yo recuerdo, por ejemplo, una escena en *El Chacal* en donde yo giro sobre mí mismo, porque el personaje está borracho, y entonces la cámara giraba conmigo, como si estuviera compenetrada en la actuación; aquello era como un ballet" (Cortínez and Engelbert, *Evolución en libertad* 524, note 145; "I remember, for example, a scene in *El Chacal* in which I turn around on top of myself, because the character is drunk, and then the camera turns with me, as though it was melding with the acting; it was like a ballet). Héctor Ríos was the film's director of photography.



*A fluid and mobile camera*

Raúl's second visit to the cinema (seg. 18) occurs after his violent sexual encounter with Cony (seg. 16). His return to the cinema is an act of defiance in response to Cony's declaration, as she kisses and masturbates Raúl in bed, that they need to leave the boardinghouse because "Tony Manero, from the movie, will never get old. But we are" (31:14-31:20). Tony reacts violently, pushing his hand down Cony's throat, asserting his power to silence her. Cony accuses Raúl of being "lifeless" (32:28) and impotent. She tells Raúl that he is naïve for thinking he can be like Tony: "You're such a fool. He's an American. You're not. You belong here, like the rest of us. We all live in the same neighborhood" (31:45-31:55). Raúl rejects Cony's observations that he is part of a community. "No. Not anymore," he says (31:57-32:00). As he dresses to leave, the protagonist again expresses his rejection of community and the narrowness of his cinephilia by telling Cony to go watch *Saturday Night Fever* on her own if she wants to find out

the color of Stephanie's dress.<sup>343</sup> For Raúl, the cinema is a private space where he engages in communion with his cinematic hero.

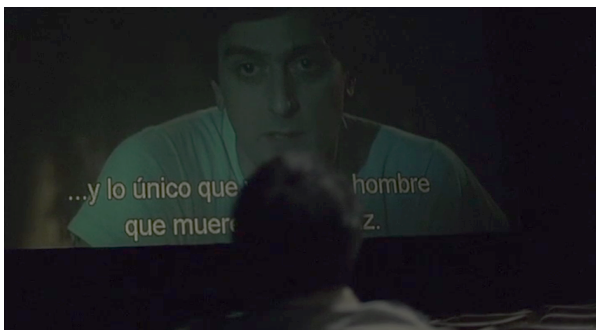
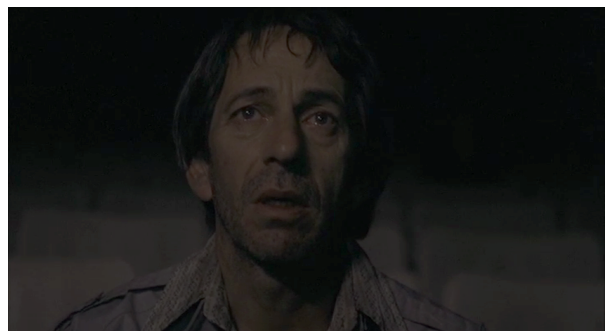
Returning to the cinema for a second time, the camera fixes on Raúl as he takes a seat to the sounds of "You Should Be Dancing" from the sequence at the midpoint in *Saturday Night Fever* in which Tony takes over the dance floor alone (33:36-33:44). The camera cuts to an image of the screen with Raúl's head in the foreground, showing shots from the earlier scene in Tony's bedroom as he dresses himself in front of the mirror for a night at 2001 Odyssey (33:44-33:54). The last shot included from this sequence in Tony's bedroom shows him putting on a necklace with a crucifix. The camera cuts (33:54) to a close-up of a teary-eyed Raúl. The inclusion of this Christian-inflected and homoerotic imagery juxtaposed with a weeping Raúl serves a dual function. First, it alludes to Tony's status as an object of quasi-religious reverence for Raúl. Second, the image of Tony putting on a crucifix before heading to the dancefloor parallels Raúl's own messianic relationship to the protagonist of *Saturday Night Fever*. Raúl is determined to fashion himself into his cinematic idol at any cost—an attitude personified by his robbery of the crucifix from the corpse of Goyo's comrade (seg. 23).

The theme of the crucifix also serves as a thematic point of departure for the final part of the sequence, comprised of alternating shots of a close-up of Raúl watching the film and a fragment of the scene in *Saturday Night Fever* in which Frank Jr. (Martin Shakar) explains his decision to leave the priesthood to his younger brother (33:54-34:26). Onscreen, Frank Jr. describes his secular epiphany as he lies next to Tony: "One day you're looking at a crucifix and all you see is a man dying on a cross. But that's only a backdrop to something else. Mamma and Papa, their dreams of pious glory. They turn you into what they wish at a time. You can't defend

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<sup>343</sup> Referring to the final dance sequence, Tony says that Stephanie's dress is red. Raúl correctly notes that it is white.

yourself against their fantasies. All I ever really had any belief in was their image of me as a priest” (33:57-34:26). As Frank Jr. speaks, Raúl repeats the dialogue. Coming from Raúl, the monologue takes on an ironic meaning. Raúl is not living someone else’s fantasy; it is entirely his own. This monologue and fragments of dialogue from Raúl’s first visit to the cinema appear in the next sequence (seg. 24). Raúl takes to the microphone in front of a few patrons in the restaurant and performs Frank Jr.’s monologue in halting English (45:47-46:34). In reenacting this scene from *Saturday Night Fever* before an audience, Raúl underscores his role as an evangelist for the film, while embracing Frank Jr.’s message of fashioning your own identity.



*Raúl’s second visit to the cinema and performance as Frank Jr.*

Raúl's third visit to the cinema (seg. 27) establishes the narrow boundaries of his cinephilia. Significantly, just before this third visit, Raúl helps Tomás fashion a disco ball out of a soccer ball and shards from a mirror (seg. 26). To obtain the glass pieces, Raúl uses a hammer to smash the mirror, much to Wilma's displeasure. In addition to its practical purpose, the shattering of the mirror carries a symbolic meaning: Raúl chooses to see himself not through the glass mirror but refracted through his makeshift disco ball.



*Raúl and Tomás make a disco ball*

The sequence at the cinema begins with Raúl walking towards the box office beneath the enclosed portico (seg. 27a). Unlike his previous outings to the theater, he is not carrying his white suit. The camera tracks behind him as he walks, panning and tilting upward towards the marquee, which now reads “*Grease*.” As Raúl approaches the window, he looks to his right at the poster for *Grease*, which has replaced that of *Saturday Night Fever*. The woman at the box office confirms Raúl and viewers’ suspicions of a cinematic coup d’état: “There’s another film with the same gentleman,” she tells Raúl (50:46-50:51). As she says this, Raúl and the camera returns its focus to the poster, which features a two-shot of Olivia Newton John and John Travolta. After paying for his ticket, Raúl, again followed by the hand-held camera, passes through the blood-red threshold (seg. 27b). The camera cuts to a close-up of the protagonist, who stands immobile in the back of the theater staring at the screen (51:27-51:34). The camera cuts to a point-of-view shot of the nearly empty theater—a lone couple is visible near the front row—



and the screen, which shows a shot of Travolta as Danny Zuko playing basketball and wearing a red t-shirt emblazoned with the words “Rydell High School” (51:35-51:39). The camera returns to Raúl, who maintains a neutral expression. The protagonist turns away from the camera and walks towards the door. Bathed in red light, he turns around to look at the screen, before abandoning the theater (51:40-51:58). Although Raúl does not say anything or otherwise signal his feelings, his brusque exit reflects his discontent with the removal of *Saturday Night Fever* and its replacement by *Grease*.



*Raúl walks out of Grease*

The extent to which this change in movies has upset Raúl becomes evident after he leaves the atrium (seg. 27c). Raúl heads up the stairs to the cinema's projection room, where he spies the older woman who sells tickets and the man who operates the projectors. After entering the projection room, the protagonist sneaks up behind the projectionist and pushes his head against the projector. He grabs his victim by the back of the head and bashes his forehead against the projector three more times, leaving the machine bloodied. Throughout this extended take (52:14-53:08) the handheld camera tracks Raúl. As he attacks the projectionist, his face comes in and out of focus, drawing attention to the camera's shallow depth of field, but also Raúl's clouded perception.<sup>344</sup> Unlike his previous acts of violence, this attack on the projectionist is not a crime of opportunity or a means of furthering his transformation into Tony Manero; rather, this is an act of revenge for the sin of replacing his favorite film. The setting (the projection room) and the tool of violence (the projector) underscore the vengeful nature of this violence, which is a manifestation, in extremis, of his narrow and obsessive cinephilia. Unlike his murder of the elderly woman he accompanies home (seg. 6)<sup>345</sup> and the bludgeoning of the Romanian (seg. 33), the camera provides a clear view of the violence. In the next shot (53:08-53:12), the camera cuts a reverse over-the-shoulder shot, revealing the woman who sells tickets at the door of the projection room holding a cup of tea and looking directly at Raúl. A poster for Bernardo Bertolucci's film *Luna* (1979) is visible on the left side of the frame. The poster for *Luna* functions as a metacinematic reference to the source of Raúl's anger: the replacement of *Saturday Night Fever* at the cinema. In Bertolucci's film, the adolescent protagonist dances to

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<sup>344</sup> Throughout the shooting of *Tony Manero*, Larraín deliberately used a shallow-focus camera and did not allow his actors to use marks. See Larraín, "Bailando por una pesadilla."

<sup>345</sup> A similar incident occurs in *Saturday Night Fever*. Gus, one of the Faces, is interred in the hospital after being assaulted on the street as he is carrying groceries. In revenge for the assault, Tony and his crew smash into the clubhouse of The Barracudas, a Puerto Rican gang.

the Bee Gees’s “Night Fever”—one of the hits on *Saturday Night Fever*’s soundtrack—as it plays on a jukebox at the Zanzibar restaurant.<sup>346</sup> After racking focus from the back of Raúl’s head to the woman, the camera jump cuts (53:12) away from the projection room to the lobby. The fate of the woman is unclear, but Raúl’s action in the next scene make it seem unlikely that she escaped his ire.



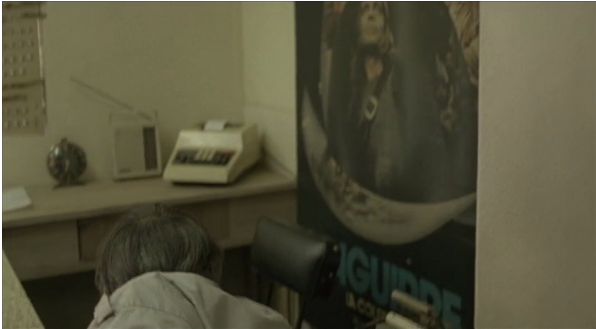
*Raúl attacks the projectionist*

This third and final visit to the cinema concludes with Raúl stealing the film reels containing *Saturday Night Fever* (seg. 27d). Raúl discovers the reels in metal canisters on the floor as he pilfers the cash register. Notably, a poster for Werner Herzog’s 1972 film *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* (*Aguirre, the Wrath of God*) hangs above the metal canisters. Mariana Johnson observes that through this poster Larraín establishes a connection between the “single-mindedly driven” and “tyrannical” protagonists of both movies (207). Like *Aguirre*’s doomed search for

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<sup>346</sup> Like Tony Manero and Raúl, Matthew Barry’s character Joe wears white pants as he dances.

gold in the Amazon, Raúl ultimately comes up short in his quest to win the lookalike contest. However, Raúl does find treasure in the film reels. The subsequent sequence (seg. 28) begins with Raúl hunched over on the sofa examining the celluloid frame by frame underneath the light of a lamp. Now the owner of a copy of *Saturday Night Fever*, Raúl can examine every inch of the film and indulge his myopic cinephilia to his heart's content.



*Raúl, the wrath of cinema*

An additional connection between *Tony Manero* and *Saturday Night Fever* is the protagonists' violent relationship with women. Both Tony and Raúl attempt to subordinate the women in their lives, who, in turn, offer an alternative to their closed-off worlds. Travolta's

character expresses a binary conception of women's role in the world. He divides women into two groups: good girls and cunts. Although he expresses it in coarse terms, his twofold division of women into these two categories is based on a traditional notion of women's roles.

Notwithstanding his penchant for disco, with its origins in gay and African American culture, Tony holds onto an old-fashioned conception of gender dynamics. Tony's relationship with Stephanie exemplifies his misogyny. Stephanie is also a Bay Ridge native, but she has moved out of the neighborhood and works as a secretary in Manhattan. She aspires to live independently and advance in her career. "I'm changing. I'm really changing as a person. And I'm growing. Nobody has any idea how much I'm growing," she says during a date with Tony at a restaurant. She tells Tony that she will accept him as a dance partner, but nothing more. In her view, Tony, who lives at home and works as a clerk, represents the traditional life from which she wishes to escape. Summing up her opinion of Tony, she says: "You're a cliché. You're nowhere on your way to no place." Notwithstanding her clear delineation of the boundaries of their relationship, Tony attempts to rape her in the back of a car. This act of violence underscores the limits of his respect for his dance partner, as well as his desire to assert control over her and her body. Despite being the victim of this sexual assault, Stephanie agrees to remain as Tony's dance partner. Their relationship evolves into a strained friendship, in which Stephanie offers Tony a window into life outside of Bay Ridge. As a single career-woman, she does not fit into Tony's binary conception of women as being either mothers or whores. After the death of his friend Bobby, Tony travels to Manhattan to Stephanie's apartment. Ultimately, Tony embraces Stephanie's efforts to attain independence outside of the narrow confines of Bay Ridge.

Raúl's relationship with women is also marked by violence. As we have seen, Raúl utilizes violence as a means of asserting his control within the household. Raúl is sexually or

romantically involved with Wilma, Cony, and Pauli. The incestuous nature of Raúl's relationships within the boardinghouse—Pauli is Cony's daughter—exemplifies his position as the dominant figure in the household, as well as his ambiguous status as father, lover, and artist.<sup>347</sup> Whereas the women dote on Raúl, he treats them with disdain and indifference. This dynamic is exemplified by the scene in which Cony bathes Raúl after he spends the night with her daughter (seg. 40) This cleansing has religious overtones. It is a baptism before Raúl's performance, but also an act of devotion—Raúl wears a crucifix around his neck as Cony scrubs him with a towel. Raúl, however, reserves his affections for his cinematic hero, even as he relies on the women to stage the show and realize his artistic vision.



*Cony bathes Raúl*

Although Raúl wields significant power over the women in the household, they possess a wider field of vision than he does. Wilma recognizes the limitations of Raúl's fascination with *Saturday Night Fever*. After declaring her love for Raúl, she tells him: "Once the film is out of fashion, you think they'll still follow you? No way" (47:30-47:38). Raúl challenges her assertion: "It's not a fashion," he says (47:41-47:42). Like Stephanie does for Tony in *Saturday Night Fever*, Wilma encourages Raúl to consider possibilities outside of his narrow view of the world, which is inextricable from his myopic cinephilia. Despite Wilma's warnings about the

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<sup>347</sup> *Luna* features an incestuous sexual relationship between a mother and son.

ephemeral charms of *Saturday Night Fever* and Travolta's character, Raúl chooses not to listen.

In discarding her admonition, Raúl diverges from his cinematic hero, who follows Stephanie into the cosmopolitan world of Manhattan. Raúl is unwilling to let go of his all-consuming cinematic fever dream.

### 4.3. Segment Summary

Copy utilized: DVD, distributed by Lorber Films.

(The beginning and end time, as well as the duration of each segment are noted in parentheses)

#### Part I: Fever Dreams

Seg. 01	(00:00-00:38)	Opening Credits	(0'38'')
Seg. 02	(00:38-04:45)	Raúl arrives at TV studio during Chuck Norris doubles auditions	(4'07'')
Seg. 03	(04:45-05:43)	Raúl runs through Santiago, hesitates	(0'58'')
Seg. 04	(05:43-07:38)	Raúl visits the cinema, watches <i>Saturday Night Fever</i> : Travolta's solo dance at 2001 Odyssey	(1'55'')
Seg. 05	(07:38-08:13)	From his window, Raúl watches assault of an elderly woman	(0'35'')
Seg. 06	(08:13-12:23)	Raúl walks the woman home, assaults her	(4'10'')
Seg. 07	(12:23-13:23)	Raúl carries the color TV and eludes patrol	(1'00'')
Seg. 08	(13:23-18:11)	Goyo, Cony, and Pauli rehearse, before Raúl takes to the stage, falls, and damages floor	(4'48'')
Seg. 09	(18:11-20:49)	Raúl and Cony visit the glass factory and get a quote for high-density glass	(2'38'')
Seg. 10	(20:49-21:27)	Raúl, Cony, Goyo, and Pauli watch El Festival de la Una, Raúl turns off TV as the host announces next week's Tony Manero contest	(0'38'')
Seg. 11	(21:27-24:29)	Raúl carries TV to the Romanian's junk yard, and offers to trade the TV for glass tiles	(3'02'')
Seg. 12	(24:29-25:46)	The Romanian shows Raúl the tiles, and offers him twenty tiles in exchange for the TV	(1'17'')
Seg. 13	(25:46-27:05)	Goyo carries Raúl and the tiles back to the restaurant on his cargo tricycle, CNI agents in a car make them move aside	(1'19'')
Seg. 14	(27:05-28:36)	Raúl asks Cony where he can find the hair dye	(1'31'')
Seg. 15	(28:36-30:09)	Raúl dyes his hair	(1'33'')
Seg. 16	(30:09-32:59)	Raúl and Cony engage in sex, Raúl gets violent	(2'50'')
Seg. 17	(32:59-33:36)	Raúl runs down the streets, paces	(0'37'')

#### Part 2: The Show Takes Shape

Seg. 18	(33:36-34:26)	Raúl's second visit to the cinema: Tony admires himself in front of mirror and his brother explains why he is leaving the priesthood	(0'50'')
Seg. 19	(34:26-35:24)	Goyo and Raúl discuss their suits and buttons on the street	(0'58'')
Seg. 20	(35:24-36:41)	Raúl shows Wilma his suit, he then rebuffs her advances	(1'17'')
Seg. 21	(36:41-38:31)	Raúl eats, sews a broken second button onto	(1'50'')



Seg. 22	(38:31-39:05)	trousers, and dances alone in his underwear From his window, Raúl watches Goyo meet with two comrades	(0'34")
Seg. 23	(39:05-42:44)	Raúl pursues man with satchel, witnesses his arrest and murder by CNI agents, and then robs his corpse	(3'39")
Seg. 24	(42:44-46:47)	Raúl interrupts rehearsal session, recites lines from <i>Saturday Night Fever</i> in English before patrons	(4'03")
Seg. 25	(46:47-47:43)	Wilma discusses the future with Raúl	(0'56")
Seg. 26	(47:43-50:33)	Raúl fashions a disco ball from a soccer ball and shards of a mirror, sees Pauli naked	(2'50")

### Part 3: *Grease* and the Revue Show

Seg. 27	(50:33-53:55)	Raúl's third visit to the cinema: <i>Grease</i> a) Raúl buys his ticket (50:33-51:27) b) <i>Grease</i> : Danny Zuko plays basketball (51:27-51:58) c) Raúl heads upstairs, bashes head of the projectionist against the projector (51:58-53:13) d) Raúl steals <i>Saturday Night Fever</i> reels (53:13-53:54)	(3'22")
Seg. 28	(53:55-55:54)	Raúl examines the film reel, Goyo and Pauli show off new dance to Raúl	(1'59")
Seg. 29	(55:54-56:38)	Raúl runs down streets, evades patrol	(0'44")
Seg. 30	(56:38-59:00)	Raúl buys more glass tiles from the Romanian	(2'22")
Seg. 31	(59:00-1:00:49)	Raúl and Goyo unpack tiles, Pauli and her mom argue over Pauli's political activities, Raúl carries some tiles to his room	(1'49")
Seg. 32	(1:00:49-1:01:33)	Raúl visits a stand in the Vega Central market, trades the stolen Seiko watch for bones	(0'44")
Seg. 33	(1:01:33-1:03:18)	Raúl climbs wall of Romanian's junkyard, throws bones to dogs, and bludgeons Romanian while he sleeps	(1'45")
Seg. 34	(1:03:18-1:03:59)	Raúl dances atop flickering glass tile platform in his room	(0'41")
Seg. 35	(1:03:59-1:06:57)	The big show	(2'58")
Seg. 36	(1:06:57-1:11:49)	Post-show: Wilma asks customers to leave, Raúl dances with Pauli, Pauli gets sick	(4'52")
Seg. 37	(1:11:49-1:14:40)	Mutual masturbation in Raúl's room	(2'51")

### Part 4: Escape and El Festival de la Una

Seg. 38	(1:14:40-1:15:38)	The morning after	(0'58")
Seg. 39	(1:15:38-1:16:14)	Goyo: "Did you have fun last night?"	(0'36")

Seg. 40	(1:16:14-1:18:15)	Cony bathes Raúl, Goyo reveals his plan to participate in the Festival de la Una contest	(2'01'')
Seg. 41	(1:18:15-1:19:49)	Raúl defecates on Goyo's suit	(1'34'')
Seg. 42	(1:19:49-1:20:17)	Raúl grooms, dresses, and poses	(0'28'')
Seg. 43	(1:20:17-1:24:05)	CNI agents detain Cony, Goyo, Pauli, and Wilma, Raúl flees across the roof	(3'48'')
Seg. 44	(1:24:05-1:24:11)	Raúl rides the bus	(0'06'')
Seg. 45	(1:24:11-1:24:47)	The Tony Manero impersonators assemble at the studio	(0'36'')
Seg. 46	(1:24:47-1:31:17)	El Festival de la Una a) Raúl waits his turn (1:24:47-1:27:46) b) Raúl takes the stage (1:27:46-1:29:28) c) The jury decides (1:29:29-1:31:17)	(6'30'')
Seg. 47	(1:31:17-1:32:52)	Raúl follows the contest winner and his wife onto the bus	(1'35'')
Seg. 48	(1:32:52-1:37:02)	End credits	(4'10'')

#### 4.4. Technical Summary

Country: Chile/Brazil

Language: Spanish

Year: 2008

Shooting Format: 16mm, Color

Running Time: 97'02''

Director:

Pablo Larraín

Producer:

Juan de Dios Larraín

Screenplay:

Pablo Larraín, Mateo Iribarren, and Alfredo Castro

Cast:

Alfredo Castro (Raúl Peralta), Amparo Noguera (Cony), Héctor Morales (Goyo), Elsa Poblete (Wilma), Paola Lattus (Pauli), Nicolás Mosso (Tomás), Enrique Maluenda (Enrique Maluenda), Antonia Zegers (TV Producer), Marcelo Alonso (Romanian), Marcial Tagle (Glass Maker), Rodrigo Pérez (CNI Agent #1), Francisco González (CNI Agent #2), Diego Medina (TV Producer), Luis Uribe (Tony 5), Sergio Monje (Tony 1), Maite Fernández (Vieja María), Greta Nilsson (Cashier), Cristián Ordoñez (TV Studio Security Guard), Jaime Silva (Projectionist), Freddy Huerta (Man with Satchel), Mirta Traslaviña (Tony 5's Wife), Sebastián Pinto (Tony 2), Luis Salazar (Tony 4), Jerónimo Armstrong (Tomás's Friend), Ruth Orellana (Box-Office Lady), Vanessa Borgo (Argentine Model), Evaristo Sáez (Chuck Norris Double), Víctor González (Chuck Norris Double), Mariachis Luna de México (Mariachis), and don Héctor (Butcher)

Director of Photography:	Sergio Armstrong González
Art Director:	Polin Garbisu
Editor:	Andrea Chignoli
Unit Production Manager:	Ruth Orellana
Screenplay Consultant:	Eliseo Altunaga
Artistic Advisor:	Rodrigo Bazaes
Sound Design:	Miguel Hormazábal
Assistant Director:	Oscar Godoy
Costume Designer:	Muriel Parra
Makeup Artist:	Margarita Marchi
Hair:	Paola Morales
Camera:	Pablo Larráin and Sergio Armstrong
Post-Production:	Alejandro Atenas
Choreography:	Francisca Sazié
Direct Sound:	Ernesto Trujillo
Associate Producer:	Tomás Dittborn
Executive Producers:	Marian Hatard and Juan Ignacio Correa
Co-producers Latina Estudio:	Cao Quintas and Otávio Escobar
Assistant Camera:	Cristián Petit-Laurent
Second Camera:	Pablo Martínez
Video Operator:	Carlos Díaz
Production Design:	Berta Jiménez
Property Manager:	Andrés Chacón
Art Assistants:	Felipe Carmona and Cristián Fuenzalida
Costumes:	Claudia Muñoz
Gaffer:	Víctor Rojas
Sound Effects:	Margarita Marchi and Juan Pablo Aliaga
Location Manager:	Hugo Ulloa
Casting:	Paula Leoncini
Image Post-Production Coordinator:	Juan Carlos Arriagada
Foley Artists:	Marcelo Corvetto and Roberto Zúñiga
Sound Editing:	Miguel Hormazábal and Roberto Zúñiga
Sound Mixer:	Miguel Hormazábal
English-language Subtitles:	Titra
Production Companies:	Fabula (Chile) and ProDigital (Brazil)
Associate Production Companies:	Universidad UNIACC (Chile) and TVN (Chile)
Distributors:	BF Distribution (Chile), Lorber Films (USA)
Funding:	Films in Progress, CORFO, Hubert Bals Fund
Premiere:	May 17, 2008 (2008 Cannes Film Festival)
Theatrical Release:	August 28, 2008 (Chile), July 3, 2009 (New York, USA)
Spectators:	86,193 (Chile)

Shot in Santiago, Chile during the month of October 2007

## 5. Cinecittà: The Cinematic City in Alicia Scherson's *Il Futuro*

*It's like a myth being born right there in our living room,  
like something we know in a dreamlike and preconscious way.*  
—Don DeLillo

Alicia's Scherson's *Il Futuro* (2013) depicts an orphaned young woman and cinephile as she navigates tragedy and contemporary Rome through the cinema. The film is an adaptation of Roberto Bolaño's novella *Una novelita lumpen* (*A Lumpen Novella*, 2002).<sup>348</sup> Like the novella, *Il Futuro* is a porous transnational production that appeals to a cinephile audience. The protagonist's consumption of film and television, her sensitivity to light, and her interaction with sites of cinema and spectatorship exemplify the film's representation of Rome as a cinematic and cosmopolitan city.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the transnational production contexts of *Il Futuro*, the cosmopolitan genesis of Roberto Bolaño's novella, and Bolaño's place within the world republic of letters. The second section considers the relationship between Bolaño's novella and Scherson's film. *Il Futuro* employs many of the same narrative and generic elements as *Una novelita lumpen*. I consider both works' representation of the narrator; their titles; their structures; portrayal of Bianca and other characters; and their shared Gothic genre elements. Both works are porous cultural productions, which engage with cosmopolitanism through the lenses of class, migration, and genre. The third section analyzes *Il Futuro*'s incorporation of cinephilia, highlighting Bianca's representation as spectator of cinema and television and the ways in which the movie amplifies the novella's cinematographic qualities. I point to Bianca's sensitivity to light and two dream sequences in the film as

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<sup>348</sup> Bolaño's novella was translated into English by Natasha Wimmer and published in the United States by New Directions under the title *A Little Lumpen Novelita* in 2014. All citations from Bolaño's novella are taken from Wimmer's translation.

manifestations of her cinephilia. I also examine five interrelated objects and places in the film that function as sites of cinema: the magazine personality quiz, the television, the video store, Cinecittà, and Maciste's mansion. These cinematic sites shape and inform Bianca's conception of the city as a cosmopolitan city of moving images.

### 5.1. A Markedly Cosmopolitan and Transnational Production

Of the four films analyzed in this dissertation, *Il Futuro* is the most markedly transnational. The film is a Chilean, German, Italian, and Spanish co-production. It was shot in Chile, Germany, and Italy, with local crews employed in each country. The interior sequences in the siblings' apartment were shot in Cologne; the city exteriors and sequences in the gymnasium and hair salon were shot in Rome; and the sequences in Maciste's apartment were shot in Santiago (Scherson, email communication, "Il Futuro Shooting Dates," 2 March 2018). The film also features an international cast from Chile and Europe. Dialogue in the film is primarily in Italian, although Bianca and Maciste converse in English, and there is a short exchange between Bianca and her brother in Spanish. Like the diversity of production locales, the variety of languages spoken in the film exemplifies its cosmopolitanism and transnational qualities. The use of multiple languages also reflects the work's orientation towards a global and cosmopolitan art-house audience. In addition to being shown at film festivals like Sundance and Rotterdam, *Il Futuro* had an eleven-week limited theatrical run in the United States at three theaters (*Box Office Mojo* "Il Futuro"). In Los Angeles, the film screened for a week at the Landmark Theatres chain's Nuart Theatre, a staple of the city's art-house film circuit. The transnational nature of the film's production is also underscored by the casting of the Dutch actor and international film star Rutger Hauer. The polyglot actor is best known for his role as the villainous replicant Roy Batty

in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), and his career exemplifies the transnational nature of the global film industry. In his role as Maciste, a multifaceted and dynamic character that harks back to the origins of Italian cinema, Hauer plays a warped reflection of himself and his own trajectory as an actor and icon of masculinity.

*Una novelita lumpen* forms part of the Año 0 (Year 0) collection, a transnational literary initiative by the global publishing house Mondadori.<sup>349</sup> For the Año 0 collection, seven Latin American authors were commissioned to write novels set in distinct metropolises.<sup>350</sup> A paragraph on the back cover of the first-edition paperback of *Una novelita lumpen* describes the collection:

En el Año 0 del nuevo milenio una serie de escritores hispanoamericanos de primera línea han viajado a conocer cómo son algunas de las capitales mundiales más importantes: el Moscú actual, fuertemente corrupto, el México D.F., magnético y disparatado, un Pekín de belleza oriental y miseria oriental, Nueva York, la ciudad de las ciudades. El Cairo, Madrás, Roma.... Realidad y ficción se conjugan en novelas cortas y largas, crónicas calidoscópicas o diarios de viaje. Los autores de Año 0 han abandonado el territorio de sus mentes para trasladarse a escenarios palpables. Y están de vuelta para contarlo. (In the Year 0 of the new millennium a number of the finest Spanish American writers have traveled to get to know some of the most important global capitals: contemporary Moscow, strongly corrupt, Mexico D.F., magnetic and absurd, a Beijing of

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<sup>349</sup> The creation of the Año 0 collection took place amid sweeping changes in the global publishing industry. In 2001, Random House formed a joint venture with the Italian publishing conglomerate Mondadori to form Random House Mondadori. In 2012, Random House acquired full ownership of their joint venture with Mondadori. In 2013, the consolidation of the industry culminated with the merger of Penguin and Random House. That same year, the Barcelona-based division of the international publishing conglomerate changed its name to Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial ("Random House Mondadori is Renamed").

<sup>350</sup> In addition to Bolaño, Rodrigo Fresán, Santiago Gamboa, José Manuel Prieto, Gabi Martínez, Rodrigo Rey Rosa, and Héctor Abad Faciolince published works in the Año 0 collection. According to Abad, Bolaño chose Rome at the urging of his friend and fellow Año 0 participant Santiago Gamboa (Abad, Interview, 24 April 2018).

oriental beauty and oriental misery, New York, the city of cities. Cairo, Madras, Rome.... Reality and fiction blend together in short and lengthy novels, kaleidoscopic chronicles or travel diaries. The authors of Año 0 have abandoned the territory of their minds in order to relocate themselves to palpable settings. And they have returned to tell about it)<sup>351</sup>

The Año 0 collection appeals to the regional and global markets for Spanish-language fiction. It is not the product of an artist-led manifesto, but an initiative spearheaded by an international publishing conglomerate featuring internationally-recognized authors like Bolaño and the Argentine writer Rodrigo Fresán. Underscoring its cosmopolitan and transnational qualities, the collection is thematically centered on urban space, with a focus on “the most important global capitals.” Like the Año 0 collection and *Una novelita lumpen*, *Il Futuro* is a fundamentally cosmopolitan and transnational project. In addition to being shot and financed across multiple countries with an international cast and crew, the film appeals to a global art film audience and features a thematic focus on the cosmopolitan and cinematic city.

*Il Futuro* is the first cinematographic adaptation of Bolaño’s work. The film draws on the Chilean author’s prominent status as a globally best-selling author to appeal to readers and art cinema audiences. Scherson explicitly highlights this connection with Bolaño by crediting him as a co-screenwriter on the film. Chris Andrews, the translator of many of the writer’s works into English, describes Bolaño, who was born in Santiago, Chile in 1953, as a “transnational writer who set his fiction in Chile and Mexico, where he grew up, but also in other American countries, which he constructed elaborately in imagination and fantasy” (13). Bolaño himself stressed his cosmopolitan identity. In an interview with Mónica Maristain published in *Playboy* in 2003, Bolaño responds to the interviewer’s question about his origins—“¿Usted es chileno, español o

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<sup>351</sup> Notably, the English-language translation of the novella does not include any information about the Año 0 collection.

mexicano?” (“Are you Chilean, Spanish or Mexican?”)—, by omitting his national identity entirely. “Soy latinoamericano” (“Estrella Distante” 331; “I’m Latin American”), he replies. Like the Latin American Boom authors of the 1960s, Bolaño embraces a pan-continental identity.<sup>352</sup> Alberto Fuguet observes that this Bolaño’s identity is also enmeshed with his love of cinema. Fuguet labels Bolaño “un autor cinéfilo pop como pocos” (*VHS* 24; “a pop cinephile author like few others”).

In the years since his death in 2003, Bolaño’s stature as an author and celebrity has grown immensely. Ignacio López-Calvo describes the Chilean author as “the most influential Latin American writer of his generation” (1). Sergio Villalobos-Ruminott labels Bolaño “one of the most important writers in the current renovation of the Western literary tradition” (193).<sup>353</sup> The critic Héctor Hoyos says that Bolaño has become synonymous with Latin American contemporary literature: “In the twenty-first century, the synecdochal figure has been Roberto Bolaño, who in many circles has come to represent the entirety of contemporary Latin American literature” (7). And Susan Sontag calls Bolaño: “The most influential and admired novelist of his generation in the Spanish-speaking world” (qtd. Pollack 356).

Translation and literary prizes play a key role in the circulation of Bolaño’s works and his global literary fame. Ricardo Gutiérrez-Mouat observes that Bolaño’s “canonization in the

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<sup>352</sup> Many critics highlight Bolaño’s ambivalent relationship to the literature of the Latin American boom. In his essay “Bolaño and the Canon,” Gutiérrez-Mouat explores the links between Bolaño and fellow countryman and boom writer José Donoso. He suggests that the title *Una novelita lumpen* may be “an ironic reference” to José Donoso’s *Tres novelitas burguesas* (1973) (43). Sergio Villalobos-Ruminott stresses the close relationship between Bolaño’s canonization, his posthumous commercial success, and the boom: “The irony of this canonization, however, is not just Bolaño’s regret at how his unveiling of the literary business became a profitable business itself, it is also related to the easy classification of his works as the successful continuation of the Latin American Boom, the most important market-related literary phenomenon of the twentieth century in the Spanish American tradition” (194).

<sup>353</sup> In the years since his death, Bolaño’s public persona and image have become objects of fascination and kitsch. The 2013 exhibit “Archivo Bolaño: 1977-2003” at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, which cataloged the author’s life in Catalonia, exemplifies the author’s cult status (“Archivo Bolaño”).



Hispanic world was followed by canonization in the English-speaking world” (39). In her article on Bolaño’s reception in the United States, Sarah Pollack notes that the translation of Bolaño’s texts played a key role in his canonization in the English-speaking world: (346-47).<sup>354</sup> Pollack also notes that translations of his works into English was accompanied with a repackaging of Bolaño’s public image as a counter-cultural figure, with the aim of “satisf[ying] the fantasies and collective imagination of U.S. cultural consumers” (347).<sup>355</sup> The numerous prizes Bolaño’s work received from across the Spanish and English-speaking literary markets enhanced the author’s prestige. Bolaño’s 1998 novel *Los detectives salvajes* (*The Savage Detectives*) was awarded Spain’s Juan Herralde prize (1999) and Latin America’s Rómulo Gallegos prize (1999). In the United States, Bolaño was posthumously awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2009 for his 2004 novel *2666*, which was published in English translation in 2008. *Il Futuro* continues the process of the canonization and global circulation of Bolaño’s work. As a Chilean filmmaker who circulates in the cosmopolitan spaces of the world republic of cinema and global culture, Scherson is uniquely positioned to adapt Bolaño’s cinephilic vision of Rome.

## 5.2. Adapting *Una novelita lumpen* for the Silver Screen

Alicia Scherson describes *Il Futuro* as “a story built up from leftovers of cheap movies and novels” (“Director’s Statement” 15). The porous nature of the film extends to its source text, *Una novelita lumpen*, which features a cinema and television-obsessed protagonist, an aging movie star, and a heist plot. The novella lends itself to a cinematic adaptation because of its heterogenous qualities and the prominent role of cinema within its narrative. In this section, I

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<sup>354</sup> Casanova observes that “translation, like criticism, is a process of establishing value” (23).

<sup>355</sup> According to Pollack, the commercial success of Bolaño and the malleability of his image recall the Latin American boom writers (357-59).

analyze how Scherson's film engages with its literary source material. I do not focus on the fidelity of *Il Futuro* as an adaptation of *Una novelita lumpen*, but rather in the ways in which the film diverges from and overlaps with the novella. Keeping in mind the "double nature" of a cinematographic adaptation of a work of literature (Hutcheon 7), I argue that Scherson embraces the narrative and generic porosity of Bolaño's novella and its portrayal of cinephilia, class, migration, and genre. In my analysis of how Scherson adapts the novella to the screen, I focus on a series of interrelated elements: the narration of both works; their plots and structures; their titles; the representation of Bianca and secondary characters like Bianca's brother, the Bolognan, the Libyan, and Maciste; and, finally, their Gothic genre elements.

The novella and the film feature narrator-protagonists who narrate events from an unspecified time in the future. This narrative structure echoes Alfred Hitchcock's Gothic film *Rebecca* (1940). Hitchcock's movie begins with voice-over narration by the female narrator-protagonist who frames the narrative as a journey through her past: "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." In Bolaño's novella and Scherson's film, Bianca frames the narrative as a revisiting of a traumatic and trying period from her past. The narrator of the novella and film is an older Bianca, who narrates in the first person from an unspecified time in the future, in which she is now a wife and mother. In the novella, the narrator's recounting of her past is interspersed with dialogue from a younger Bianca and other characters. In the film, this first-person narration is presented via a voice-over and the action on-screen is set in contemporary Rome.

From the beginning of the novella and film, the narrator distances herself from her younger self and underscores her identity as a married mother. In the opening lines of the novella and first sequence of the film, the narrator frames the loss of her parents and the events that follow through the lens of orphanhood. The novella begins: "Now I'm a mother and a married

woman, but not long ago I led a life of crime. My brother and I had been orphaned. Somehow that justified everything. We didn't have anyone. And it all happened overnight" (3).<sup>356</sup>

Compelled by circumstance to provide for herself and her brother, the adolescent Bianca is one of these prematurely aged orphans. In *Il Futuro*, the narrator, speaking in Italian as she does throughout the film, frames her story with nearly identical sentiments. Her voice-over narration is coupled with a bird's-eye-view shot of her parents' sun-drenched yellow Fiat as it winds through mountain roads: "I am now a mother. And a married woman. But not long ago, I was a criminal. My brother and I had become orphans. Somehow, that justified it all. We had no one. And it all happened from dusk to dawn" (01:53-02:14).<sup>357</sup> The bird's-eye-view shot that accompanies this narration personifies the narrator's sense of remove from the events she recounts. In these two opening monologues, the narrators refer to events that they will recount as having transpired in the near past. In addition to highlighting this indefinite, though not too distant time frame, the opening interior monologue and voice-over frame the first-person accounts as stories of survival and coming of age. In labeling herself "a mother" and "a married woman," Bianca frames her narrative from the vantage point of respectability, a position from which she is able to engage with her "criminal past" at arm's length while simultaneously empathizing with the actions of her younger self. In this vein, her declaration that her actions were "justified" by her orphanhood reveals both her sympathetic attitude towards her adolescent

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<sup>356</sup> The literary critic Rodrigo Cánovas points out that the theme of orphanhood is a recurring theme in the Nueva Narrativa Chilena (New Chilean Narrative): "Aparece en escena, primero una legión de niños abandonados, iluminada en su centro por la figura del expósito, ser sin protección, guía, ni contento. Niños envejecidos tempranamente, jóvenes sin ilusiones, chivos expiatorios de otras gentes, de otros sueños" (40; "There appears on the scene, first a legion of abandoned children, illuminated in their center by the figure of the foundling, a being without protection, guide, nor happiness. Children prematurely aged, youths without illusions, scapegoats of other peoples, of other dreams"). Although Cánovas does not include Bolaño among this generation, his career overlaps with the authors Cánovas lists as part of Nueva Narrativa Chilena, among them Gonzalo Contreras, Ramón Díaz Eterovic, Arturo Fontaine, Carlos Franz, and Alberto Fuguet.

<sup>357</sup> All Italian and Spanish dialogue from *Il Futuro* is quoted from Doris Wunderlicht's English-language subtitles.

self, as well as her struggle to reckon with actions that are unseemly for a mother and married woman. In these opening monologues, the narrators establish themselves as self-reflexive figures, who distance themselves from their past, while at the same time they seek to justify their actions and assert their identities as respectable mothers.

Like their shared elements of narration, the plot of Bolaño's novella and Scherson's film hew closely together. After the death of Bianca and Tomás's parents in a car wreck, the two siblings are left to their own devices in their middle-class apartment in the center of Rome, where they compulsively watch television. They take up jobs at a hair salon and a gym, and eventually stop attending school.<sup>358</sup> Soon afterwards, two young men who work in the gym, identified in the end credits as "the Bolognan" and "the Libyan," move into the sibling's apartment. The men sleep with the teenage Bianca (Manuela Martelli) and enlist her in their plan to rob Maciste, a blind former movie star and ex-Mister Universe, who lives alone in a large, decrepit mansion. The two men arrange for Bianca to work as a sexual companion to the aging and sightless actor and strongman. Once inside, the two men reason, she will be able to search for the safe where they believe Maciste hides his fortune.

The plan goes awry as Bianca becomes enamored with the former movie star. After repeat visits to Maciste's house and fruitless searches for the safe, Bianca leaves the elderly strong man. After announcing she is abandoning the scheme, she kicks the Bolognan and the Libyan out of the apartment. Both the novella and the film end with nearly identical monologues by their narrators. In the final passage of the novella, the narrator envisions "a noiseless, eyeless storm from another world, a world that not even the satellites in orbit around the Earth could capture, a world where there was a place that was my place, a shadow that was my shadow"

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<sup>358</sup> In the novella the orphans' apartment overlooks the Piazza Sonnino in central Rome (33).

(109). In the film, the narrator imagines “A storm without sound and eyes that came from another world. A world where not even the satellites that circle around the Earth can see. And where there existed a hole that was my hole. A shadow that was my shadow” (1:34:33-1:34:39). The narrator’s final monologue is accompanied with a wide shot of Rome at dusk from the balcony of Bianca’s apartment.<sup>359</sup>

In addition to their plots, the two works share a similar structure. The narrators frame their respective narratives as recollections of their pasts and center their tales on their relationship with the character of Maciste. Bolaño’s novella is divided into sixteen short chapters. Scherson’s film centers largely on Bianca’s encounters with Maciste, whom she visits seven times. As in the novella, Bianca’s visits with the aging movie star are temporally ambiguous—it is not always clear how much time has passed between them. Notwithstanding the broad similarities of these plots and structures, the two works diverge in significant ways.

The distinct titles of novella and film exemplify the ways in which these works differ from one another. The title of Bolaño’s novella, *Una novelita lumpen*, which I translate into English as *A Lumpen Novella*, emphasizes the genre of the text.<sup>360</sup> On the other hand, the title of Scherson’s film, *Il Futuro*, stresses the thematic elements of the story. The first part of Bolaño’s title “una novelita” or “a novella” draws attention to its genre. In his essay “Some Aspects of the Short Story,” the Latin American boom author Julio Cortázar characterizes the *nouvelle* or novella as “a genre straddling the short story and the novel proper” (27).<sup>361</sup> In Cortázar’s definition, the novella is delineated in relation to two other, more clearly demarcated literary

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<sup>359</sup> This shot echoes the final image of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Mamma Roma* (1962).

<sup>360</sup> Wimmer’s translation of the title, *A Little Lumpen Novelita*, is tautological; in English “novelita” is translated as “novella” or “novelette.” The addition of “little” to the title is extraneous.

<sup>361</sup> Cortázar notes that the French attach a twenty-page limit on the short story. He does not, however, establish a dividing line between the novella and the novel (27). Edgar Allan Poe observes that the tale or short story, unlike the novel, can be read in one sitting. Poe calls the “*single effect*” the defining feature of the short story (153; author’s emphasis).

genres. By including “novella” in the title, Bolaño generically categorizes his work as belonging to a fluid literary genre.<sup>362</sup> However, by appending “lumpen” to novella, Bolaño marks the text as a subversive manifestation of an in-between and fluid literary genre.

“Lumpen,” the second part of the title of Bolaño’s novella, is derived from “lumpenproletariat,” a term coined by Karl Marx in 1850 in *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich 1848 bis 1850 (Class Struggles in France 1848-1850)*. The Oxford English Dictionary defines lumpenproletariat as “the lowest and most degraded section of the proletariat; the ‘down and outs’ who make no contribution to the workers’ cause.” The derivative “lumpen” is defined as “boorish, stupid, unenlightened, used derisively to describe persons, attitudes, etc., supposed to be characteristic of the lumpenproletariat.” As it relates to the title, lumpen has a dual meaning. First, “lumpen” refers to the socially marginalized characters that populate the novella. Second, the use of lumpen as a modifier to novella, establishes the text as a self-reflexive, minor, and heterogeneous work of literature populated by a diverse range of artistic productions and genres. The narrator of the novella foregrounds film and television from the beginning of her narration, declaring: “TV and videos play an important role in this story” (6).

In conjunction with the title, the image on the front cover of the first-edition paperback of the novella and the epigraph similarly highlight the mixture of mediums and genres in the text.<sup>363</sup> The image consists of a bare-chested man smiling as he holds a metal rod behind his back. This figure, with his playful, photogenic, and controlled show of strength, is an archetypical peplum film hero. The illustration also serves as a point of contrast with the blind and decrepit Maciste.

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<sup>362</sup> The Spanish-language first-edition paperback of Bolaño’s novella is 122 pages long. The first edition English translation published in hardback by New Directions is 109 pages.

<sup>363</sup> The cover illustration of *Una novelita lumpen* is credited to the Telepress Servizi Editoriali and the cover design is by Florencia Helguera and Sergio Juan.

The novel's epigraph also reflects the porous and self-reflexive nature of Bolaño's text.<sup>364</sup> The epigraph is taken from the first lines of the poem "All Writing is Garbage" (1925) by the French writer Antonin Artaud: "All writing is garbage. / People who come out of nowhere to try and put into words any part of what goes on in their minds are pigs. / All writers are pigs. Especially writers today" (85). Like the title and cover image, this epigraph subverts the concept of artistic purity. This brief quotation emphasizes the messiness of the act of creation and primes the reader for the lumpen character of the novella. Artaud describes the writer as someone who feeds from the trough of culture, a site beset by the "the hilarious classifications" and "ranking ideologies of the age" (85). Embracing the Surrealist concepts of automatism and the centrality of the subconscious, Artaud conceives of writing as "Nothing but a fine Nerve Meter," which he describes as "A kind of incomprehensible stopping place in the mind, right in the middle of everything" (86). In melding the *bildungsroman* literary genre, the thriller, and Gothic literature, Bolaño's novella resists categorization and asserts itself as literary "garbage" that draws on a range of artistic traditions and sensibilities, including marginal ones like game shows, the peplum film, and pornography. Considered together, the title of the novella, cover image, and epigraph offer a self-reflexive commentary of the novella and highlight the interplay between writing and visual culture within the text.

Whereas the title of the novella ironically reflects its generic and literary attributes, the title *Il Futuro* ironically underscores a key theme of the film: the future. The siblings envision a modest and pragmatic future, in which they can support themselves: Bianca's brother Tomás (Luigi Ciardo) expresses his desire to work with computers, while Bianca dreams of owning a

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<sup>364</sup> *Il Futuro* does not feature an epigraph.

hair salon.<sup>365</sup> Later in the film, Bianca's brother's pragmatic desire to work with computers is eclipsed by his obsession with bodybuilding.<sup>366</sup> In the film, the theme of the future is inscribed into the characters and the city, most notably via the social worker's tattoo (seg. 6) and the billboards depicting satellites staring skywards (segs. 8 and 18). The tattoo and billboards are Scherson's creations and do not appear in the novella. The tattoo belongs to the middle-aged social worker (Daniela Piperno) charged with monitoring the orphans after the death of their parents. Tomás asks what the tattoo says. The social worker tells him that it reads "Ad Astra per Aspera," a Latin phrase that can be translated as "Through hardships to the stars" or "A rough road leads to the stars." The social worker comments that the tattoo, with its hopeful message of perseverance and opportunity, has lost its significance: "It had a special meaning when I got it. But I will erase it with (a) laser" (07:35-07:39). This theme of pessimism and thwarted opportunity is a through line in the film. As a representative of the government, the social worker is charged with caring for these vulnerable orphans. However, all she can offer the siblings is their father's modest pension. The social worker places the burden of caring for Tomás on Bianca. The social worker's tattoo is an obsolete emblem of optimism: she cannot offer the orphans more than token assistance as they confront the loss of their parents and economic hardship.

This notion of a frustrated and unrealized future pervades the cityscape as well. In a city beset by an economic crisis, even a modest aspiration—like owning a hair salon—is out of reach

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<sup>365</sup> The narrator also describes the future as a source of constant preoccupation for herself and her brother: "At night, when he got home, we talked and made plans. I dreamed about having my own hair salon. I had reason to think that the future was in small salons, small boutiques, small record stores, tiny exclusive bars. My brother said the future was in computers, but since he worked at a gym (sweeping floors and cleaning bathrooms), he'd started lifting weights and doing all the things people do to build their bodies" (5-6).

<sup>366</sup> In the novella, Tomás dreams of becoming "Mr. Rome and then Mr. Italy or Master of the Universe" (6). When Bianca laughs at his plan, her brother calls out her hypocrisy: "My brother said that if I could dream of owning a mini-salon, he had the right to dream of a better future too. That was the word he used *future*" (7; author's emphasis).



for Bianca. The two billboards that the orphans pass by in the first half of the film exemplify the divide between the siblings' precarious economic reality—with its daily pressures—and the omnipresent, if vaguely defined notion of the future. The first of these billboards appears in a wide shot above Bianca and Tomás as they cross in front of an empty field (seg. 8). The sign features an image of the earth with a giant eye peering upwards at a satellite with the caption: “Il Nostro Futuro Nel Cielo D’Europa” (13:13-13:19; “Our Future in the Sky of Europe”). The satellite and the eye are bound together by a diagonal beam of light amid a black background, with the words “eye sat” in the lower right-hand corner. Like the social worker’s tattoo that will soon be lasered into oblivion, the sign is an ambiguous representation of the future. On the one hand, it represents an antiquated fantasy that links space with the future, encapsulated by John F. Kennedy’s vision of a “new frontier.”<sup>367</sup> On the other hand, it presupposes a future located in the European sky, a symbolic allusion to the European Union, the continent’s ambitious, cosmopolitan, and fragile post-war political project. The image on the billboard also emphasizes perspective and connection. The earthly eye reflects the adolescent Bianca’s obsession with the sky and television, which is transmitted from satellites to the antennas that dot the apartment buildings of Rome. The satellite, on the other hand, is a symbol of distance and vigilance, which mirrors the vantage point of the narrator and viewer. From the first scene of the film, a birds-eye-view shot, the film underscores the distance between the narrator and the story she narrates.

The second billboard, which is partly cropped out of the frame, also depicts a seeing earth staring upwards into space (seg. 18). The billboard’s caption, “Il Nostro Avvenire Nel Cielo D’Europa” (30:25-30:31; “Our Approaching Future in the Sky of Europe”), is nearly identical to the first. This seeing image is juxtaposed with the narrator’s observation, in voice-over, about her

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<sup>367</sup> See Kennedy, “1960 Democratic National Convention, 15 July 1960.”

brother's increasing distance from her and his blindness towards his mal-intentioned friends: "Now I know closeness does not exist. There's always one with the eyes closed. One sees when the other does not" (30:25-30:35).<sup>368</sup> She describes herself as a kind of Tiresias, leading her delusional brother and his friends through the underworld: "My attitude was of someone with open eyes, while my brother and his friend wandered, eyes closed" (30:37-30:43).<sup>369</sup> Bianca's sentiments of alienation are reflected and contrasted in the distant and cyclopid images of the billboards, which present an imagined and collective future. Ultimately, the science fiction-inflected images do not hold weight for the orphans, who pass by these billboards without looking at them.



### *The sky of Europe*

Like their plots, structures, and titles, the depiction of the narrators and characters in the novella and film offer insight into the differences between both works. The Bolognan, the Libyan, the siblings, and Maciste are represented with significant variations in the film and novella. The depiction of the ethnic and racial identities of the Bolognan and the Libyan is a significant point of departure between the novella and the film. In both works the two unnamed characters are emblematic of the lumpen class described in the title of the novella; however, their

<sup>368</sup> Similar lines are uttered by the narrator in the novella: "Now I know that there's no such thing as closeness. One person's eyes are always shut. The first person sees and the second doesn't" (26).

<sup>369</sup> The narrator of the novella states: "I was blind, but I was the yardstick by which they measured their freedom" (26).

ethnicity, nationality, and race are key features of their representations in the novella but are only obliquely alluded to in the film. Whereas in the novella the Libyan is depicted as North African, the film does not specify his ethnic identity until the end credits. In omitting explicit mention of the racial identity of the Libyan, *Il Futuro* shifts the focus onto the class status of the two men.

In the novella and the film, the Bolognan and the Libyan are portrayed as members of the lumpen class. They work at a local gym, where they strike up a friendship with Tomás. The two men are interlopers into the sibling's tenuous domestic space. The two gym aficionados move into the apartment without Bianca's approval. The men spend their days working out at a local gym and watching game shows on the TV, and alternate sleeping with Bianca. In the novella, the narrator remarks that it was difficult to tell them apart: "One was from Bologna, the other from Libya or Morocco. But they looked like twins. Same head, same nose, same eyes" (17). Bianca's failure to distinguish between the two men and her inability to recall or unwillingness to use their names, underscores her conception of them as foreigners and members of the lumpen class. In the film, the stocky Bolognan (Alessandro Giallocosta) and the slimmer Libyan (Nicolas Vaporidis) are readily distinguishable physically, although their origins and motives are opaque.

The narrator of the novella describes her sexual relationship with these two men as transactional in nature: "In my defense I can say — if anything needs to be said, if the notion of defense is pertinent (which it isn't) — that at no moment did I think that I was falling in love. I saw the shadowy negative of romantic situations. I saw the negative of passionate moments whose point of reference was always a TV series or the whispering of girls now forgotten" (29). Bianca's interactions with these two men in the novella and the film foreshadows her relationship with Maciste, which also eschews the tropes of stereotypical romance. In both works, the arrival of these two "brothers in blood" (26:57-26:59) presages the end of the

siblings' innocence and undermines the integrity of their apartment—their refuge and sanctuary from the outside world populated by soccer hooligans and mired in economic crisis.<sup>370</sup> In the novella, the appearance of these two men marks the beginning of the protagonist's descent into delinquency: "I didn't like my life. The nights were still crystal clear, but I had become less of an orphan and I was moving into an even more precarious realm where I would soon lead a life of crime" (47). In the film and the novella, Bianca's perception, which was marked by an excess of light, becomes colored by darkness. And after her brother gets fired from his job at the gym, Bianca feels the burden to provide more acutely. She shoulders the responsibility for sustaining her brother and the two men, an obligation that culminates in her participation in the plot to rob Maciste. For the men in the house, Bianca alternatively fulfills the roles of bread winner, mother, and sex object.<sup>371</sup> Only after abandoning the scheme to rob Maciste, does she expel these two foreigners and members of the lumpen class from her house, asserting her independence, distinct class status, and aspirations of middle-class domesticity and respectability.

While the racial and ethnic origins of the Libyan are minimized, the themes of immigration, ethnicity, and nationality are also significant themes in the film. Whereas the novella does not allude to the national origin of Bianca and Tomás, thereby leaving the reader to infer that they are Italian—the film portrays the siblings as Chilean immigrants. Although the exact nature of their family's ties to Chile are never spelled out—we do not know if both their

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<sup>370</sup> These hooligans appear briefly in the film, marching beneath an underpass (30:11-30:25). The narrator of the novella describes these hooligans as part of the city's faceless lumpen underclass: "There were cars that passed with the windows already rolled down and kids inside yelling —"Fascism or barbarism!"—and they'd keep going too" (14). This chant is an ironic allusion to the Marxist slogan "Fascism or Socialism," as well as the Argentine writer Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's canonical work *Civilización i barbarie: vida de Juan Facundo Qiroga (Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism, 1845)*.

<sup>371</sup> In the novella, the narrator expresses her desire to excise the two gym fanatics from her memory: "But I don't remember the names anymore and I'd rather not make an effort to remember them" (18). Later in the novella, the narrator questions whether the Libyan and the Bolognan existed at all: "I couldn't find a single personal item among their belongings. Not a letter or an address book or a photocopy of their Social Security papers. I guessed that they always carried their important documents around with them. Or they didn't have any. Or they didn't exist" (52).

parents are Chileans or if the siblings were born in Chile—, Bianca and her brother fit into the larger demographic phenomenon of Chilean emigration in the late-20th century. During the military dictatorship of 1973-1990, an estimated two hundred thousand Chileans went into exile, approximately 2 percent of the total population.<sup>372</sup> After the turn of the millennium, Chileans continued to migrate abroad in significant numbers. According to a report published by the OECD in 2015, in the years 2010 and 2011 an estimated 509,400 persons born in Chile were living abroad, representing an emigration rate of 3.7 percent.<sup>373</sup> In 2010 and 2011, Italy was the ninth most popular destination for Chilean emigrants, with an estimated 10,500 native-born Chileans residing in the Mediterranean country (*Connecting with Emigrants* 198).

In *Il Futuro*, the nature and strength of the siblings' ties to Chile are presented piecemeal. Their connection to the country is referenced in linguistic, material, and relational terms. The first allusion to the orphans' national origin is in the form of a question posed by the social worker who meets the siblings on the day of their parents' funeral (seg. 4). The social worker asks them whether they have relatives in Rome. Tomás responds that their family members "are all in Chile" (6:00-6:04). The orphans' connection to Chile is also hinted at in the brief appearance of a coffee mug featuring the logo of the Universidad de Chile soccer team, which is drying on a rack in the kitchen (12:10-12:15). Later in the film, when the Bolognan presents Bianca with the plan to rob Maciste (seg. 21), he references Chile in pointing to the potential payout from the scheme: "It's what you could call a master strike. It can change your life. This is important, it could be a new start for us all. Who knows, maybe a house by the beach in Chile"

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<sup>372</sup> See Quay Hutchinson et al., "The Pinochet Dictatorship" (436).

<sup>373</sup> *Connecting with Emigrants: A Global Profile of Diasporas 2015* defines emigration rate as follows: "The emigration rate of a given origin country *i* in a given year is defined as the share of the native population of country *i* residing abroad at this time" (449; author's emphasis).

(37:43-37:53).<sup>374</sup> The Bolognan's appeals to Bianca's desire for a stable middle-class lifestyle with a degree of economic security.

Another reference to the orphans' Chilean origins comes in the form of a brief conversation between the two shortly after the arrival of the Bolognan and the Libyan (seg. 15). Tomás stands in the doorway of Bianca's bedroom, while she sits upright in her bed. Speaking in Spanish, Tomás tells his sister that the two men are going to be sleeping in their parents' bedroom. Bianca replies in Spanish: "No los conocemos. ¿Y si son ladrones?" (24:08-24:18; "We don't know them. And what if they are thieves?"). Spanish is the orphans' private language. It allows them to speak freely among themselves and express their anxieties and their solidarity as the Bolognan and Libyan's encroach on their domestic space.

*Una novelita lumpen* and *Il Futuro* both feature Maciste, a cosmopolitan character who dates back to the early-20th century. Maciste first appeared in Giovanni Pastrone's historical epic *Cabiria* (1914). Pastrone's film, which features intertitles by the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, was an international success and spawned a series of Maciste films.<sup>375</sup> In *Cabiria*, Maciste, a burly African slave, played by Bartolomeo Pagano, helps his Roman master liberate Cabiria, a noble Roman girl, from Carthage.<sup>376</sup> Like other strongman films, *Cabiria* emphasizes the virility and

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<sup>374</sup> In the novella, the narrator describes the plot as "the perfect coup, a scheme that would open the doors of a new life to us, that would get us a house on the beach, or a restaurant in Tangiers, or a gym up north" (54).

<sup>375</sup> *Cabiria*'s setting during the Punic Wars of the 3rd century BC resonated in the aftermath of Italy's colonial intervention in Libya (1911-1912) and the "delirious atmosphere of a pre-war climate" (Dalle Vacche 29). According to Maria Wyke, films like *Cabiria* not only presented a glorified vision of colonial intervention; they also elevated cinema to a respectable bourgeois art form: "Feature-length film narratives set in antiquity, such as *Quo Vadis* (1913) and *Cabiria* (1914), formed part of a strategy to win over the bourgeoisie to the new cinematic art-form by bestowing on the modern medium a grandiose register and an educative justification. Such films borrowed from the whole spectrum of 19th-century modes of historical representation (literary, dramatic, and pictorial) in pursuit of authenticity and authority for cinema as a mode of high culture, and to guarantee mass, international audiences through the reconstruction in moving images of familiar and accessible events of Roman history" (25).

<sup>376</sup> Pagano made a total of nineteen films as Maciste. Some notable Maciste films from this period include the aforementioned *Maciste all'inferno* (Brignone, 1925) and the metacinematic *Maciste alpino* (Pastrone, 1916), in which Maciste makes a film in the Alps and fights German soldiers during the First World War. See Reich, "Italian Silent Film Genres" (36).

strength of its protagonist.<sup>377</sup> Jacqueline Reich notes that while this emphasis on masculinity remains constant the character of Maciste evolves over a series of films released in the 1910s and 1920s. Reich situates the character of Maciste within the context of Italian nation-building at the beginning of the 20th century: “Maciste gradually transformed from colonized slave to bourgeois citizen to heroic soldier to colonizing agent . . . Maciste effectively bridged Italy’s past and present, and, in a convergence of Italian politics and popular entertainment, his fame anticipated the political stardom of Benito Mussolini” (*The Maciste Films* 4). According to Reich, the Maciste films comprised a “unique hybrid genre” (26). In addition to their feats of strength and ironic comic tone, a recurring feature in the Maciste series was their star, Pagano. Dubbed “the Gentle Giant,” Pagano, who worked as a stevedore in Genoa before being discovered by Itala films, was inseparable from the strongman character he played on-screen. As Reich puts it, “Pagano is the prime example of an actor whose star persona merged with and subsumed his off-screen existence” (49). In *Il Futuro*, Hauer’s Maciste similarly blurs the lines between the aging strongman character and the actor himself.

The Maciste films of the 1910s and 1920s are early examples of peplum films (better known in the United States as sword-and-sandal films). The term “peplum film” originated in French criticism in the early-1960s. It is a Latinized version of the Greek word “peplos” which

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<sup>377</sup> In Italy, the strongman genre derives from a variety of local cultural traditions, including the circus, the expansion of gymnasiums in the early-20th century, and traditional variety theater (Reich, *The Maciste Films of Silent Italian Cinema* 1-2). Reich observes that these strongman films had a mass appeal and shared many elements in common: “The strongman film, commonly referred to in Italian cinema as the *il cinema dei forzuti*, *il cinema degli uomini forti*, or *il cinema atletico-acrobatico*, was an extremely popular genre in the late 1910s and 1920s that revolved around a familiar character, a hero with a Herculean upper body performing feats of bravery that showed off his strength and virility, or in the case of the more acrobatic-oriented films, agility. The strongman fits somewhere in between the realist and decadent/expressionist tendencies of Italian cinema’s early years. On the one hand, the films required a suspension of disbelief with respect to their plot twists, the main character’s feats of strength and their often ludicrous catalytic incidents. On the other hand, they were filmed on location all over Italy, although mostly in the North, in both urban and rural settings, in order to appeal to the widest possible audience” (Reich, “Italian Silent Film Genres” 35).

refers to “a voluminous piece of cloth worn floor-length by Greek women until the fifth century BC, when it was replaced by the chiton, a woolen tunic worn long by the Ionians and short by the Dorians” (Reich, “Heroic Bodies” 97-98). The heirs of the Maciste cycle were the mid-20th-century peplum movies. These films, released between 1958 to 1965, were a cosmopolitan and transnational cinematic phenomenon. A total of twenty-two Hercules and twenty-six Maciste films were produced during this period (100). In addition to drawing on earlier films like *Cabiria*, these films were influenced by earlier artistic manifestations like *feuilletons*, comics, and public strongman shows (98). Reich observes that the protagonists of these films are derived from a range of historical, literary, and mythological sources: “The films are particularly renowned for their depiction of mythical (Achilles, Ajax, Hercules, Theseus, Ulysses), invented (Maciste), literary (Saetta, Ursus), historical (Spartacus, Thaur) or biblical (Goliath, Samson) apotheoses of the heroic male body” (97). Yet notwithstanding the variety of these mythological characters, these films share an emphasis on a pre-modern, pre-industrialized, and rural masculinities (101-02). The first film in the mid-century peplum cycle, Pietro Francisci’s *Le fatiche di Ercole* (*Hercules*, 1958), with its brawny protagonist (Steve Reeves) and mythological setting, exemplifies the conventions and themes of the genre. Francisci’s film was released to great domestic and international success, earning an estimated twenty million dollars at the box office worldwide.<sup>378</sup> The film stars the American actor and former Mr. Universe, Steve Reeves in the role of Hercules and established a formula that would be repeated across some three hundred peplum films (Reich, “Heroic Bodies” 100-01).

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<sup>378</sup> Joseph Levine’s Embassy Pictures was the international distributor of *Le fatiche di Ercole* and many other peplum films. See Brunetta (162); Solomon, *The Ancient World in Cinema* (307); and Solomon, “The Muscleman Peplum” (164-65).



The success of these peplum films in Italy and abroad was precipitated by a number of economic and cultural factors. The films were cheap to produce and their mix of “brawny violence, titillating sex and morally sanctioned heroism triumphant over unrelentingly evil villains” appealed to a wide popular audience in Italy and elsewhere (Solomon, “The Muscleman Peplum” 163).<sup>379</sup> Gian Piero Brunetta argues that the peplum film represented a turning point in the fortunes of Italian cinema: “Thanks to Hercules, Maciste, and Ursus, the chains of cinematic colonialism were broken at the close of the 1950s, the balance of power with Hollywood began to change, and for the first time, box-office scales tipped in favor of Italian cinema” (116).<sup>380</sup> In the United States, the genre emerged during a period of renewed interest in Roman and Greek mythology.<sup>381</sup> Often exhibited in Eastmancolor and in widescreen, these peplum films relied on international stars, large Italian supporting casts, and hundreds of extras (Solomon, “The Muscleman Peplum” 163-64).<sup>382</sup> The transnational character of sword-and-sandal films is also evident in their use of co-productions, often with French and U.S. companies, and the distribution of dubbed versions for international distribution. Drawing on the appeal of Hollywood at the domestic box-office, they frequently featured American and British bodybuilders like Steve Reeves, Ed Fury, Mark Forest, Brad Harris, Gordon Mitchell, Reg Park,

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<sup>379</sup> Reich notes that peplum films attracted mainly lower class, poorly educated audiences from the provinces, the South, and urban areas. These movies were often shown in second and third-run theaters in Italy. See “Heroic Bodies” (101).

<sup>380</sup> While the Spaghetti Western eclipsed the peplum film by the end of 1965, this new genre would incorporate many of the elements of the peplum film: international casts, transnational co-productions, and an emphasis on masculinity. See Brunetta (204-11) and Dalle Vacche (56).

<sup>381</sup> The 1951 Hollywood remake of the early Italian silent film *Quo Vadis?* (1913) was an important predecessor to the Italian peplum film. The MGM production of the biblical film was directed by Mervyn LeRoy and shot at Cinecittà. It starred Robert Taylor and Deborah Kerr. During the 1950s, there was a resurgence in interest in all things Greco-Roman. Singling out the year 1959, Solomon highlights the release of Marcel Camus’s *Orfeu Negro* (*Black Orpheus*); the publication on numerous books on Greek mythology; NASA’s designation of its spacemen as astronauts; and advertisements for Searle’s birth control pill, Enovid, in which the company claimed that the drug was “symbolized in an illustration from ancient Greek mythology: Andromeda freed from her chains” (Solomon, “The Muscleman Peplum” 164). Stanley Kubrick’s *Spartacus* (1960) likewise exemplified Hollywood’s resurgent interest in the Roman history and myth.

<sup>382</sup> *La furia di Ercole* was shot in Eastman Color and exhibited in Supertotalscope widescreen.

and Gordon Scott in the roles of these barrel-chested heroes (163-64).<sup>383</sup> In the article “Más musculosos: los nuevos superhombres italianos” (“More Muscular: the New Italian Supermen”) published in the January 26, 1965 issue of the film-centric Chilean magazine *Ecran*, José Pérez Cartes describes the peplum as a global phenomenon: “Las películas de Hércules, Sansón o Maciste son artículos muy fáciles de exportar. Si bien es cierto que se trata de películas de segunda categoría (aunque hoy día ha surgido un grupo de directores especializados en el género histórico-mitológico), se exhiben en la actualidad con gran éxito en el Extremo y Medio Oriente, América latina, Africa del Sur, Australia y España” (38-39; “The movies of Hercules, Samson or Maciste are articles that are very easy to export. While it’s true that these are second-rate movies (although a group of directors specialized in the historical-mythological genre has recently emerged), they are currently exhibited with great success in the Far and Middle East, Latin America, South Africa, Australia and Spain”).

Bolaño’s novella and Scherson’s film incorporate this cinematic strongman into their narratives and depict their relationship as a key moment in Bianca’s development as a cinephile. Both works portray Maciste as an aging and blind star of the screen and a former Mister Universe who lives a hermit-like existence in his dark mansion. In the novella, the narrator recounts that Maciste’s real name was Giovanni Dellacroce and that his stage name was Franco Bruno (59). In the film, Maciste tells Bianca that his “artistic name” is Franco Bruni and his real name is Greg Morris, an allusion, perhaps, to the Italian actor Adriano Bellini, who was credited in films under the name Kirk Morris (50:41-50:46). Both works depict Maciste as a remnant of an outmoded cinematic past. In the novella the narrator recounts how the Bolognan and the Libyan told her that “Maciste had been a movie star and his movies were seen all over the world.

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<sup>383</sup> Italian bodybuilders also starred in these peplum films. They often adopted English stage names. Sergio Ciani, for instance, was known as Alan Steel. See Reich, “Heroic Bodies” (101).

Then he'd had the accident and retired, and after that he'd gradually been forgotten" (55). In the film, Maciste lists some of his credits and tells Bianca that it is unlikely she would recognize him: "I played in movies. *Maciste in Hell*, *Maciste Against the Mongolians*, *Maciste the Strongest Man in the World*. But that was before you were born. I doubt you've seen any of them" (45:39-45:54).<sup>384</sup> Bianca admits that she is not familiar with these movies, but that she watched the Hercules cartoon, one of the many offshoots of the mid-century peplum film, when she was younger. Bianca's remark that she is familiar with the cartoon, but not with the cinematic versions of Maciste and Hercules that dominated Italian movie production and screened at movie theaters world-wide from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, reflects this cinematic tradition's fall into obscurity and the realms of camp and paracinema (Solomon, "The Musclemans Peplum" 163).<sup>385</sup> Maciste's own reclusive existence personifies these movies' fall from box-office successes to objects of curiosity and kitsch. The character of Maciste, though frail and blind, embodies this cinematic genre, which finds an audience in Bianca, a fellow orphan and outcast.

Despite their difference in age, Bianca and Maciste are not as far apart as they first appear. They are both orphans and their lives are marked by automobile accidents. In both the novella (92-93) and the film (1:13:57-1:14:58), Maciste's describes how he suffered a car

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<sup>384</sup> The titles that Maciste references are from the early 1960s and the silent film period. *Maciste all'inferno* (*Maciste in Hell*) is the title of a 1926 feature directed by Guido Brignone. In 1962, Riccardo Freda (credited as Robert Hampton) directed a peplum film with the same title starring Kirk Morris. *Maciste contro i Mongoli* (*Maciste Against the Mongolians*) is a 1963 sword-and-sandal film directed by Domenico Paolella and starring the American actor Mark Forest (whose real name was Lou Degni). The 1961 film *Maciste, l'uomo più forte del mondo* (known in English as *Mole Men Against the Son of Hercules*) was directed by Antonio Leonviola and stars Forest as the legendary strongman character.

<sup>385</sup> In his article "'Trashing' the Academy: Taste, Excess, and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style" (1995), Jeffrey Sconce describes paracinema as "less a distinct group of films than a particular reading protocol, a counter-aesthetic turned subcultural sensibility devoted to all manner of cultural detritus. In short, the explicit manifesto of paracinematic culture is to valorize all forms of cinematic 'trash', whether such films have been either explicitly rejected or simply ignored by legitimate film culture. In doing so, paracinema represents the most developed and dedicated of cinephilic subcultures ever to worship at 'the temple of schlock'" (372).

accident, in which two of his friends died and he lost his sight. In the novella, Maciste's personal tragedy prompts Bianca to reflect on her own traumatic loss: "I was alone for a long time, lying on the wooden bench, my body smeared with liniment, waiting for him and thinking my own thoughts, about the future that was opening up like a mirror of the present or a mirror of the past, but opening up regardless, until I got bored and fell asleep" (93). In the film, the mirroring of their identities is exemplified in a scene in which Bianca and Maciste are framed in a Rococo-style bathroom mirror as she combs the blind strongman's hair (1:03:39-1:04:44). Earlier in the film, the adolescent comments that she too is transforming into a cinematic character: "Before, when I was a little girl, I was beautiful. Now I look more and more like a zombie" (1:01:15-1:01:22). Bianca is pulled into Maciste's world of faded cinematic glory.



*Bianca and Maciste in the mirror*

The narrators of the novella and film contrast the declining physical state of Maciste with the cinematic strongman he once played in the movies. In the novella, the narrator describes Maciste as "hulking and white, like a broken refrigerator" (85). The film depicts Maciste as a figure hobbled by age. Although he still lifts weights and moves with surprising agility through his home, he is nonetheless in physical decline. When he leaves his house in pursuit of Bianca (seg. 50), he is left stranded, adrift on a concrete island in the middle of a traffic circle. In depicting the frailty of Maciste, the novella and film subvert the peplum film's fixation on what Reich calls the "body-as-spectacle" (*The Films of Maciste* 104). Whereas peplum films depict

the male hero's body on an intimate scale, celebrating its vigor and strength, *Una novelita lumpen* and *Il Futuro* upend this convention in their representation of the decaying body of Maciste.<sup>386</sup> Scherson's film subverts the peplum film's representation of corporeal beauty. Bianca is presented as the youthful and vibrant strongwoman, while Maciste is portrayed as a shadow of his strapping cinematic namesake, who pays the adolescent for companionship and sex. The narrator of the novella remarks that only traces of the virility and heroism that Maciste displayed in these peplum films remain in his worn-out body: "He had been a world bodybuilding champion and a tiny part of that glory still lived on somewhere, not in his body, maybe, but in the way he moved" (65). In the film, Maciste's use of his personal gym underscores the persistence of remnants of this past strength. Yvonne Tasker observes that bodybuilding is an activity in which the body is molded and fashioned into an object for public consumption: "Bodybuilding offers the possibility of self-creation, in which the intimate space of the body is produced as a raw material to be worked on and worked over, ultimately for display on a public stage" (78). Maciste's decaying body and his reclusive existence subvert this link between bodybuilding and exhibitionism.

Ironically, the youthful and petite Bianca emerges the prime object of the emphasis on "body-as-spectacle" in the film. Bianca is nude in many of her interactions with the blind strongman (segs. 24c, 28b, 31d, 35, and 44). Her oiled body contrasts with the robed and wrinkled body of her lover. Yet, notwithstanding the subversion of the trope through the corporeal representation of its female heroine, the representation of Bianca as the object of heterosexual affection contrasts with peplum films which presented "sexualities other than licit

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<sup>386</sup> Reich observes that the peplum film puts a magnifying glass to the body of its stars: "The peplum deals in visual superlatives and starkly differentiating characteristics inscribed on the body as a new technicolour landscape. The body in all its detail of contour and colour is available for close-up scrutiny and the negotiation of gender, sexuality and race" ("Heroic Bodies" 104).

heterosexuality” (Reich, “Heroic Bodies” 102). However, Bianca and Maciste’s interactions merge the bodily obsession of the peplum, with the overt sexuality critics associate with art film.<sup>387</sup> In a similar vein, Scherson’s film engages ironically with the campiness of the peplum film. A brief scene set during a body building competition (seg. 33) is emblematic of the film’s ironic and metacinematic sensibility. As a saccharine pop song plays in the background, a friend of the Bolognan and the Libyan lifts weights on a stage, his body glistening in oil in a gender-switched, mirror image of Bianca. After the event, the Libyan comments on his friend’s choice of music: “You played some gay music” (1:09:19-1:09:21). The homoerotic nature of this scene alludes to the camp qualities of the peplum film, and, in particular, to what Susan Sontag calls the “exaggerated he-man-ness” of its stars (“Notes on Camp” 279).<sup>388</sup>

Like Maciste’s faded body, his Gothic mansion, with its marble statues, crystal chandeliers, art deco and rococo interiors, reflects his relegation into cinematic obscurity. His tomb-like house is indicative of his transformation from the “placeless” hero of the peplum film, who occupies a masculine outdoor space into a blind man trapped indoors (Reich, “Heroic Bodies” 111). Writing about 1980s Hollywood action heroes, Tasker highlights the “paradox” of the action hero’s relationship to place: “The hero of the action narrative is often cast as a figure who lacks a place within the community for which he fights, a paradox familiar from the Western genre” (77). The male hero’s body reflects this rootlessness: “problems of location and position are increasingly articulated through the body of the male hero” (77). In the peplum film, this sense of displacement is not only tied to the hero’s body and his lack of a home, but also to the interchangeable coterie of international actors. *Il Futuro* subverts this theme of rootlessness

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<sup>387</sup> Steve Neale highlights the role of sexuality in art cinema in the 1960s: “With the opening of a market in America, European films were able to trade more stably and commercially both upon their status as ‘adult’ art and upon their reputation for ‘explicit’ representations of sexuality” (33).

<sup>388</sup> Sontag describes the “exaggerated he-man-ness of Steve Reeves” as a quintessentially camp image (279).

and masculine identity through Maciste's confinement to his palatial home. In the peplum film, this sense of displacement is not only tied to the hero's body, but also to the interchangeable coterie of international actors that represented these toned heroes. In the film, Hauer, as Maciste, comments that his character is a loner: "Maciste can't stay with a girl. He's kind of a stupid and lonely hero" (1:03:54-1:04:00). This statement has a double meaning. First, Maciste, confined to the interior, has been relegated to his own palace, a place associated with domesticity and femininity in peplum films (Reich, "Heroic Bodies" 111-12). Second, this observation is a self-reflexive commentary on Hauer's own physical and professional evolution, from the muscular antagonist in *Blade Runner* into an older actor playing a role in which his aging body is placed squarely on view.

I want to conclude this section with a consideration of ways in which the novella and the film incorporate the Gothic genre. This genre has its origins in 18th and 19th-century works of literature like Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Jerrold E. Hogle describes the Gothic as "a highly unstable genre," which confronts social anxieties through the lens of an imagined or fantastic past (1). Cinema also has a rich tradition of incorporating the genre of the Gothic, that dates back to films like Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940). Misha Kavka observes that like its literary counterparts, the Gothic film is unstable and occupies a space "between *film noir* and horror" (214; author's emphasis). Hogle notes that the settings of Gothic fiction are varied, but are often situated in a real or fictional past:

a Gothic tale usually takes place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space—be it a castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean

crypt, a graveyard, a primeval frontier, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public building, or some new recreation of an older venue, such as an office with old filing cabinets, an overworked spaceship, or a computer memory. (2)

Maciste's mansion is emblematic of a Gothic space situated in a time outside of the present. It is closed off from the world, shrouded in darkness, full of locked rooms, and lacks the most elemental of modern amenities: a television.

Before Bianca enters the mansion in the novella and the film, the reader and viewer are primed for the change provoked by this liminal and antiquated space. In the novella, after the protagonist agrees to participate in the scheme to rob Maciste, the narrator remarks: "From here on my story gets even fuzzier" (48). In the film, the narrator utters similar lines before the protagonist's first visit to Maciste: "I will be a delinquent now, I thought without fear. From that moment on, my story becomes blurrier" (40:27-40:35). The narrator of the film self-reflexively connects her transformation into a criminal with the film's generic shift towards the Gothic. Upon entering the grounds of Maciste's mansion, the narrator of the novella notes the pall of death that overhangs the house: "More than a garden, it was like a cemetery" (60). In the novella and the film, the Libyan and the Bolognan do not advance beyond the threshold of the house, only Bianca and the reader or viewer are privy to the inner world of Maciste. The narrator of the novella describes entering the mansion as stepping into a ghostly and ethereal place:

Then the door opened and we got a glimpse of a dark threshold where I seemed to see a shadow move very quickly, and a foyer, also dark, into which we stepped and out of which we backed like frightened children entrusted with a mysterious responsibility, and into which we stepped again, sheepishly, and out of which we inevitably backed again,



until I took three steps inside, this time alone, and bumped into a piece of furniture and asked whether anyone was there. (60)

The narrator remarks that “what happened next is hard to describe” and recalls that “Maciste’s voice was always ahead of me, guiding me” (61). In the film, Bianca, wearing a beige trench coat, like a detective in a film noir, follows Maciste, clothed in a black silk robe featuring an image of a dragon, as he ascends a staircase covered with crimson-colored carpet. She passes by a marble statue, peeling walls, an unmade bed, and a stained-glass window, all of which underscore the antiquated and artificial nature of the space. The soundtrack of pulses and distorted feedback adds to the foreboding atmosphere (seg. 24a). The film’s depiction of the house shrouded in darkness evokes the observations of the novella’s narrator who remarks: “During my forays in search of the safe, the whole house seemed alive. Alive in decay, alive in neglect. But alive” (91).

The Gothic qualities of Maciste’s home are not limited to its eerie décor; the mansion is also haunted by its occupant and the cinematic history he embodies. Hogle observes: “These hauntings can take many forms, but they frequently assume the features of ghosts, specters, or monsters (mixing features from different realms of being, often life and death) that rise from within the antiquated space, or sometimes invade it from alien realms, to manifest unresolved crimes or conflicts that can no longer be successfully buried from view” (2). Maciste’s dual identity as an aged actor and cinematic character epitomize this notion of haunting and exemplifies the blurring of the line between reality and the supernatural (or in this case the cinematic) that is a defining feature of Gothic fiction (Hogle 2-3). The phantom-like Maciste haunts the abode, a cinematic ghost exiled to the margins of film history. The former Mr. Universe and actor is not just an object of terror and curiosity; he also embodies the peplum film,

an orphaned cultural phenomenon built on narratives of masculine heroism and exceptionalism. When it becomes apparent that the treasure is an illusion and when Maciste reveals his true sickly self in the daylight, Bianca chooses to realize her ambition to become a respectable, middle-class woman.

Both the novella and the film depict Bianca in the tradition of what Hogle describes as the “Gothic *heroines* who seek both to appease and to free themselves from the excesses of male and patriarchal dominance” (5; author’s emphasis). The ambiguity of Bianca’s relationship with Maciste reflects her identity as a Gothic heroine and her aspirations of social mobility, another trope of Gothic fiction (Hogle 2-3). In the novella and the film, she provides Maciste with sex in exchange for money, but also serves as his companion and caretaker, listening to his stories about his past and functioning as his seeing eyes. As time progresses, Bianca develops romantic feelings for Maciste, who the narrator calls “my lover or my master” (95). She describes how her confession of love is tinged with shame: “I’m ashamed of this now, but one night I told him that I was in love with him and asked him what his feelings were for me” (92). When Maciste does not respond, Bianca is left to cry alone in his gym. In the film, Bianca also confesses her love to Maciste. He rebuffs her, saying: “Don’t be silly” (1:19:42-1:19:43). Ultimately, Bianca rejects Maciste’s blind and stagnant perception of the world. She abandons the infirm Maciste’s dark and cloistered world for the city bathed in light.

Consistent with its porous qualities, *Il Futuro* adds another layer of complexity to Bianca’s identity as a Gothic heroine by explicitly referencing Brontë’s Gothic novel *Jane Eyre*, which appears in two scenes in the film (segs. 9 and 31c).<sup>389</sup> In the first of these scenes (14:14-

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<sup>389</sup> Steve Neale observes that modernist literature has profoundly impacted critical conceptions of the art film: “If cinema has tended massively to exist hitherto as an institution for the perpetuation of the novelistic, then it has historically been the case that it is within the institutional space of Art Cinema that film has most closely approximated that version of the novelistic that we associate with writers like Eliot, Mann, James and Tolstoy,

14:47), Bianca's classmate reads a passage from the novel in which Mr. Rochester and Jane Eyre joke of the mythical "men in green" (144). In the second, Bianca begins to read passage of the novel to Maciste in the courtyard of his house. As Bianca reads the text, the camera cuts to an image of the two intertwined in bed (1:06:15-1:06:40). The passages she reads is a dialogue between Mr. Brocklehurst and young Jane about what parts of the bible the orphan enjoys: "I like Revelations, and the Book of Daniel, and Genesis, and Samuel, and a little bit of Exodus, and some parts of Kings and Chronicles, and Job and Jonah" (40). Jane's description of her reading habits parallels Maciste's discussions with Bianca about his filmmaking career and movie-going habits. In explicitly referencing *Jane Eyre*, Scherson highlights the similarities between this 19th-century Gothic novel, the novella, and the film.

The orphaned and self-reflexive narrator of *Jane Eyre*, who tells the story of Jane's youth and her courtship with the wealthy Mr. Rochester, bears much in common with the narrators of Bolaño's novella and Scherson's film, who likewise narrate from a future of motherhood. The narrator's assertion in *Jane Eyre* that "this is not to be a regular autobiography" (98) mirrors the frequent interventions of the first-person narrators in *Una novelita lumpen* and *Il Futuro*. The narrator of Brontë's novel also narrates from a similar vantage point: "I have now been married ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth" (519). Like the older and married Bianca, the narrator of *Jane Eyre* recounts the story of her youth and early-adulthood from a place of stability and position of respectability that contrasts with her volatile and precarious childhood.

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shading at times into the hesitations of the modernist novel (Faulkner, Dostoievski, the *nouveau roman*), while Hollywood has tended to produce and reproduce the version of the novelistic we associate with the genres of popular fiction" (13; author's emphasis). Galt and Schoonover also highlight the connection between art cinema and literature: "The art film extends its modernist tendencies in its privileging of internal conflicts, self-reflexivity, extradiegetic gestures, and duration over empiricist models of knowledge and pleasure" (15-16).

The character Jane is a fictional sister to Bianca. Jane's maid describes her charge as "a little roving, solitary thing," which is also true of Bianca, whose peripatetic nature is reflected in her cinema-centric journeys through Rome (47). Jane and her Roman counterpart also share a similar arc of development, in which both orphans assert their independence, and later attain the status of a married and respectable woman. After reencountering Mr. Rochester, Jane affirms: "I am an independent woman now" (501). This declaration has its parallels in Bianca's final monologue about finding her own shadow. Ultimately, both protagonists leave behind their lives of scarcity and hardship and assert their newfound respectability as wives and mothers.

The parallels between Bianca and Jane also extend to their vivid and self-reflexive imaginations. Jane and Bianca's dreams and fantasies reflect their own anxieties and accentuate the metafictional qualities of both works. In *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist's dreams underscore her social anxieties and the Gothic elements of the text. In one instance, Jane dreams of "the windings of an unknown road" (324). In another, she dreams of Thornfield Hall as "a dreary ruin, the retreat of bats and owls" (325). These two dreams meld distinctly Gothic imagery with Jane's insecurities about her social status: "I was not heroic enough to purchase liberty at the price of caste" (30), the narrator observes. Meanwhile, a third dream evokes explicit memories of her grim childhood: "I dreamt I lay in the red-room at Gateshead; that the night was dark, and my mind impressed with strange fears" (367). In the novel, these dreams offer a window into the protagonist's anxieties, while at the same time drawing attention to the text's Gothic elements. Oneiric sequences also feature prominently in *Una novelita lumpen* and *Il Futuro*. In the novella, which includes more oneiric sequences than the film, the narrator relates how dreams consume her thoughts and shape her perceptions:

Back then I dreamed a lot and almost all my dreams were quickly forgotten. My life itself was like a dream. Sometimes I stared out a window in Maciste's house and thought about dreams and life, which meant thinking about my own dreams, so quickly forgotten, and my own life, which was like a dream, and I got nowhere, nothing cleared inside my head, but just by doing this, by thinking about dreams and life, a vague weight was lifted from my heart or what I thought of as my heart, the heart of a criminal, of a person without scruples or with scruples so warped that it was hard for me to recognize them as my own. (93)<sup>390</sup>

*Il Futuro* also presents a hazy line between reality and fiction through the incorporation of dreams, which function as analogues for filmmaking. The two oneiric sequences in the film epitomize Bianca's dual identity as a spectator and creator of cinema and reflect the role that cinema plays in shaping her vision of the city. The first of these dream sequences occurs just before Bianca's first visit to Maciste's house and right after the narrator remarks: "From that moment on, my story becomes blurrier" (40:31-40:35).

The first oneiric sequence (seg. 22a) is set on a sun-parched road where Bianca follows a man and woman, who may be her parents (40:35-40:58). This five-shot sequence, which shifts between close-up, long-shot, point-of-view, and medium-shots, emphasizes Bianca's perception of herself.<sup>391</sup> In the final shot of this sequence, two dogs—perhaps a stray Romulus and Remus—approach Bianca, who has her back turned to the viewer. The camera cuts to a close-up

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<sup>390</sup> There are five dream sequences in the novella (12, 21, 35, 80-81, and 105-06).

<sup>391</sup> The narrator of the novella describes a similar dream: "Every so often I had terrible dreams. I saw my parents walking along a southern highway, they didn't recognize me. I kept going, happy to be so changed, then I thought better of it and turned around, but now my parents had turned into worms dragging themselves away, one after the other, torturously along the pavement, below a sign that read REGGIO CALABRIA 33 KILOMETERS, and though I called them by name, begging them to answer, warning them that they wouldn't get far crawling like that, they didn't even turn their worm heads to give me a final glance and they continued impassively along their way. Once in a while a late-model car would drive by with the windows rolled down and the kids inside shouting 'Fascism or barbarism!'" (35).

of Bianca opening her eyes, staring at the camera (40:58-41:08). This oneiric sequence underscores Bianca's anxiety about her precarious situation. The over-exposed and washed-out colors of the scene highlight her sensitivity to the images in her head and underscores the narrator and Bianca's blurry relationship between sight, perception, and experience. The dream presages Bianca's visit to Maciste's mansion, a construction of fiction and artifice. In breaking the fourth wall when Bianca awakes from her dream, the film highlights the connection between her imagination and the film itself.



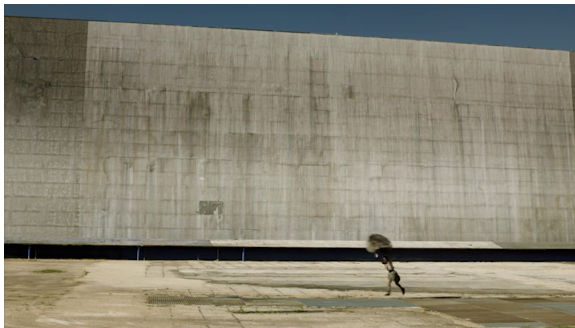
*Bianca's dream of the highway*

The second oneiric sequence takes the form of a daydream (seg. 52).<sup>392</sup> It is preceded by a shot of Bianca in the foreground leaning against the edge of a bridge and looking out over the Tiber River. In the distance, a train crosses a bridge over the brackish water (1:18:18-1:18:27). The camera cuts to a wide shot of a large plaza inside of Cinecittà, bounded by a Romanesque arcade (1:18:27-1:18:35). A large stone boulder or chunk of column lies in the foreground. A man dressed as Hercules or Maciste enters the frame from screen left and in the distance a woman flees the frame screen-right from behind a lone column in the background. The peplum hero lifts the stone over his head in a sweeping motion and begins to run towards the left of the frame. The camera cuts to another wide shot of the muscular man crossing in front of the towering grey wall that Bianca contemplated during her first visit to the film studio (1:18:35-1:18:42). The hero, continuing his left-ward trajectory, throws the boulder towards the center of the frame, which reverberates in an industrial clang across the desolate concrete landscape. The brawny man twirls around with his arms outstretched, poised to face an invisible enemy. The camera cuts to a close-up of Bianca, eyes-closed, as she sweeps her head backwards in the middle of an orgasm. She brings her head forward and opens her eyes, staring directly at the camera in a metacinematic gesture that mirrors the shot after the film's first dream sequence (1:18:42-1:19:01). This second oneiric sequence establishes a link between Bianca's perceptions

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<sup>392</sup> Neither this particular dream nor Bianca's visit to Cinecittà are featured in the novella. However, Bianca does dream about Maciste's film *Maciste vs. the Tartars*. After the Bolognan tells her that *Maciste vs. the Tartars* is the best of the Maciste films, she unsuccessfully scours neighborhood video stores. Despite the fact that she never finds a copy, she still fantasies about it: "I was glad he couldn't find it because I didn't like the idea of seeing Maciste as a young man, when he still had his sight and his hair and a perfect body. I didn't want to see that because I knew what was to come, twenty years later. But once I dreamed about the movie. First, two armies clashed on a dry plain. Then Maciste fought twenty warriors inside a palace and defeated them all. At some point a woman appeared in a tunic of gauzy silk and kissed Maciste. The two of them stood on the edge of a cliff. An abyss yawned at their feet and wisps of smoke rose on the horizon. Then I saw Maciste sleeping in a room with marble walls and a marble floor. And in the dream I thought: this is a movie, he's not really sleeping, he's just pretending to sleep, and in fact he's awake, and only then did I realize that Maciste, making the movie, was in the present, and I, watching the movie or dreaming that I was watching it, was in the future, Maciste's future, or, in other words, nothingness. Then I woke up" (80-81).

of Rome and cinema, and the protagonist's sexuality and creative impulses. Bianca fashions her own cinematic fantasy. The peplum hero is a protagonist in her fantasies and offers her sexual release. Moreover, the editing of this sequence, which moves from contemporary Rome, to a dream-like Cinecittà, to Maciste's mansion, underscores the fictional qualities of the character of Maciste, and the extent to which cinema shapes Bianca's perception of Rome as a city of moving images.<sup>393</sup>



*Bianca dreams of Cinecittà*

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<sup>393</sup> The novella features a cinematic dream sequence that is not included in *Il Futuro*. This oneiric sequence alludes to Vittorio De Sica's 1953 film *Stazione Termini* (*Terminal Station*), which was shot on-location in Rome's newly-constructed Stazione Termini and Cinecittà. Bianca's dream takes place in Rome's cavernous Central Station: "That night, when I was in bed and the house was quiet, I imagined—or rather saw—my brother and his two friends at Rome's Central Station sitting in the cafeteria waiting, my brother and the Libyan doing nothing, watching people come in and out, and the Bolognan working the crossword puzzle from the *L'Osservatore Romano*" (21; author's emphasis). The dream ends with a fog engulfing the station: "I felt a weight on my chest, a pain in my heart, a sense of anguish. As if a fog were rising from the underground tunnels and swamping the whole of Central Station, and I was the only one who could see it (but I wasn't there). As if the fog was blurring my brother's face and coming irrevocably between us. But then I fell asleep and I forgot or dismissed what I had seen—or what I had foreseen, because it really was a premonition" (22). *Stazione Termini* was produced by David O. Selznick and stars Jennifer Jones and Montgomery Clift. Christian Dior designed Jones's costumes and Truman Capote wrote the dialogue. The film competed in the 1953 Cannes Film Festival. Selznick released a significantly shortened and altered version in the United States under the title *Indiscretion of an American Wife*.



A final connection between *Jane Eyre* and *Il Futuro* are the characters of Mr. Rochester and Maciste. Both men are blind—Jane describes Mr. Rochester after he loses his sight as a “sightless Samson” (498)—and rely on the care and attention of their younger female companions. The narrator of *Jane Eyre* describes how Mr. Rochester quite literally came to “see” the world through his young bride:

He saw nature—he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words, the effect of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam—of the landscape before us; of the weather round us—and impressing by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye. Never did I weary of reading to him; never did I weary of conducting him where he wished to go; of doing for him what he wished to be done. (519-20)

Bianca also helps Maciste see, by reading *Jane Eyre* to him or answering his question about the color of his sperm: “it’s like melted gold,” Bianca replies (1:10:48-1:11:02). However, Maciste is content to remain in the darkness of his familiar and hermetic world, surrounded by weight-lifting trophies (44:50-45:15) and paintings of himself (1:26:27-1:26:49). Unlike Mr. Rochester, Maciste does not offer Bianca the opportunity to fully exploit her powers of sight, and, by extension, her imagination. Moreover, Maciste only offers Bianca the sheen of heroic masculinity and security; ensconced in his own dark mansion and a creature of habit, he is unsuited for the bright world outside.

### 5.3. Cinephilia and the Cosmopolis of Moving Images

In an interview about *Il Futuro*, Alicia Scherson comments that for her Rome is a celluloid city:

yo creo que *mi* Roma es una ciudad de puro cine. Yo no conozco Roma en otro sentido. La conocí antes por el cine, porque no había estado antes. Después cuando la fui a conocer de verdad lo hice pensando en una película y buscando locaciones para una película; muchas veces, muchos viajes. Y, después, filmando la película y ahora viendo la película. Creo que no tengo otro tipo de relación que no sea esa, de la historia del cine y de la historia del mundo: el Imperio Romano. . . . pero también a través del cine.

(“Entrevista con Alicia Scherson,” author’s emphasis; I believe that *my* Rome is a city of pure cinema. I don’t know Rome in any other way. I knew it before through film, because I hadn’t been there yet. After I actually went there I did so thinking about a movie and looking for locations for a movie; many times, many trips. And, afterwards, filming the movie and now seeing the movie. I think that I don’t have any kind of relationship other than this one, of cinematic history and of world history: the Roman Empire . . . but also through film)

Scherson channels her conception of Rome as a cinematic and cosmopolitan city through the character of Bianca. *Il Futuro* depicts Bianca as a quintessentially cosmopolitan cinephile, who eagerly consumes a range of televisual and cinematic productions, ranging from Jean Vigo’s art-house classic *L’Atalante* (1934) to game shows, pornography, and news programs.<sup>394</sup> In the film,

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<sup>394</sup> In Bolaño’s novella, the narrator portrays her younger self as a curious and insatiable spectator: “Other times, throwing caution to the wind, I’d rent two movies at once. I was omnivorous: I liked romance (which almost always makes me laugh), classic horror, gore, psychological horror, crime horror, military horror. Sometimes I sat for a long time on Garibaldi Bridge or on a bench on Tiber Island, next to the old hospital, and I studied the video cases as if they were books” (13-14).

Bianca does not merely consume these audiovisual productions; she also incorporates them into her perception and imagination of Rome. The protagonist's cinephilia is exemplified by the film's opening sequence, her costumes, her sensitivity to light, and five sites of cinema: (1) the magazine personality quiz; (2) the television in the siblings' apartment; (3) the video store; (4) the Cinecittà film studio; (5) Maciste's mansion.

The film's close engagement with cinema and Bianca's cinephilia are established early on. The bird's-eye-view shots of the siblings' parents' gold Fiat traveling through the mountains at the beginning of *Il Futuro* (01:04-01:56), establishes the work's appeal to an art-house audience and establishes Bianca as a cinephile and cinematic character. These shots echo the extended opening shot of Stanley Kubrick's horror classic *The Shining* (1980) of a yellow VW Beetle driving up the mountains to the Overlook Hotel.<sup>395</sup> This reference to *The Shining* appeals to art-cinema audiences by engaging them as active spectators and rewarding knowledge of film history (Wilinsky 105). These opening shots also establish Bianca's celluloid lineage and the film's ambition. The death of her parents does not leave her entirely orphaned; she is also a daughter of cinema and a devoted spectator of the screen. The discolored car that Bianca and her brother see in the junkyard (seg. 2) is an ambiguous symbol of both the loss of their parents and the opportunity for Bianca to assert herself as a cinematic hero.

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<sup>395</sup> Bill Weber calls the opening shot in *Il Futuro* "a dubiously motivated opening homage to the aerial highway shot that begins *The Shining*."



*A visual homage to The Shining*

The film's costumes also exemplify the film's metacinematic qualities and Bianca's identity as a cinephile. The trench coat Bianca wears during her first visit to Maciste's house recalls Humphrey Bogart's Sam Spade character in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). Bianca is a cinephile detective, who takes it upon herself to find out about Maciste's movie career. In a similar vein, Bianca wears a t-shirt emblazoned with the title and characters from Gary Godard's cult film *Masters of the Universe* (1987). Godard's film draws extensively on peplum imagery, through its epic scale, its mythological tropes, and its mash-up of genres.<sup>396</sup> Dolph Lundgren's He-Man, with his exposed chest, bulging muscles, and skill with a giant sword is a descendant of the peplum strongman. Bianca's t-shirt underscores her visual and corporeal connection to cinema and the sword-and-sandal genre.

Bianca's sensitivity to light, like her dreams, is another mark of her cinephilia. The connection between sight and cinephilia is reflected in the recurring visual motif of overexposure and the film's chiaroscuro color palate. The dark confines of Maciste's mansion and the siblings' apartment are contrasted with the sun-filled outdoor studios of Cinecittà. This dramatic color scheme underscores the significance of light and lighting in the film, but also fits in with

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<sup>396</sup> In the novella, the narrator recalls her brother's ambitions to be "Mr. Rome and then Mr. Italy or Master of the Universe" (6). The protagonist remarks: "To be Master of the Universe you have to train from the time you're ten" (7).

Bianca's apocalyptic vision of the future: "I waited for something. A catastrophe. The arrival of a meteorite that darkened the sky. But nothing happened" (15:12-15:19). An extended sequence early in the film (segs. 6b and 6c) underscores the connection between Bianca's sensitivity to light and her consumption of television. This sequence occurs in the sibling's apartment shortly after their parents' funeral. Framed in a two-shot, the siblings sit at the kitchen table. Bianca notices the light streaming in behind the window curtains, she observes: "Shouldn't it be night already?" (09:24-09:28). "Yes, it should be," her brother replies (09:29-09:31). Bianca gets up from her chair and walks over to the window and the camera cuts to a close-up shot of Bianca in profile, with light from outside shining on half of her face. She remarks: "Strange . . . all this light, do you see it?" (09:34-9:36). In response, Tomás says: "Accidents release so much energy, they modify the universe" (09:36-09:43). The camera cuts to a shot of the window curtain, which is moved sideways revealing Bianca's light-filled face in a frontal close-up. The teenager whispers to herself: "How strange!" (09:51-09:52).<sup>397</sup> Bianca's face bathed in white light is a kind of reverse shot of the final image of Michelangelo Antonioni's film *L'eclisse* (1962). Antonioni's film, which is also set in Rome, ends with a close-up of a street lamp, whose white light envelops the frame, suggesting an "apocalyptic explosion" (Williams 53).

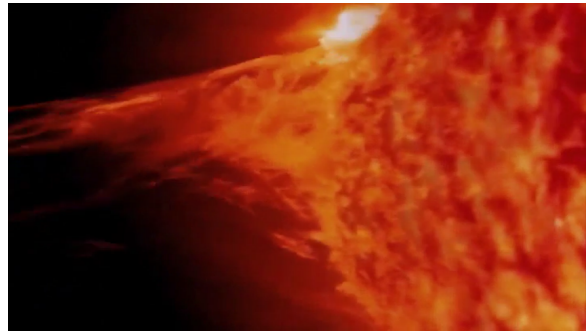
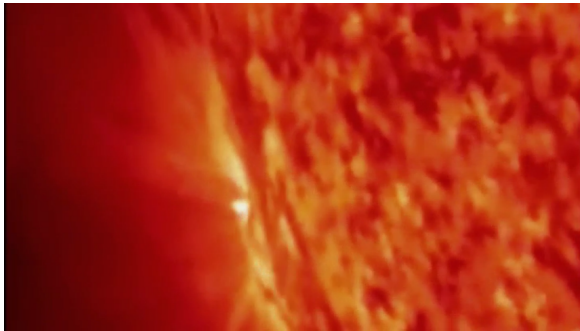
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<sup>397</sup> The narrator of the novella describes a similar event: "Suddenly the night stopped existing and everything was constant sun and light. At first I thought it was exhaustion, or the shock of our parents' sudden disappearance, but when I told my brother about it he said that he had noticed the same thing. Sun and light and an explosion of windows" (4).



*An excess of light*

Bianca leaves the window and joins her brother on the couch to watch TV. She asks him “But is the light real? Or can we see in the dark?” (09:58-10:03). Her brother responds: “Both. Light is here, but only you can see it” (10:04-10:08). She asks whether he can see it too, to which he replies: “Yes, more or less” (10:09-10:11). Bianca observes: “Then it’s psychological” (10:11-10:13). Her brother responds: “No, it’s real. I mean paranormal. Like those who see the dead. The dead are here, but only they can see them” (10:13-10:21). Ending the dialogue, Bianca asks: “How will I be able to sleep with all this light?” (10:40-10:42). As she speaks these last words, an image of the sun’s surface superimposes itself on Bianca’s face. The screen fills with a series of images of coronal mass ejections on the sun’s surface emanating from the television, while the soundtrack reverberates with explosions and ominous electronic tones (10:45-11:05). The camera cuts to a close-up of Bianca, who awakes as the explosions abruptly end, replaced by the voice of the program’s narrator who describes “space, time, and all the matter in the universe” (11:05-11:15).



*Sun, light, and the television*

Each sibling provides two distinct, but not mutually-exclusive explanations, for Bianca's ocular hallucination. Bianca attributes the strange excess of light to a "psychological"

phenomenon, which originates from within. For his part, Tomás describes the excess of light as the paranormal result of their parents' death. While Bianca emphasizes the power of her perception and imagination, Tomás underscores the fantastic nature of the phenomenon. Both of these explanations are metacinematic. Bianca's cinephilic-perception and imagination shape the film's representation of the city, while the paranormal takes shape in the form of Maciste, a Gothic cinematic haunting. In addition to establishing the connection between light and Bianca's unique and malleable perception of the world, this sequence links the abundance of light to Bianca's identity as a spectator. The television eclipses and supplants the diegesis of the film's narrative. Furthermore, the television, like the mirror it faces on the opposite wall, reflects and refracts Bianca's perception and self-conception and colonizes her dreams. As the narrator states in a voice-over later in the film, she is preoccupied with keeping her eyes open, with being a spectator, despite the high cost of this vigilance: "Keeping the eyes open meant consuming yourself. I consumed myself" (30:44-30:50). The price of Bianca's all-consuming spectatorship is self-immolation.

In addition to the opening sequence, the film's costumes, and Bianca's sensitivity to light, *Il Futuro's* metacinematic qualities and Bianca's cinephilia are reflected in five places and objects: the magazine personality quiz, the television in the siblings' apartment, the video store, Cinecittà, and Maciste's mansion. These objects and places are all sites of cinema, analogous to Pierre Nora's "*lieux de mémoire*" or sites of memory (7; author's emphasis). Nora maintains that memory is connected to the tangible things: "Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects" (9).<sup>398</sup> For Bianca, these sites of cinema play a similar role,

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<sup>398</sup> M. Christine Boyer argues that modern visual culture plays a crucial role in the creation and preservation of memory: "We travel backward in time through memory and through the recorded imagery of paintings, photographs, the cinema, and architecture" (69).



facilitating her engagement with film and providing an avenue through which she perceives the city she inhabits. Bianca's cinephilia exemplifies Giuliana Bruno's description of spectatorship as an "imaginary form of *flânerie*" (14; author's emphasis). Through these objects and places, Bianca experiences and *Il Futuro* portrays Rome as a fundamentally cinematic and cosmopolitan space that is constructed upon and inundated with the images and sounds of cinema and television.<sup>399</sup>

Cinema and the city have been closely intertwined since the birth of cinema in the late-19th century (Shiel, "Cinema and the City in History and Theory" 1). Helmut Weihsmann draws a parallel between cinema and perception of urban space: "Film becomes analogous to the modern perception of a city, continuous sequences of space frames perceived through time" (9). Rome has played a key role in the development and history of Italian cinema. The city occupies a protagonic role in numerous art films, including Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (1945), Vittorio De Sica's *Terminal Station* (1953), Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'eclisse* (1962), Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1962), and Paolo Sorrentino's *La grande bellezza* (2013).<sup>400</sup> For Bianca, Rome is not a stationary metropolis; rather it mutates and evolves through the lens of her experiences and viewing habits. After her first encounter with Maciste, for whom she serves as a

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<sup>399</sup> In Scherson's first feature *Play* (2005), the protagonist Cristina, a caretaker and recent immigrant to Santiago, traverses the city in pursuit of Tristán. Like Bianca, Cristina's perception is shaped by the cultural productions she consumed, in particular the video game *Street Fighter II*. In one memorable scene, the game merges with the diegesis of the film as Cristina gets into a fight with a woman in a plaza.

<sup>400</sup> Mussolini's regime utilized cinema as a (not always straightforward) propaganda tool and a means of propagating cultural prestige. The first major step towards the consolidation of the film industry was the creation of L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa (LUCE) in 1925. LUCE produced documentaries, educational films and newsreels that regularly celebrated the regime's achievements in economic development and urban planning. The creation of the film studio Cines in 1930; the Venice Film Festival in 1932; the Direzione Generale per la Cinematografia, the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, and the Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche in 1935; the publication of the *Bianco e Nero* film journal and the construction of Cinecittà in 1937; and legislation like the Alfieri law of 1938, which limited the importation of foreign films, were central to the regime's efforts to foment the country's domestic film industry. By the mid-1930s, as a result of industrial consolidation and protectionist legislation, the Fascist regime had created a "vertically integrated, state-controlled cinema sector" (Forgacs 43). See Bondanella (12-14); Brunetta (67-74); Dalle Vacche (23); and Forgacs (42-43).

visual guide, the narrator observes that the city has changed (seg. 27). As she walks down a tree-lined street near the Coliseum, framed in a long shot, the narrator observes it was difficult to distinguish between herself and the city: “That morning, the streets I walked didn’t seem the same as the day before, even if I knew they were the same. The streets don’t change overnight. Maybe in Africa, but not here. Here I was the one changing” (54:30-54:45). The camera cuts to a close up of Bianca’s face as she sits on a bench, with ancient Roman ruins behind her in the distance. Over the voice of a tour guide, the narrator reflects: “I am changing, I am changing, I repeated while I walked” (54:45-54:53). After Bianca utters these lines, she stares directly at the camera. The camera cuts to a point-of-view shot, revealing tourists with their cameras pointed directly at her (and the viewer), underscoring this moment of metacinematic self-reflection. For the tourists, Bianca forms part of the cityscape. In the following scene, back in the hair salon, she offers a different view of the city and her perception of it: “When I got to the hair salon, I realized that it wasn’t true. The streets had moved slightly to the left or to the right. But not me. I had remained the same” (55:10-55:27).<sup>401</sup> Although she asserts her permanence (“I had remained the same”), her active and critical engagement with cinema and television does cause her to change and see things differently.

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<sup>401</sup> The narrator of the novella utters similar lines: “the streets I walked didn’t look like yesterday’s streets, though I knew they were the same, streets don’t change overnight, maybe in some places they do, but I’ve never been to those places, maybe in Africa, but not here, here I was the one who was changing, but when I got to the salon I realized that I hadn’t changed, that the streets had shifted slightly, to the left or to the right, up or down, but I was still the same” (29).



*Bianca walks through the streets of Rome*

Bianca's shifting perception of the city and herself are reflected in the magazine personality quiz she takes with help from her co-worker at the hair salon (seg. 20). The quiz, which appears in a slightly different and expanded form in Bolaño's novella, is a narrative device that highlights and distills the protagonist's cinematic sensibility, class anxieties, and self-perception. The quiz is comprised of fourteen questions, shortened from twenty-two in the novella.<sup>402</sup> The sequence takes place after Bianca drops out of school and just before the

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<sup>402</sup> In *Una novelita lumpen*, the narrator comments on her serendipitous encounter with the quiz in the women's fashion magazine *Donna Moderna* (the magazine was founded in 1988 and is a publication of the Mondadori

Bolognan and the Libyan pitch her their scheme to rob Maciste. The first two-thirds of the quiz is presented in a series of shot-reverse shots between Bianca and a stylist in the salon who administers the quiz within the salon. Her male co-worker administers the quiz from the Italian edition of the tabloid magazine *OK!* to Bianca while she washes a young boy's hair. The first part of the quiz is presented in a diegetic exchange between the protagonist and her co-worker, while the final part of the quiz shows Bianca as she commutes home on the bus, with Bianca's answers presented via voice-over. In framing the quiz in the context of Bianca's commute home, during which she passes by Cinecittà, the film underscores the connection between Bianca's consumption of films and television, her perception of the city, and her self-conception.

As in the novella, the quiz begins in the hair salon with two questions about Bianca's views of young men. The first question asks her "opinion of men under twenty." The teenager responds: "Same opinion I have of my brother. A normal one." When asked about her views of "men under thirty," she answers: "None" (33:48-34:01). A female co-worker at the salon interrupts the exchange and asks Bianca if she has a boyfriend. Bianca replies that she does not, and in turn asks whether she can cut the hair of the boy whose hair she is shampooing. After the woman declines Bianca's request, the quiz continues. In response to the third question, "How old would you like to be at death?," Bianca says: "Before forty. Thirty-six" (34:28-34:34).<sup>403</sup> The

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publishing group, which also published the novella). The title of the magazine, which translates as *Modern Woman*, is an ironic counterpoint to Bianca's lumpen identity as a school dropout and criminal. While the death of her parents has compelled her to adopt the role of breadwinner, she nevertheless rejects middle-class respectability. Notwithstanding this tension between the orphaned adolescent and the traditional gender ideals embodied by this women's magazine, the narrator notes that the quiz "seemed to have been written just for me" (41). The narrator takes the magazine home, where she completes the quiz. The twenty-two questions are transcribed on the page, a narrative device that marks a shift away from the otherwise dominant voice of the narrator (although the narrator does insert hers into a few of these answers via parentheses). The quiz comprises the entirety of chapter VI (41-44).<sup>403</sup> This exchange is virtually the same in the novella. In response to the question "*What's a good age to die?*", Bianca answers: "Thirty-six, maybe. Before I turn forty" (41; author's emphasis).

fatalism of this answer reflects Bianca's uncertainty and her ironic sensibility. She envisions herself as someone who will die young, like Marilyn Monroe, who died at the age of thirty-six.

Presented in the same pseudo-psychoanalytical style as the rest of the quiz, questions four through seven deal with themes of celebrity, family, and cinephilia. It is worth considering these questions in comparison with those in the novella. In the novella, the questions related to celebrity and film are as follows: "*What actor would you date?*", "*What actor would you marry?*", "*What actor would you choose as your lover?*", "*What actor would you choose as your father?*", "*What actress would you choose as your best friend?*", and "*What actress would you be?*" (41-42; author's emphasis). Bianca responds, "Brad Pitt," "Edward Norton," "Antonio Banderas," "Robert De Niro," "Maria Grazia Cucinotta," and "Brad Pitt" (42-43). The protagonist's choice of actors reflects her heterogeneous tastes. These actors have performed in films across genres, ranging from Hollywood blockbusters to European art cinema.

In the film, Bianca's answers to a similar set of film-related questions reflects her diverse cinematic tastes. Bianca is asked by her interlocutor to choose actors to be her lover, father, husband, and best friend. The teenage cinephile responds that she would choose Johnny Depp as her lover, Brad Pitt as her father and husband, and Maria Grazia Cucinotta as her best friend (34:35-35:09).<sup>404</sup> Bianca's choice of the Italian actress Maria Grazia Cucinotta as best friend similarly reflects her own self-conception as a mother and lover, and obliquely alludes to her national identity. Cucinotta is most-well known, at least among English-speaking audiences, for her supporting roles in two transnational films: as the principal love interest in Michael Radford's *Il Postino* (*The Postman*, 1994)—the fictionalized story of an Italian postman who befriends the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda—, and as a Bond girl in Michael Apter's *The World is*

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<sup>404</sup> Bianca has second thoughts about Cucinotta and requests to change her answer to Penélope Cruz, but her co-worker does not allow it.

*Not Enough* (1999). In these two roles, Cucinotta is the object of desire for the male protagonists. These two characters mirror Bianca's janic relationship with the Bolognan and the Libyan, which is both transactional (like a Bond Girl) and maternal (like Cucinotta's character in *Il Postino*).<sup>405</sup> These two productions dovetail with the kinds of films—European art cinema and Hollywood blockbusters—that feature the male actors Bianca chooses as her lovers, husband, and father. Bianca's choice of Cucinotta is also an oblique allusion to her Chilean national identity: *Il Postino* is a remake of Antonio Skármeta's 1983 film *Ardiente paciencia* (*Burning Patience*). Skármeta's film is a West German and Portuguese production and is set in the turbulent political period of the early 1970s in Isla Negra, Chile, where Neruda had a home.<sup>406</sup>

The next set of questions (eight through fourteen) engages Bianca's self-perception and her worldview (35:09-36:54). In response to the eighth question, "Is there anyone capable of risking his life for you?", the teenage cinephile replies: "No, nobody. If there was one, I'd do everything to change his mind. I'd tell him it's not worth risking his life for me" (35:09-35:14). Bianca reveals her feelings of insecurity—she believes is not worth dying for—and, ironically, in refusing assistance reveals her independence and desire to be self-sufficient. The next question asks what animal she would be, and she replies: "A mole, or a mouse" (35:26-35:27). This answer highlights the protagonist's marginalized class identity—she sees herself as a lowly, unseen mouse—and presages her encounter with Maciste, who, like a mole, is blind.<sup>407</sup> The next

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<sup>405</sup> The narrator of the novella interjects in parentheses and expresses astonishment at her response: "Surprising answer, because I always thought Maria Grazia Cucinotta looked superficial and egotistical, like someone who only cared about herself" (42).

<sup>406</sup> The quiz in the novella includes another question (number sixteen) about cinema: "*If you were a movie, what movie would you be?*". Bianca's response underscores her predilection for cosmopolitan and transnational productions: "I'd be *War and Peace*, with Audrey Hepburn and Henry Fonda. I saw it a while ago on TV" (43; author's emphasis). King Vidor's 1965 adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's novel was produced by Dino De Laurentiis and Carlo Ponti—two prominent producers of post-war European cinema. In addition to its producers, the movie's transnational qualities are manifest in its international cast.

<sup>407</sup> The quiz in the novella includes a question about what bird Bianca would be. To which she answers: "an owl" (42). This nocturnal animal, with its reliance on sound to hunt, parallels Bianca's nighttime movements and serves

question, “If you were a fish, what fish would you be?”. Bianca’s answer is the only time she recalls an early childhood memory in the film. Bianca begins to answer: “One of those small ones. Have you seen the ones they use for bait? Once when I was a child I saw a fisherman at a beach fishing with a long pole. And he had a bucket, filled with fresh fish. Horrible, half-alive, sandy” (35:37-35:57). The camera cuts midway through her answer (35:57), to a medium shot of Bianca on a bus as she commutes back to her house (35:57-36:08). She is shown in profile as she looks out the window as she answers via voice-over: “Next to him in a box, he had the bait that he put on the hooks. The bait were small transparent fish. When I asked if he had fished them all, he said no, he had only fished the bigger ones, the parents. But the small ones, the babies, he’d bought them at a fish market. But they were no good to eat. They were only useful as bait” (35:57-36:27). Halfway through this response, the camera cuts in to a close-up of her face (36:08), drawing the viewer closer into the character’s psychological headspace (36:08-36:21). The camera then cuts (36:22) to a point-of-view shot looking through the bus window at the façade of the historic film studio Cinecittà (36:22-36:27), which Bianca will visit later in the film. Notably, the protagonist’s answer about her desire to be bait, foreshadows her involvement in the plot to rob Maciste in which she will be his bait (De los Ríos, “Visualidad, política y animalidad” 107). These three shots exemplify the visual and aural connections between Bianca’s self-conception, the city, and her cinephilia. As we shall see, these cinematographic sites are key places in Bianca’s relationship to the city and serve as symbols of the connections between Rome, cinema, and television.

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as a metaphor for her sensitivity to light and fascination with television and movies. See De los Ríos “Visualidad, política y animalidad” (102).



*Bianca passes by Cinecittà on the bus*

After the shot of the film studio, the camera cuts to a shallow-focus shot of an empty outdoor passageway bordered on both sides by concrete pylons that extend backwards towards the vanishing point of a door in the background. Bianca enters the foreground of the frame, walking from screen-left to screen-right. The camera pans right, following her path up a small flight of stairs, before she stops and looks up towards a window in the apartment building (36:27-36:42). As she walks, the exchange continues in voice-over dialogue: “If you had no option and had to kill somebody, who would you kill?”. Bianca responds: “Anyone. I’d pop out the window and shoot randomly” (36:43-36:54).<sup>408</sup> This answer alludes to André Breton’s *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1930), in which the author describes a quintessential Surrealist

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<sup>408</sup> The novella features a similar questions and answers. The magazine asks: *If you had to kill someone, what weapon would you choose?*”. Bianca says that she would choose “A gun,” although she recalls the story of “a friend at school who said she’d like to blow up her boyfriend with an atomic bomb. I remember I thought that was really funny, because it wouldn’t just be my friend’s boyfriend who’d die, I would die too, and so would everyone in and around Rome, maybe even the fishermen of Frascati” (43). In response to the next question—“*If you had to kill someone, who would you kill?*”—Bianca answers: “Whoever. I’d go over to the window and kill whoever” (43; author’s emphasis).



undertaking: “The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd” (125). Bianca’s reference to this early-20th-century avant-garde manifesto reflects her cosmopolitan sensibilities.

When Bianca’s co-worker utters the next question, “Do you consider yourself a pretty girl?” (36:41-36:45), the camera cuts to a low-angle point-of-view shot, the camera tilts upwards and pans right, following the adolescent protagonist’s gaze, until it rests on the window of her apartment, where her brother, the Bolognan, and the Libyan are looking down at the street (36:43-36:54). Bianca, confident in her physical appearance, responds: “Yes” (36:45). Her answer to the question establishes the character’s self-aware nature and create a disjuncture between her maternal instincts, her future as a mother, and her criminal identity. The young man from the salon asks: “Do you consider yourself intelligent?”. She responds: “No” (36:46-36:49). Bianca bluntly expresses a negative opinion of herself. However, the sardonic and ironic qualities of Bianca’s previous answers belie this negative self-assessment. The final question of the quiz in the film is the same as in the novella: “How many kids would you like to have?”. “Zero,” she responds (36:50-36:54). As she speaks, the camera fixes on the three young men looming above. The juxtaposition between Bianca’s verbal rejection of motherhood stands in opposition to the image of the three men waiting for her, the teenage matriarch. This dissonance is amplified by the next shot, a medium shot of the orphans’ empty kitchen table. In the background, the three men are still perched by the window. The camera slowly dollies towards the table and Bianca enters the frame. Tomás and his two companions leave their places by the window and take a seat at the table where they serve lasagna. Once seated, the Bolognan and the Libyan present their plot to rob Maciste (36:54-38:02).

This quiz reflects Bianca's porous cinematic tastes and her ironic conception of Hollywood and cinema as a surrogate family. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu notes that "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier" (6). Through her eclectic answers Bianca establishes herself as a self-aware cosmopolitan cinephile, who has strong opinions about a range of actors, cinematic productions, and film genres. In this respect, Bianca's name, which in Italian means "white," is ironic; her consumption of cinema is characterized by porosity, not purity. Moreover, in juxtaposing the audio of Bianca's answers over images of Cinecittà, the film draws a connection between her self-perception, cinema, and Rome.

Television is omnipresent in *Il Futuro*. The TV in the sibling's apartment plays a fundamental role in shaping Bianca's perception of the city as a cosmopolitan space. For Bianca and her brother, the device is not just a source of entertainment, but a window onto the world, a didactic tool, a mirror, and a movie theater in miniature. Within the gloomy confines of their apartment, the TV replaces the rhythms of the city, supplanting Bianca's dreams and filling the apartment with sounds and images from around the world. In the novella, Bianca contextualizes their television viewing within their everyday routine: "I worked, did the shopping, cooked, watched TV, went with my brother to rent videos" (27). In *Il Futuro*, television is also a vital part of the siblings' routine. They devour an esoteric mix of programs and movies, but their television is not solely an object intended for consumption. It is also a mirror that reflects and refracts the siblings and the city they inhabit.

In *Il Futuro*, the television is enmeshed with the cityscape. The symbiotic connection between the city and television is highlighted in a sequence that climaxes with a series of long shots of apartment buildings covered with antennas and satellites pointing skywards (seg. 13).<sup>409</sup> The sequence begins with Bianca rising from bed, unable to sleep with the light coming in from her window (19:20-19:40). The camera cuts to medium shot of Tomás sleeping on the couch (19:40-19:55). In the foreground stands a coffee table covered with knickknacks, the remains of a pizza, a half-empty glass, napkins, and a newspaper. Off-screen the TV emits the voice of a girl speaking in Arabic. Bianca, wearing a pink nightgown, enters screen right and sits next to her sleeping brother, her face cut off by the top of the frame. She then grabs the remote and presses a button to lower the volume. The camera cuts to the TV, which is framed against the wall (19:55-20:13). The device is tuned to Al Jazeera and shows a close-up of a young girl crying. Bianca mutes the television. The camera cuts to a medium close-up of Bianca lying down on the couch next to Tomás, who has his arm around his sister's neck (20:13-20:20). Bianca stares directly at the silent screen. The silence is broken by an electronic beep and the camera cuts to a long-shot of stucco-colored apartment buildings covered with antennas and satellites, foregrounded against the sky at sunset (20:20-20:28). On the soundtrack, a female voice in Japanese speaks of “satellites” over beeps and static.<sup>410</sup> The camera cuts to a second long-shot of the fragments of two apartment roofs dotted with antennas. In between these roofs is a gulf of ochre colored sky (20:28-20:33). This shot is accompanied by the sound of children singing imposed over indistinguishable adult voices and electronic pulses. The camera cuts to another long shot of

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<sup>409</sup> In the novella the sky is a source of fascination and dread. The narrator relates how one day on her way back from the hair salon she found herself gazing skywards: “I was walking in a daze, staring up at the sky, which—as I’ve said—looked stranger every day” (25). That same day after encountering her ex-boyfriend, Bianca looks at the sky again and remarks: “I had the feeling that I was living on another planet” (26).

<sup>410</sup> Thank you to Dan Abbe for this translation.

apartment rooftops spotted with an array of satellites and antennas, accompanied by the sound of a muezzin summoning worshipers to morning prayer (20:33-20:38). The call to prayer serves as a sound bridge to the penultimate shot of the sequence, a medium shot of Bianca still asleep on the couch (20:38-20:50). The sound of gunfire erupts from the television and Bianca wakes up.<sup>411</sup> The camera cuts to a shallow-focus point-of-view shot of food and trash on the coffee table as gunfire continues to emanate from the TV (20:38-20:59).



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<sup>411</sup> The narrator of the novella describes a similar episode: “When I woke up my brother was asleep in his chair and the screen was a gray sea, gray and black stripes, as if a storm was approaching Rome and only I could see it” (12).



### *The television and Rome*

As in the earlier sequence with the documentary on the sun, the television erupts into the narrative, supplanting the sounds of the city and inserting itself into Bianca's perception and daily routine. The three successive shots of rooftop antenna and satellites paired with clashing transmissions in different languages underscore the cosmopolitan qualities of Rome. The Italian capital is subsumed under different languages and a jumble of competing sounds. Like the two billboards with their utopian slogans of a shared future in the European sky, the television broadcasts embody a culturally diverse Rome and Europe. These heterogeneous transmissions from different parts of the globe reflect what Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande call "a *Europe of*

*difference*, of accepted and recognized difference” (14; authors’ emphasis). Through the television, Bianca experiences Rome as a city immersed in intersecting transmissions from around the world.

In addition to functioning as a surrogate for Bianca’s dreams and a cure for her insomnia, the television serves as a didactic tool. She learns about the contemporaneous European economic crisis of the late 2000s and early 2010s from the device.<sup>412</sup> While Bianca rides by what appears to be an unfinished or abandoned construction site on the bus, she says: “In that time, the economic situation had worsened. The TV said something was happening to Europe or to Italy. Or to Rome or to our neighborhood” (14:55-15:05).<sup>413</sup> The pedagogical qualities of the television have a perverse side too. Tomás unlocks the pornography channel, a skill he learns from his two friends at the gym. As Tomás explains to his sister, he watches pornography to learn “how to make love” (18:35-18:37). Bianca watches hardcore pornography with her brother, although she quickly diverts her eyes. Without their parents and uninterested in a formal education, the orphans turn to the television to learn about the world.

In addition to its pedagogical role, the TV acts as a mirror that reflects and refracts Bianca. In the film, the four-piece art deco mirror just above the couch underscores the television’s role as a mechanism of self-reflection.<sup>414</sup> The sequence in which Bianca, Tomás, and

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<sup>412</sup> Like her brother, the Bolognan and the Libyan men are part of a mass of under- and unemployed youths in Italy. In 2002, the year the novella was published, youth unemployment, defined as the unemployment rate of youths available for and seeking employment between the ages of fifteen to twenty-four, measured 27 percent in Italy. In 2013, the year the film was released, youth unemployment in the Southern European country measured 40.28 percent (The World Bank, “Unemployment, youth total”).

<sup>413</sup> The narrator of the novella remarks: “At the same time economic conditions were deteriorating. Not much, but on TV they said they were deteriorating. Something was wrong in Europe or Italy, I think. Or Rome. Or our neighborhood” (36).

<sup>414</sup> The narrator of the novella describes the television as a mirror to her past: “Even today, when I turn on the TV, I seem to get a glimpse of my criminal younger self, but the vision doesn’t last long, no longer than the time it takes the TV to fully come on. For an instant, though, I can see the eyes of the person I used to be, my hair, my scornful lips, my cold-looking cheekbones, and my neck, cold too, like marble. The sight always gives me a shiver” (6).

his friends from the gym watch a game show together on the couch (seg. 17) exemplifies the television's mirror-like qualities, while establishing a link between television, spectatorship, and the city (27:23-29:47).<sup>415</sup> The sequence begins with a static medium shot framed through the doorway, which shows Bianca lying on the couch watching TV (27:23-29:21). A corner of the television set is visible in the foreground and the mirror is centered on the wall above the couch. The mirror reproduces a distorted and fragmented image of the game show onscreen, which stars dancers in gold sequins and a child host dressed in a sky-blue leisure suit with coiffed hair. Tomás and his friends enter the room screen-right and join Bianca on the couch.

When Bianca tells them to stop distracting her with their small talk about the gym, the Bolognan declares that he, like Bianca, is fan of the program. He proceeds to answer the question about the meaning of the word *nimbo*: "Aureola: circle of light that identifies the holy" (28:32-28:35). The Libyan asks about his friend's reasons for not wanting to appear on the program and then taunts him, asking if he is "scared of the child" who hosts the show (29:14-29:15). After brushing aside the Libyan's teasing ("You go then!"), the Bolognan tells Bianca to "turn it up a bit" as a dance sequence begins on-screen (29:15-29:22). The camera cuts in (29:22) to the diegesis of the game show, showing the dancers on stage in their red wigs, gold shorts, and high heels moving in sync to a monotonous tune on a black and gold stage (29:22-29:27). The camera cuts to a close up of the dancers' then to another close-up of the smiling boy host in a circle of dancers (29:28-29:31). The dancers dissolve from the frame and the host, moving back and forth to the beat, stares directly at the camera and frowns (29:31-29:42). The screen then dissolves into gold sequins, some like those on the dancers' dresses, others inserted into the frame like gold

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<sup>415</sup> The game show appears briefly earlier in the film (18:23-18:29). The narrator of the novella also mentions her habit of watching these programs: "After eating and washing the dishes, I would sit down to watch some game show on TV" (34).

coins moving across the screen. The digitally-generated gold disks give way to an image of Bianca traversing a traffic circle (29:42-29:58).



*The television as a mirror: images from the gameshow*



In this sequence, the on-screen world crosses over into the diegetic world of the film. The boy host's grim stare breaks the fourth wall, suggesting that this television viewing experience is neither passive nor innocuous. No longer fragmented and refracted by the mirror or framed within the device itself, the television confirms its central place within the narrative. The sequence concludes with an image of the television program dissolving into a traffic circle, a motif that recurs towards the end of the film when Maciste chases after Bianca (seg. 50). This feature of the modern city, designed to control traffic flows, entails circular and recursive motion, movement that is paralleled by the mise-en-abyme reflections of the television and the mirror. It is also a symbolic clock enmeshed in the city. Bianca underscores this connection between the traffic circle, the city, television, and time. Standing out against the flow of automobiles as she traverses the traffic circle on foot, she remarks "And days went by" (29:52-29:54). For Bianca, time and her engagement with the city are fractured and mediated by the television.



*Bianca asserts herself in front of the TV*

The television reprises its role as a mirror at the end of the film (seg. 51). As she tells the Bolognan and Libyan to leave the apartment, she places her body in front of the television, obstructing the men's view of the screen. The camera shows her from behind facing the two men and her brother, who are sitting on the couch (1:31:38-1:31:45). After the Libyan challenges her decision—"You can't do this Bianca," he says (1:31:42-1:31:43)—the camera cuts (1:31:45) to a

medium close-up shot of Bianca in front of the television, telling the men that they had better be gone when she and Tomás return from a walk outside (1:31:45-1:31:58). In placing herself in front of the television—the main attraction in the apartment—, Bianca demands attention and asserts the validity of her own desires. She will no longer participate in their harebrained plots or be subsumed by their malaise. In the narrator’s final voice-over monologue, she describes the television as a mirror of her psyche. She imagines the TV projecting images from the past, like “photos of my brother’s friends, looking at me with nostalgia from our TV screen” (1:34:05-1:34:12).<sup>416</sup> In these final sequences, Bianca asserts herself as the matriarch of the household and casts off the role of the submissive movie heroine.

In addition to its cosmopolitan, didactic, and mirror-like qualities, the television replaces the movie theater as the traditional site of cinema. During a conversation in Maciste’s mansion about his film career, Bianca remarks: “I never go to the cinema” (58:33-58:34). Instead, the orphans watch movies on the television in their apartment. Bianca’s viewing of Jean Vigo’s *L’Atalante* and Gianfranco Parolini’s *La furia di Ercole* (*The Fury of Hercules*, 1962) exemplify the TV’s function as a site of cinema and spectatorship. In addition to augmenting the *Il Futuro*’s appeal to an art-house audience, these two films dialogue with Bianca’s situation. The happy ending of Vigo’s film (seg. 19a)—the reconciliation of the married couple on the river barge—contrasts with her transactional romance with Maciste, while resonating as a future ideal for the protagonist (30:51-31:09). Parolini’s peplum film serves as a metacinematic window into Maciste’s past glory.

Thomas Elsaesser suggests that the cinephile is both a “collector and archivist” (“Cinephilia” 40). In *Il Futuro*, the video store functions as an archive of the peplum film and

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<sup>416</sup> The novella ends with an almost identical monologue (108-09).

facilitates Bianca's cinephilia.<sup>417</sup> Bianca visits the video store after her second stay at Maciste's house. Although she does not explicitly say so, her visit to the video store is prompted by an urge to see Maciste performing his famous character. The amorous and investigative nature of Bianca's outing to the store is reinforced by the preceding sequence (seg. 28), in which Maciste recounts the last movie he ever saw (he walked out of the theater before it was over) and details his relationship with the actress Dolly Plimpton (an apocryphal character), who left the movie business to start a family. Significantly, the sequence at the strongman's mansion ends with Maciste and Bianca making love, before cutting to the three-shot sequence (seg. 29) in the video store (1:02:11-1:02:33). This transition from sex to browsing movies exemplifies the extent to which cinema and love—cinephilia—are inextricable for Bianca.

The first shot of the sequence in the video store is a close-up of a scale model mountain traversed by a road (1:02:11-1:02:24). This metacinematic shot recalls the opening sequence of the film, in which Bianca's parents traverse a mountain road in their doomed yellow Fiat. The camera pans left and tilts upwards to reveal the "Hollywood" sign on the top of this miniature landscape. In the background are DVDs and movie posters. Bianca enters screen left, and the camera pans left, following her movement as she contemplates the racks full of movies, arranged like books in a library. The following shot is an obstructed close-up, which shows a small horizontal opening framed between two rows of DVDs of peplum films, including Sergio Leone's *Il colosso di Rodi* (*The Colossus of Rhodes*, 1961) (1:02:25-1:02:33).<sup>418</sup> Through this small gap we see Bianca's eyes and forehead as she enters the frame from screen-left. The

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<sup>417</sup> The narrator of the novella recounts how she often visited these establishments: "Without surprise I discovered that I liked video stores. Not so much the ones in our neighborhood, but the stores in other neighborhoods" (13). She continues: "Sometimes I went into a video store and spent half an hour or more scanning the shelves of video cases and then I would leave without renting anything, not because I wouldn't have liked to, but because I had no money" (13).

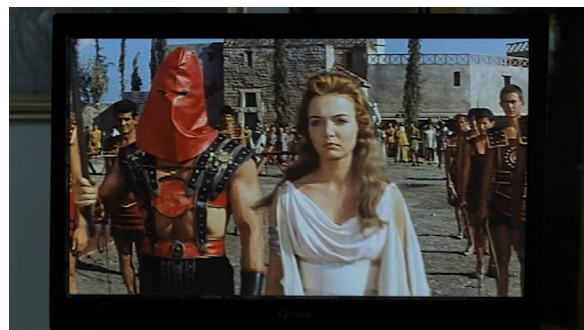
<sup>418</sup> The "Leone" decal on the façade of the gym where Tomás works may be a reference to the famous director (21:08-21:23).

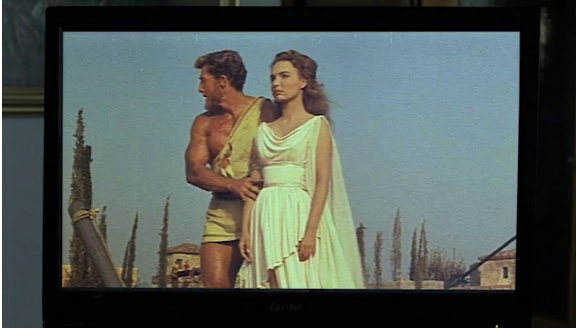
camera pans right, keeping the protagonist's face centered in the frame. She pauses among these peplum films. Bianca's fascination with these films recalls the observation by the narrator of the novella about how she "studied the video cases as if they were books" (14).

As a redoubt of the forgotten and maligned peplum film, the video store is central to Bianca's practice of cinephilia. The video store is a living archive, which Bianca relies on to satisfy her appetite for cinema and her desire to know about Maciste. After the shot of Bianca scrutinizing the DVD cases, the camera cuts to the television in the orphans' apartment (1:02:33-1:03:26). Framed against the wall, the television reproduces scenes from Parolini's *La furia di Ercole*. Parolini's 1962 film is a French and Italian co-production. It was shot at Dubrava Film studios in Zagreb, Yugoslavia (present-day Croatia) and features a diverse cast, including the Italian peplum star Alan Steel, the French singer Serge Gainsbourg in the role of the villain Menistus, and the Zagreb Opera Ballet. The film stars the American bodybuilder and stuntman Brad Harris as Hercules. In the scenes shown on the screen, Hercules (ostensibly played by Hauer's Maciste) attempts to rescue the daughter of the leader of the rebellion against the kingdom, who is going to be ritually sacrificed. The hero is shown fighting a giant ape—the second of the three trials he faces—before eventually rescuing her.

As Hercules fights to save the helpless maiden on-screen, the Libyan comments off-screen that the film lacks artistic merit: "My father liked these films, they're terrible. There's no rhythm, shallow characters, arbitrary plot turns." Bianca challenges his capacity to judge the film: "What do you know about art?". The Libyan, incredulous, responds: "This is art?". Bianca retorts: "Of course it is, idiot" (1:03:04-1:03:17). The final shot of this sequence in the apartment shows the characters on the couch watching the television, which is only partially visible in the frame (1:03:26-1:03:39). A dumbbell lies in the foreground, a symbolic link between the

masculine aesthetic ideal of Hercules and the body-building-obsessed male characters in Scherson's film. Bianca comments on Maciste's ex-lover, the "vulgar" Dolly Plimpton (in Parolini's film, Hercules's love interest is played by Luisella Bony, who is credited as Brigitte Corey) (1:03:35-1:03:36). In addition to her personal investment in the film and its strongman star, Bianca valorizes this peplum film as art and incorporates it into her perception of the city. After this shot, the camera cuts to a sequence shot of Bianca cutting Maciste's fingernails and then combing his hair while Maciste blindly looks on in the mirror, while they discuss the movie. Bianca says she liked the ending when Maciste (Hercules) abandons the handmaiden Daria (1:03:39-1:04:44). This long-shot juxtaposes the youthful physicality of Bianca with the aging body of the former movie star we just saw on screen, pointing to Bianca's dual role as spectator and caretaker of Maciste. Additionally, in cutting from the sequence of *La furia de Ercole* in the television to Maciste's image in the mirror, the film establishes a direct connection between these two objects and underscores the self-reflexive and active nature of Bianca's spectatorship.





*From the video store, to the television, to the mirror*

*La furia di Ercole* appears again later in *Il Futuro* and again serves as a bridge between the sites of cinema in the film: the television in the siblings' apartment, the video store, Cinecittà, and Maciste's mansion. The sequence (seg. 36) unfolds in the living room, where Bianca sits on the couch next to the Libyan, watching the sword-and-sandal epic she rented from the video store (1:11:30-1:12:37). The Bolognan accuses her of falling in love with Maciste and abandoning the search for the safe. He reproaches her for "not thinking about the future" (1:12:23-1:12:24). Following this dialogue, the camera cuts to the television, again framed against the wall, which shows another scene from the peplum film (1:12:25-1:12:37). In the scene, Hercules embraces the voluptuous Queen Cnidia, who asks: "Hercules, why don't you stay with me forever?" (1:12:25-1:12:28). The two characters kiss and the string instruments on the soundtrack crescendo. This music carries over into the next shot, in which Bianca crosses in front of the modernist façade of Cinecittà, framed in a long shot (1:12:37-1:12:42). In the sequence that

follows, Bianca explores this famous studio and fashions it into a site of cinema, memory, and spectatorship.

At the time of its founding in 1937 under the Mussolini regime, Cinecittà was among the largest and most modern film studios in Europe (Brunetta 72-73). The studio figures prominently in art films like Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris* (*Contempt*, 1963) and Mateo Garrone's *Reality* (2012). In Godard's satirical film, Cinecittà is the stomping ground of a Hollywood producer (Jack Palance) who has commissioned Fritz Lang (played by the director himself) to adapt *The Odyssey*. The studio, with its ubiquitous and kitschy busts of Greek gods, is a place of bad taste and egos run amok. In *Reality*, a similar transformation takes place, as the famed studios are the site of an audition for a reality television show. Like these films, *Il Futuro* engages with the historical legacy studio as a site where cinema and memory are intertwined. For Bianca, the studio is not just part of the urban scenery that she passes by on her commute while taking the magazine quiz; Cinecittà is also a place that she interacts with and dreams about and where her peplum fantasies manifest themselves.

Cinecittà appears three times in the film. The first time, Bianca is commuting home while the magazine quiz continues in voice-over (seg. 20). The second time, it appears in an extended sequence in which Bianca visits the studio (seg. 37). The third time, the film studio appears in an oneiric sequence (seg. 43), which I analyzed in detail in the previous section. Her multifaceted engagement with Cinecittà reflects the double nature of cinephilia: she consumes and dreams of movies. In this section I want to highlight Bianca's visit to Cinecittà. Her visit occurs after the Bolognan accuses her of not thinking of the future. Symbolically forsaking her obligations, she immerses herself inside this cinematic city. This sequence consists of seven shots that follow Bianca as she visits the famed film studio. The first shot is an exterior establishing shot of the

studio's façade as Bianca enters (1:12:37-1:12:42). The second (1:12:43-1:12:52) and third shots (1:12:52-1:12:57) show the orphan protagonist as she passes by faded hieroglyphs, a photo shoot, and a group of tourists in an enormous plaza against the backdrop of an ancient Roman palace. The fourth shot shows her beneath the dismembered legs of a colossal statue between which stands a pharaonic statue (1:12:57-1:13:04). The enormous scale of the stone legs is emphasized by the camera, which tilts upwards. In the following shot, Bianca approaches the head of a weathered bust of Zeus and touches its beard (1:13:04-1:13:17). The movie set is a kitschy reimagining of ancient Rome on a colossal scale. Cinecittà transforms the Roman ruins seen elsewhere in the film, most notably the Coliseum, into a work of cinematic artifice, in which an Egyptian statue and a Roman palace stand side by side. This amalgam of cinematic fantasy at Cinecittà is a microcosm of Bianca's relationship to Rome, which is mediated through moving images.







*Bianca visits Cinecittà*

This shot of Bianca touching the statue of Zeus’s head recalls her tactile interactions with Maciste. As she caresses its beard, the narrator of the film begins a long meditation in voice-over, responding to the Bolognan’s accusation that she has neglected her future: “He was wrong about my thinking. I was always thinking about the future. I thought about it so much that the present had become part of the future. The strangest part” (1:13:11-1:13:27). During her monologue, the camera cuts to a long shot of Bianca sitting on the steps of the enormous square next to a man with a bandaged head (1:13:17-1:13:22). In the background, a row of red columns stretches out in the distance, a façade that recalls the sets in *La furia di Ercole*. The final shot of this sequence shows Bianca sitting down in front of a grey wall that spans the frame (1:13:22-1:13:28). The narrator’s voice-over monologue continues as the camera cuts to a long shot of Bianca smoking a cigarette and peering out the window of Maciste’s gym (1:13:28-1:13:59). This cut links Cinecittà with Maciste’s mansion, another site of cinema. The camera tracks closer as Bianca reflects on her future: “For me, the future was like one of the rooms at Maciste’s

house, but brighter and with furniture covered in old sheets. As if the owners had gone on a trip and didn't want their stuff to get dusty. That was my future, and that's how I thought of it. If that could be called 'thinking.' And if that could be called 'future'" (1:13:27-1:13:54). Although the protagonist's future is obscured, her present is a vivid landscape of cinema and television.

As this transition from Cinecittà to Maciste's mansion underscores, the home of the aging strongman is a site of cinema and cinephilia. As we have seen, the film emphasizes the artificial, Gothic, and cinematic qualities of the space from Bianca's first visit (seg. 24). It is haunted by its movie star inhabitant, a cinematic ghost, who hangs onto his past glory as an actor and Mr. Universe. Moreover, the space itself, which is trapped in darkness, emphasizes sight and blindness. Although Maciste cannot see, he moves with agility through the space. However, Bianca, a surrogate for the viewer, enters into this unfamiliar and world with trepidation and is unable to move freely without disturbing Maciste, until he becomes ill. Further bolstering the notion that the house is a site of cinema, Bianca's visits to the mansion occur at night. Maciste's house is a cinema where Bianca consummates her celluloid fantasies with the aging movie star. In making love with this blind cinematic hero, the protagonist enacts cinephilia—the love of cinema—with all five of her senses. Notwithstanding the trophies and paintings of Maciste hidden inside the house, Bianca, her body glistening with oil, is the real star.

Bianca's consumption of and travels between these sites of cinema and spectatorship—the magazine personality quiz, the television in her apartment, the video store, Cinecittà, and Maciste's mansion, reflect the close connection between her perception of Rome as a cosmopolitan city of moving images. Bianca engages with these objects and sites as an active spectator and cinephile. These cinematic sites host her dreams, facilitate self-reflection, and shape her engagement with and perception of Rome as a cosmopolis of moving images.

## 5.4. Segment Summary

Copy utilized: DVD, distributed by Strand Releasing.

(The beginning and end time, as well as the duration of each segment are noted in parentheses)

### Part 1: The Accident and Explosions of Light

Seg. 01	(00:00-02:29)	Credits: yellow Fiat on mountain road	(2'29'')
Seg. 02	(02:29-04:27)	Salvage yard: crushed Fiat	(1'58'')
Seg. 03	(04:27-04:52)	Parents' belongings in a plastic bag	(0'25'')
Seg. 04	(04:52-06:43)	Car ride home with the social worker	(1'51'')
Seg. 05	(06:43-07:10)	Dark apartment: relics from the past	(0'27'')
Seg. 06	(07:10-11:04)	Ad Astra per Aspera a) Social worker's visit (7:10-8:57) b) Explosion of light (8:57-10:45) c) Documentary on the sun (10:45-11:04)	(3'54'')
Seg. 07	(11:04-13:01)	Bianca awakes and rummages around her parents' room	(1'57'')
Seg. 08	(13:01-14:04)	Walk to school past the billboard and the gym	(1'03'')
Seg. 09	(14:04-14:47)	Bianca bored at school	(0'43'')
Seg. 10	(14:47-15:21)	Bianca on the bus: waiting for a catastrophe	(0'34'')
Seg. 11	(15:21-16:23)	Hair salon: how to wash hair	(1'02'')
Seg. 12	(16:23-19:20)	Brother and sister watch pornography	(2'57'')
Seg. 13	(19:20-20:59)	The television and rhythms of the city	(1'39'')
Seg. 14	(20:59-22:22)	Bianca visits Tomás at the gym	(1'23'')

### Part 2: Intruders and the Magazine Quiz

Seg. 15	(22:22-25:58)	The Bolognan and the Libyan pay a visit	(3'36'')
Seg. 16	(25:58-27:23)	Dinner with the brothers in blood	(1'25'')
Seg. 17	(27:23-29:47)	The game show	(2'24'')
Seg. 18	(29:47-30:51)	Bianca walks through Rome with open eyes, consuming herself	(1'04'')
Seg. 19	(30:51-33:47)	Nocturnal emissions a) <i>L'Atalante</i> (30:51-31:09) b) Sleeping with the Libyan and the Bolognan (31:09-33:47)	(2'56'')
Seg. 20	(33:47-36:54)	Personality quiz	(3'07'')
Seg. 21	(36:54-40:22)	The plan to rob Maciste	(3'28'')
Seg. 22	(40:22-42:10)	Dreams and preparations a) I will be a delinquent now (40:22-40:35) b) Dream: Bianca follows her parents along a sun-parched highway (40:35-40:58) c) Bianca dons a trench coat (40:58-41:54) d) Nocturnal Rome: journey to Maciste's	(1'48'')

house (41:54-42:10)

Part 3: Bianca and Maciste

Seg. 23	(42:10-43:07)	Arrival at Maciste's house, communicating through the intercom	(0'57")
Seg. 24	(43:07-53:03)	First visit to Maciste's house a) Bianca follows Maciste up the stairs (43:07-44:22) b) Getting to know each other in the gym (44:22-49:31) c) Maciste massages Bianca with oil (49:31-50:36) d) Bianca showers (50:36-52:14) e) Maciste pays Bianca (52:14-53:03)	(9'56")
Seg. 25	(53:03-53:18)	Bianca's taxi ride home	(0'15")
Seg. 26	(53:18-54:19)	The Bolognan interrogates Bianca about Maciste	(1'01")
Seg. 27	(54:19-55:31)	Bianca walks through the shifting streets of Rome	(1'12")
Seg. 28	(55:31-1:02:11)	Second visit to Maciste's house a) Bianca enters the house and undresses (55:31-56:48) b) Wrestling on the bed (56:48-57:24) c) The Pittsburgh Colt sandwich (57:24-59:26) d) Bianca searches through the house and is caught by Maciste (59:26-1:02:11)	(6'40")
Seg. 29	(1:02:11-1:02:33)	Bianca visits the video store	(0'22")
Seg. 30	(1:02:33-1:03:39)	Watching <i>La furia di Ercole</i>	(1'06")
Seg. 31	(1:03:39-1:07:00)	Third visit to Maciste's house a) Bianca combs Maciste's hair (1:03:39-1:04:45) b) Bianca searches the house and is caught again by Maciste (1:04:45-1:06:15) c) Bianca reads <i>Jane Eyre</i> to Maciste (1:06:15-1:06:31) d) Bianca lies in bed with Maciste (1:06:31-1:07:00)	(3'21")
Seg. 32	(1:07:00-1:08:02)	Bianca tells Tomás that he needs to go to school	(1'02")
Seg. 33	(1:08:02-1:09:15)	Bodybuilding competition	(1'13")
Seg. 34	(1:09:15-1:10:04)	The Libyan accuses Bianca of being distracted and not searching for the safe	(0'49")
Seg. 35	(1:10:04-1:11:30)	Fourth visit to Maciste's house	(1'26")
Seg. 36	(1:11:30-1:12:37)	<i>La Furia di Ercole</i> redux, the Bolognan accuses Bianca of not thinking about the future	(1'07")
Seg. 37	(1:12:37-1:13:28)	Bianca visits Cinecittà	(0'51")

Seg. 38	(1:13:28-1:15:26)	Fifth visit to Maciste's house a) Bianca's monologue on the future, asks Maciste if he was driving the car when his friends died (1:13:28-1:15:19) b) Bianca in the shower (1:15:19-1:15:26)	(1'58'')
Seg. 39	(1:15:26-1:15:56)	Late-night sale	(0'30'')
Seg. 40	(1:15:56-1:17:40)	Social worker stops by to see the orphans	(1'44'')
Seg. 41	(1:17:40-1:18:18)	The hairdresser tells Bianca that she looks worse every day	(0'38'')
Seg. 42	(1:18:18-1:18:27)	Bianca watches a train crossing the Tiber	(0'09'')
Seg. 43	(1:18:27-1:18:42)	Dream of a peplum hero in Cinecittà	(0'15'')
Seg. 44	(1:18:42-1:19:50)	Sixth visit to Maciste's house a) Orgasm (1:18:42-1:19:01) b) Bianca confesses her love to Maciste (1:19:01-1:19:50)	(1'08'')
Seg. 45	(1:19:50-1:21:46)	Bianca travels back home a) Taxi ride (1:19:50-1:20:29) b) Encounter with an ex-boyfriend (1:20:29-1:21:23) c) Climbing the stairs (1:21:23-1:21:46)	(1'56'')
Seg. 46	(1:21:46-1:23:06)	Apartment in disarray	(1'20'')
Seg. 47	(1:23:06-1:23:16)	Bianca walks to the mansion	(0'10'')
Seg. 48	(1:23:16-1:28:35)	Seventh and final visit to Maciste's house a) Maciste ill in the gym (1:23:16-1:24:24) b) Bianca brings Maciste a cup of chamomile tea (1:24:24-1:24:48) c) Bianca steals Maciste's keys and searches the house (1:24:24-1:27:53) d) Bianca opens the shutters and the sunlight reveals Maciste curled up, asleep in his bed (1:27:53-1:28:35)	(5'19'')
Seg. 49	(1:28:35-1:29:11)	Maciste implores Bianca to come back inside	(0'36'')
Seg. 50	(1:29:11-1:30:18)	Bianca walks down the street and Maciste follows her to the traffic circle	(1'07'')

#### Part 4: Bianca Takes Control

Seg. 51	(1:30:18-1:31:58)	Bianca orders the Bolognan and the Libyan to leave the apartment	(1'40'')
Seg. 52	(1:31:58-1:32:58)	Bianca and Tomás walk to the Tiber, eat ice cream	(1'00'')
Seg. 53	(1:32:58-1:33:51)	Brother and sister alone in the apartment	(0'53'')
Seg. 54	(1:33:51-1:35:18)	Bianca's final monologue: storm in the European night	(1'27'')
Seg. 55	(1:35:18-1:38:50)	End credits	(3'32'')

## 5.5. Technical Summary

Country: Chile/Germany/Italy/Spain  
Languages: Italian, English, and Spanish  
Year: 2013  
Shooting Format: Digital, Color  
Running Time: 98'50"

Director: Alicia Scherson  
Screenplay: Alicia Scherson and Roberto Bolaño (based on the novel *Una novelita lumpen*)  
Producer: Bruno Bettati  
Director of Photography: Ricardo DeAngelis  
Camera: Maura Morales  
Editors: Soledad Salfate and Ana Álvarez-Ossorio  
Continuity: Marta Loza  
Wardrobe: Carolina Espina  
Original Music: Pablo Cervantes, Caroline Chaspoul and Eduardo Henríquez Ilic  
Executive Producers: Bruno Bettati, Christoph Friedel, Mario Mazzarotto, Claudia Steffen Emanuele Nespeca, Luis Ángel Ramírez, and Álvaro Alonso  
Associate Producer: Nicolas Vaporidis  
Cast: Manuela Martelli (Bianca), Luigi Ciardo (Tomás), Rutger Hauer (Maciste), Nicolas Vaporidis (Libyan), Alessandro Giallocosta (Bolognan), Daniela Piperno (Social Worker), Pino Calabrese (Policeman), Patricia Rivadeneira (Hairdresser's Owner), Maria De Aracelli Budia Cabeza (Hairdresser 1), Luciano Lavarra (Hairdresser 2), Brando Taccini (Ex-Boyfriend), Alice Fritti (Laura), Stefano Palma (Gigi), Davide Michele Zongoli (Young Maciste), Andrea Piazza (Garibaldino), Mauro Costa (Bodybuilder 1), Francesco Crimi (Bodybuilder 2), Antonella Lizza (Bodybuilder 3), Omar Monno (Bodybuilder 4), Marco Antonini (Bodybuilder 5), Marco Pinto (TV Quiz Show Host), Cristián Jiménez (TV Quiz Show Contestant 1), Patricio Gajardo (TV Quiz Show Contestant 2), Irma Pavez (TV Quiz Show Contestant 3), Nerven & Zellen (TV Quiz Show Dancers), Francisca Martelli (Bianca's Mother), and Gustavo Molina (Bianca's Father)  
Casting: Alice Fritti, Soledad Gaspar  
Art Directors: Tim Pannen (Germany), Marta Zani (Italy), and Sebastián Muñoz (Chile)  
*Germany Unit*  
Production Manager: Andreas Jupe

Set Manager: Alexander Rutkowski  
Production Coordinator: Elke Quint  
1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director: Ciro Scognamiglio  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director: Michael Löseke

*Italy Unit*

Production Manager: Luigi Boscaïno  
Production Coordinators: Carlo Traini and Irene Abrescia  
1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director: Ciro Scognamiglio  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director: Andrea Piazza

*Chile Unit*

Production Manager: José Luis Rivas  
1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director: Juan Rosas  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director: Millaray Cortés  
3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Director: Eloisa Whitley

Image Post-production: Cinecolor Chile and Grupo Chilefilms  
Post-production Color Correction: Vicky Halaby  
Post-production FX: Christian Jara  
Post-production Coordination: Juan Carlos Arriagada and Claudio Guivernau  
Sound Post-Production: Plató-Cinecolor  
Sound Design: Miguel Hormazábal  
Sound Editing: Sebastián Marín and Miguel Hormazábal  
Sound Mix: Arte Sonora  
Post-Production Coordinators: Pedro Basauri (Chile) and Enrico Barone (Italy)  
English-language Subtitles: Doris Wunderlicht  
Production Companies: Jirafa (Chile), La Ventura (Chile), Pandora Film  
Produktion (Germany), and Movimentofilm (Italy)  
Associate Production Companies: Astronauta Films (Spain) and Jaleo Films (Spain)  
Funding: Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes (Fondo de  
Fomento Audiovisual), CORFO, Film und Medien Stiftung  
NRW, Deutscher Filmförderfonds, Programa Ibermedia,  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (visions  
sud est), Consejo Nacional de Televisión, Ministero dei  
Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo (Direzione  
Generale per il Cinema), Regione Lazio (Fondo regionale  
per il Cinema e l'Audiovisivo), The MEDIA Programme of  
the European Union, Junta de Andalucía (Consejería de  
Cultura), and Erreà Sport.  
Distributors: BF Distribution (Chile) and Strand Releasing (U.S.)  
Premiere: January 19, 2013 (Sundance)  
Theatrical Release: June 6, 2013 (Chile), September 6, 2013 (U.S.)  
Spectators: 4,699 (Chile)

Shot in Rome, Cologne, and Santiago between August 2011 and January 2012

## 6. Labor of Love: Satire and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism in Sebastián Silva's *Nasty Baby*

*¿Por qué no se van, no se van del país?*  
—Los Prisioneros

Sebastián Silva's *Nasty Baby* explores the nature and boundaries of cosmopolitanism via the interconnected relationship between forming a family and filmmaking. *Nasty Baby* is Silva's sixth feature-length film and the first to be shot in the United States. The movie features elements drawn from Silva's own life as an expatriate from New York and marks a new stage in his career. In a 2015 interview Silva says that making an English-language film in New York is driven by a desire to reach and communicate with viewers:

I'm really good at observing humans overall, so I'd rather bring that here where I live. And English-spoken things have way more reach, and I'm really looking to reach a bigger audience. Not because I want their money or anything, but I'm doing these things to have a dialogue with people, you know? So the more people watch my stuff, the more satisfied I feel as a communicator. ("Interview: Sebastián Silva on *Nasty Baby*")

With *Nasty Baby*, Silva positions himself as a cosmopolitan filmmaker seeking out a global audience.

The protagonist of *Nasty Baby*, Freddy (Sebastián Silva), is a Chilean expatriate and artist. He lives in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York with his partner Mo (Tunde Adebimpe), who is African American and works as a carpenter.<sup>419</sup> Together with their friend Polly (Kristen Wiig), a white doctor, the trio attempts to produce a child. Polly first tries to conceive with Freddy. When Freddy's sperm proves infertile, she turns to Mo, who, after a period of hesitation, agrees to donate his sperm. The trio's plans to form a family are challenged

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<sup>419</sup> Adebimpe is also a musician and the lead vocalist for the rock band TV on the Radio.



by The Bishop (Reg Cathey), a semi-indigent and mentally unwell African American man who lives down the street.<sup>420</sup> In the film's final act, Freddy responds to Bishop's verbal and physical threats with violence. The murder of Bishop and the subsequent destruction and disappearance of his body by Freddy and his family, represents the failure of common conversations. Unable and unwilling to communicate forthrightly with Bishop to resolve their conflict in a peaceful manner, Freddy, Mo, and Polly resort to violence to maintain the integrity of their family and neighborhood.

The first part of this chapter considers the relationship between the figure of the expatriate, family, and cosmopolitanism. I highlight Freddy's identity as an expatriate Chilean artist in New York and link his character with the film's autobiographical qualities. *Nasty Baby* depicts Freddy, Mo, and Polly's efforts to form a family as a microcosm of cosmopolitanism. I contrast their diverse, non-traditional family with their roles in the murder and disappearance of Bishop, actions which represent a rejection of the cosmopolitan's tenet of respect for others and basis in the practice of common conversations. The second section examines the metacinematic and satiric qualities of Freddy's "Nasty Baby" experimental video and performance piece (for clarity, I will refer to this artwork as "Nasty Baby" to distinguish it from the larger film). This experimental video and performance art piece, which viewers witness pass through the various stages of creation, presents a self-reflexive and satiric portrait of filmmaking and *Nasty Baby* itself. And the portrayal of the gallery owner Marcus (Neal Huff) functions as a satire of contemporary art, film festivals, and the role of cultural brokers and gatekeepers. The final section explores the relationship between *Nasty Baby* and Roman Polanski's 1968 film *Rosemary's Baby*. I believe Polanski's film is fundamental intertext of *Nasty Baby*. I point to

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<sup>420</sup> Cathey's character is credited as "The Bishop." However, in the film he is referred to as both "The Bishop" and "Bishop." In the interest of clarity and style, I will refer to the character as "Bishop."

connections across their titles, settings, mise-en-scène, characters, genre, and depictions of conception as a self-reflexive metaphor for artistic creation.

### 6.1. The Expatriate Artist, Family, and the Cosmopolitan Ideal

The character of Freddy exemplifies *Nasty Baby*'s cosmopolitan themes. Although Freddy's nationality is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative, his use of Spanish peppered with the ubiquitous Chilean slang word "huevón" during conversations with his brother Chino on two separate occasions (12:09-12:19 and 1:22:11-1:22:30) reveal his Chilean origins.<sup>421</sup> The omission of an explicit reference to Freddy's Chilean identity reflects the diversity of his neighborhood and city: his status as an expatriate and immigrant is not a novelty.<sup>422</sup> Ulf Hannerz observes that the expatriate, and in particular the expatriate artist, represents the prototypical cosmopolitan. Hannerz notes that the expatriate voluntarily lives outside of their home country and embraces cultures different from their own:

The concept of the expatriate may be that which we will most readily associate with cosmopolitanism. Expatriates (or ex-expatriates) are people who have chosen to live abroad for some period, and who know when they are there that they can go home when it suits them. Not that all expatriates are living models of cosmopolitanism; colonialists were also expatriates, and mostly they abhorred "going native". But these are people who can afford to experiment, who do not stand to lose a treasured but threatened, uprooted sense of self. We often think of them as people of independent (even if modest) means,

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<sup>421</sup> Silva wrote a twenty-page treatment for the film instead of a traditional screenplay. During shooting, the actors improvised many of their lines. Silva also used a treatment in lieu of a screenplay for *Crystal Fairy* (Silva and Wiig, "Nasty Baby Question and Answer Session," 22 October 2015).

<sup>422</sup> According to U.S. Census data, 37.2 percent of residents in Kings County, New York (the county encompassing Brooklyn) were foreign born between 2012 and 2016 ("QuickFacts: Kings County").

for whom openness to new experiences is a vocation, or people who can take along their work more or less where it pleases them; writers and painters in Paris between the wars are perhaps the archetypes. (243)

Like Gastón, his expatriate counterpart in *Se arrienda*, Freddy pursues a career as an artist in New York City and has a measure of economic security. Unlike Gastón, who worked at a café while living in New York, the protagonist of *Nasty Baby* does not hold a job outside of his work as an artist. Freddy's lack of a day job suggests that he has had some commercial success as an artist, relies on financial support from his family, or a combination of the two. Regardless of the source of his income, Freddy's stable financial circumstances affords him the freedom to dedicate himself to his art and his relationships with Polly and Mo. As Hannerz puts it, Freddy is a person who can "afford to experiment" in his life and art. There is a key difference between Gastón and Freddy. Whereas Gastón's ties to New York are relatively tenuous, Freddy's connection to the city is deeply rooted, as exemplified by his relationship with his partner Mo.

Like Freddy's expatriate identity, the theme of family is central to the representation of cosmopolitanism. *Nasty Baby* centers on a non-traditional and multi-racial family comprised of the Chilean Freddy, his African-American partner Mo, and their white friend Polly. In his review in *The New York Times*, A.O. Scott highlights the film's emphasis on the relationships among Freddy's non-traditional family: "The movie operates mainly as a comedy of postmodern manners, poking at the unexamined sensitivities and tiny contradictions that are part of the daily rhythms of the character's [*sic*] lives" ("In 'Nasty Baby,' Friends Decide"). The nature and mutability of family is a recurring theme in many of Silva's films. *La vida me mata (Life Kills Me)* depicts two families: the protagonist's immediate family and his amateur filmmaking troupe. *La nana (The Maid)* centers on the strained relationship between a domestic employee

and the upper-middle-class family that employs her. And *Gatos viejos (Old Cats)* depicts an elderly couple as they deal with the return of their daughter and her girlfriend to Santiago.

*Nasty Baby*'s emphasis on family and its connection to Silva's own biography is underscored by the disclaimer in its title, filming locations, cinematography, and casting. The disclaimer in the title credits declares in capital letters that the film is "BASED ON A TRUE STORY" (04:56-04:57). In framing the film as a true story, Silva encourages viewers to seek connections between himself and the character he portrays in the film. The use of Silva's own apartment in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, which doubles as Freddy and Mo's home, underscores the film's quasi-autobiographical nature as well as its thematic focus on family.<sup>423</sup> And the utilization of a handheld camera throughout the film emphasizes family and affords viewers privileged vantage point into the space of the home. The handheld camera ably navigates private domestic spaces like the bathroom (segs. 8 and 44) and depicts intimate situations like Polly's artificial insemination (seg. 34).<sup>424</sup> Finally, the casting underscores the film's focus on family and its autobiographical qualities. Freddy's cat Sula is Silva's pet cat and his brother Chino is played by the director's brother Agustín Silva.<sup>425</sup> And in casting himself as Freddy, Silva blurs the lines between his own experience as a gay Chilean filmmaker living and working in New York City and the protagonist. This connection between Silva and Freddy is further strengthened by the incorporation of situations and characters from Silva's personal life. The "Nasty Baby" video is an idea Silva proposed for a dance workshop, Bishop is based on Silva's neighbor in Santiago who used a leaf blower early in the morning (Silva, "Interview:

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<sup>423</sup> Silva's web series *The Boring Life of Jacqueline* and his short film *Dance Dance Dance* from the film anthology *Madly* are also set and shot on location in New York City.

<sup>424</sup> Sergio Armstrong, the film's director of photography, collaborated with Silva on *La vida me mata* and *La nana*.

<sup>425</sup> Agustín Silva also appears in *La nana*, *Crystal Fairy*, and *Magic Magic*.

Sebastian Silva”), and Marcus is modeled on an Argentine gallery owner in New York (Silva and Wiig, “*Nasty Baby* Question and Answer Session,” 22 October 2015).



*A family affair: Agustín and Sebastián Silva*

*Nasty Baby* depicts the non-traditional family at its center as a microcosm of cosmopolitanism and its limits. In cosmopolitan thought, the family serves as a model for interactions with the larger world. In his early-5<sup>th</sup>-century treatise *City of God*, the Christian theologian and philosopher St. Augustine observes that thinkers of his day viewed the family as a microcosm of social relations: “After the city or town comes the world, which the philosophers reckon as the third level of human society. They begin with the household, proceed to the city, and then arrive at the world” (861). With its focus on the creation and preservation of a family, *Nasty Baby* personifies the conception of the family as synecdoche of the city and the world. Freddy, Mo, and Polly—three people of different races and backgrounds—unite to create and rear a child. However, in seeking to maintain tranquility and uphold the social and economic status quo of their neighborhood against outsiders like Bishop, these characters reveal limits of their openness. Faced with the disorderly and violent behavior of Bishop, who disrupts their comfortable home life and prosperous neighborhood with his leaf blower, mental instability, homophobia, Freddy, Mo, and Polly abandon “common conversations” for violence (Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* 258).

Two extended sequences epitomize the film's representation of family as a cosmopolitan impulse rooted in "a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience" (Hannerz 239), and a violent reaction against a perceived threat to the integrity of Freddy's neighborhood: the visit to Mo's parents' house and the murder and disappearance of Bishop. In each of these sequences, Freddy travels outside of New York City. These displacements outside of the city underscore the significance of the sequences within the narrative and reflect how the trio defines family against those from outside of their upper-middle-class social milieu. For Freddy, Mo, and Polly, the families of Mo's sister and Bishop are examples to be avoided. Working against these undesirable templates, Freddy, Mo, and Polly join together to fashion their own family. Ironically, they perpetuate their own exclusive vision of a racially diverse, open-minded society, while distancing themselves from, and, in the case of Bishop, destroying those who do not embody these values or who they perceive as threats to their family, neighborhood, and status quo. Their exclusionary attitude and behavior exemplify Hannerz's observation that "Cosmopolitanism often has a narcissistic streak" (240).

Freddy, Mo, and Polly's visit to Mo's parents' house (segs. 32-35) occurs on the occasion of Mo's birthday (earlier in the film Freddy and Mo host a celebration of Mo's birthday in their apartment (seg. 28). The trip follows their fourth confrontation with Bishop over his early-morning use of a leaf blower, which subsequently prompts the intervention of a police officer (seg. 31). Temporarily leaving behind the volatile situation in their neighborhood, the trio travels to the suburbs in their friend Richard's (Mark Margolis) red Land Rover (seg. 32). While in the car, Freddy tells a short anecdote that foreshadows the skepticism they face from Mo's sister about their desire to have a baby and co-parent. The protagonist describes how his parents,

seeking to appease a homophobic neighbor, forbade him from visiting the family's country house with his ex-boyfriend (49:47-50:16).



*Leaving the city*

During the birthday dinner (seg. 33), a contentious argument over the nature of family unfolds between Polly and Mo's pregnant sister, Haimy (Marsha Stephanie Blake). The dispute between Haimy and Polly and the release of *Nasty Baby* coincide with the expansion of civil rights for same-sex families in Chile and the United States. In 2015, Chile's Congress enacted a law establishing civil unions for heterosexual and same-sex couples. That same year, the United States Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage.<sup>426</sup> The discussion is a synecdoche of arguments for and against gay marriage and gay rights more generally, and pits Haimy's vision of a traditional nuclear family against the trio's non-traditional and multi-racial family. Polly suggests to Mo's sister that their children could be friends: "If it works out it would be so nice, to have . . . because you're due very soon, you know. They could grow up together, they'd be the same age, it would be so nice" (51:52-51:56). Although, Freddy declares his support for Polly's proposal—"I like that idea," he says (51:56-51:57)—, Haimy is less receptive: "But I mean you guys are in New York, so it's gonna be a little bit hard to like get them together" (51:58-52:02). Later, Polly prods Haimy about her view of the trio's plan to have a child. In response, Mo's

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<sup>426</sup> See Liptak, "Supreme Court Ruling Makes Same-Sex Marriage a Right Nationwide."

sister criticizes their effort to form a family: “Well you guys are trying it out in a different way. You know, maybe there’s a reason it hasn’t happened yet. That’s all. That’s all I’m saying” (52:33-52:40). Haimy links Polly’s “different” approach to creating a family with her failure to conceive. Mo’s sister describes Polly’s use of artificial insemination and her use of her gay friends as sperm donors as a moral failure, a view encapsulated by her declaration that “maybe there’s a reason it hasn’t happened yet.” Throughout this dialogue, the cinematography emphasizes the contentious atmosphere of the scene by isolating the characters in medium-close-ups and two-shots that capture the characters’ expressions of discomfort.







*Unease at dinner*

The tension between Haimy, who embodies traditional motherhood, and Polly, who personifies an alternative approach to motherhood, deepens as the dinner continues. Mo's sister asks the trio how they envision life with their child: "I mean, how, like how is this thing gonna work? How are you guys gonna. . . Maybe this is really, maybe this is really normal in New York, but . . ." (52:54-53:03). Haimy, who sits beside her husband, establishes a dichotomy between "New York" and elsewhere, implying that the social mores in the country's largest city are at odds with those of the rest of the country. Her conception of family is circumscribed by traditional notions of gender and sexuality, and she expresses concern at the trio's unconventional route to mother- and fatherhood. Challenging his sister, Mo remarks: "Why can't you just be supportive?" (53:03-53:05). In her response, Haimy reveals her struggles with her brother's sexuality and her own homophobia: "I have been nothing but supportive, but this isn't, this isn't one of your little schemes, like you moving off to the big city and deciding you're gay. I mean this is a kid. You're bringing a child into the world" (53:05-53:18). In contrasting Mo's

desire to create a family (notably, he has not yet agreed to be a sperm donor) with “his little schemes” like coming out and relocating to New York, Haimy depicts her brother as unprepared and ill-equipped for fatherhood. Polly, talking over Mo’s sister, rebuts her interlocutor’s narrow view of family: “Yeah, they’re bringing a child into the world with three parents that love that child. I can assure you a mom and a dad does not create that all the time” (53:18-53:27). Polly’s statement encapsulates the trio’s vision of family as a flexible entity which can exist beyond the traditional mother-father nuclear unit. The argument is broken up by the appearance of Mo’s father with the birthday cake, a ritual which unites the guests in celebration of Mo.

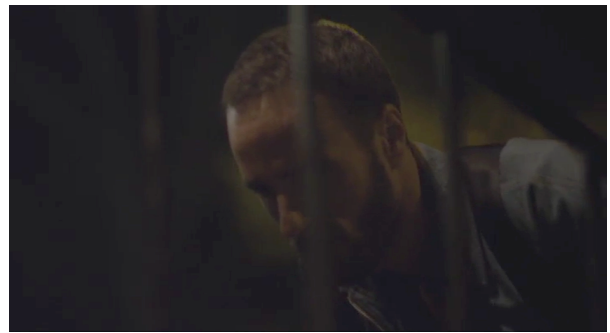
After the dinner, Freddy, Polly, and Mo gather in Mo’s childhood bedroom where they leaf through a photo album with images of Mo as a child (seg. 34). These baby pictures complement the photos of young Freddy that adorn the walls of the apartment in Fort Greene (seg. 2). Polly, bending over in front of Mo, declares “Mo, we would make such beautiful little friendly creatures (55:07-55:11). Mo pauses as though considering what the child would look like, before declaring: “Alright, let’s do it” (55:15-55:16). Mo’s decision to donate his sperm to Polly occurs after the argument with his sister and functions as a rebuke to her narrow and traditional conception of family. The subsequent effort to impregnate Polly involves all three of them: Freddy masturbates Mo in the bathroom while Polly prepares her artificial insemination kit. After Mo ejaculates, Polly inserts the sperm into her body. During this scene, the camera hovers near the bed, amplifying the intimacy of the interactions between the characters and underscoring the identity of the camera as the fourth member of the family. The scene concludes with Freddy passing the photo album, which is open to a baby photo of Mo, to Polly, who slides the album over her genitals, comically willing baby Mo into existence.



*Artificial insemination and Mo's photo album*

In the subsequent sequence (seg. 35), the trio travels back to the city. Their return is marked by two signs of childhood, which embody two conflicting visions of the neighborhood. After Freddy and Mo drop her off outside of her apartment building, Polly pauses to listen to the sound of a baby crying above her (59:37-59:43). The infant's cry portends her pregnancy, but also suggests that the neighborhood is a welcoming place for new mothers. Freddy and Mo encounter something else as they walk up the steps of their building. Lying on the stairs is a brown lump. Mo confirms Freddy's suspicion that the smelly object is "human shit" (59:54-59:55) and declares: "Someone took a shit on our stoop" (59:58-1:00:00). The presence of these feces is also an ironic allusion to child and childbirth (dirty diapers, etc.). However, it also contains a more threatening meaning: that Freddy and Mo are not welcome in the neighborhood. Although Freddy and Mo do not voice suspicions about who defecated on their stoop, viewers may infer that Bishop is a likely suspect. The presence of this human waste is another sign that Freddy and Mo's domestic tranquility and their efforts to form a family faces resistance. The

next sequence underscores the connection between the sound of the baby, the sight and sound of poo, and their efforts to establish a family. As Mo and Freddy walk up the stairs, the camera cuts to a shot of Freddy lying on his back and making baby noises as he is filmed for the “Nasty Baby” video (seg. 36).



*A baby’s cry, poo on the stoop, and “Nasty Baby”*

Whereas Freddy, Mo, and Polly’s visit to Mo’s parents’ home is a moment of hopeful creation of family, the murder and disappearance of Bishop undermine the inclusive vision of family articulated and enacted by the trio. Bishop is a black, poor, mentally unwell character, whose precarious social and economic situation contrasts with the comfortable lives of Freddy, Mo, and Polly.<sup>427</sup> The trio perceives him as an outsider in Fort Greene and an obstacle to their efforts to form of a family.<sup>428</sup> The word Bishop has two primary meanings in English, each of

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<sup>427</sup> Bishop is based on a man in Silva’s neighborhood in Santiago. See Silva, “Interview: Sebastian Silva” and Silva, “Sebastián Silva on Why Toronto Rejected ‘Nasty Baby.’”

<sup>428</sup> Bishop is not the only marginalized African American character in Silva’s films. *Dance Dance Dance*, which was released a year after *Nasty Baby*, follows Rio (Lex Santos), a poor young black man who comes out to his homophobic Christian parents.

which reflects aspects of his relationship with his neighbors. First, Bishop refers to a Christian minister who occupies a mid-level supervisory role within the church hierarchy. Bishop, like the Christian official, treats the neighborhood as his parish or diocese, punctually subjecting neighbors to his early morning leaf-blowing ritual and homophobia. The other common meaning of the word is the chess piece which moves diagonally across the board. Analogous to this chess piece, Bishop engages in a contest with Freddy, Mo, and Polly that begins with a fight over the leaf blower, but which escalates to encompass control of the neighborhood.

Bishop temporarily occupies a basement apartment down the street from Freddy and Mo. His living arrangement in a subterranean dwelling, which will soon be sold, reflects his marginal socio-economic situation and his identity as an outsider in what was, until recently, a largely poor and minority neighborhood that has since transformed into a middle class and largely white one. Colson Whitehead describes the gentrification of Fort Greene in his 2004 essay “Don’t You Be My Neighbor”: “But the current Fort Greene was the death of the one before it. Eminent domain approaches in many guises. It comes in sledgehammers, bulldozers, pieces of paper that declare in legalese, ‘This building condemned.’ Then there is eminent domain in its quieter, less bombastic forms: the arrival of the goateed and bohemian-minded, rent increases, the monied, the condoed.” Although Bishop mainly appears alone, he too has a family: the character lives with his girlfriend (Constance Shulman) (seg. 29). Significantly, Bishop’s interracial relationship parallels that of Freddy and Mo. This mirroring of relationships exemplifies the film’s focus on family, but also its representation of class divides and the intolerance of difference. Although the film reveals little about Bishop’s background, the police officer (Catrina Ganey), who intervenes during an argument on the sidewalk between Bishop, Freddy, and Mo, sheds some light on his origins. She tells Freddy, Mo, and Richard that they have little recourse but to wait for Bishop to

leave the neighborhood: “Listen, he’s . . . crazy. Everybody knows he’s crazy, right? So even if you try to press charges all they gonna do is put him in some crazy house and they gonna let him out in a couple of days. But listen to me, that house where he’s stayin’ at is gonna be sold in a few days, alright? And he’s gonna be out of here. And there’s nothing you can do about it because his mom is a judge (48:28-48:45). Given his mother’s profession, the neighbors have little recourse but to wait for him to leave. This revelation about Bishop’s mother complicates his portrait as a marginal character by giving him literal staying power and, in the process, confirming Freddy and Mo’s fear that he will not leave. Freddy reveals his exasperation with the situation, declaring: “So your mom is a judge and then you can be a criminal? (48:49-48:52).



*The police officer sheds light on Bishop*

Bishop first appears passing by Freddy and Mo as they walk down the street after eating dinner (seg. 6). Richard, their neighbor, stops the pair on the sidewalk. He alleges that Bishop “bullshitted” (10:40-10:41) him into paying for unsolicited help parking his car. Richard tells Freddy and Mo that Bishop is “a miserable bastard, he’s some kind of homeless person” (10:34-10:37). In labelling Bishop before the character speaks for himself, Richard establishes the image against which Freddy, Mo, and viewers will gauge their new neighbor. Freddy’s neighbor, who is a gay widower, describes Bishop as an unwelcome intruder who respectable folk should shun.

There is irony, however, in Richard's pernicious characterization of Bishop, given that he too has likely experienced discrimination because of his sexual orientation.<sup>429</sup>

The conflict between Bishop and his new neighbors escalates quickly. The first source of conflict is the leaf blower, which Bishop uses to clear the street and sidewalk in the morning. Freddy does not confront Bishop the first time he uses the device (seg. 11). However, after Richard informs Freddy that the man who sells him a terracotta pot on the sidewalk (seg. 14) and the early-morning leaf blowing are one and the same, the protagonist tells Polly: "Dude he's my enemy, for real" (21:55-21:57). The second time Bishop uses the leaf blower prompts Freddy to verbally and physically challenge him (seg. 18). Significantly, this first face to face confrontation between the two men occurs after Mo's sperm test, a key step in the process of forming a family (seg. 17). After Freddy puts his hand on his shoulder, Bishop pushes him away and yells over the din of the leaf blower: "Back off you fucking faggots" (26:38-26:40). Bishop's homophobia surfaces in his subsequent interactions with Freddy and reflects the character's antagonism towards his gay neighbors and his unwillingness to reach a peaceful resolution. Despite his use of this homophobic slur to demonize Freddy and Mo, Bishop, not his gay antagonists, is the marginalized figure. The complaints by neighbors during the fourth leaf blower incident (48:54-48:57) exemplify Bishop's precarious situation in the neighborhood. He is unwanted and unloved.

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<sup>429</sup> The film alludes to Richard's status as a gay man and widower when Freddy's shows Mo photo of "Fritz" with his arms around Richard (11:20).



*The conflict escalates*

Notwithstanding Freddy's half-hearted attempts to dialogue with Bishop, the dispute between the men intensifies, extending beyond the conflict over the leaf blower. Freddy's friend Nico charges at Bishop with his pickup truck (seg. 20) and shortly thereafter Bishop accosts Polly (seg. 22). In this second instance, Richard rebukes Bishop for encroaching on Polly's personal space, a charge which extends to the indigent character's presence in the neighborhood: "Master Bishop, why do you keep invading this young lady's space? You're always crossing boundaries. People have boundaries. Run along. Bye bye" (36:41-36:54). Whereas Freddy's crossing of boundaries as an expatriate is an acceptable and even laudable practice, Bishop's acts of boundary crossing—moving into the neighborhood, invading Polly's personal space, using the leaf blower—are invariably perceived by Richard and Freddy's family as threats to the neighborhood's integrity, order, and peace.

The night of Mo's birthday party, the conflict between Bishop and his neighbors moves to Bishop's home. As Polly walks to Freddy and Mo's apartment for the celebration, Bishop approaches her and offers to help carry the plant she is holding (seg. 25). Polly rejects his offer, but Bishop insists, placing his arms around her. Polly pushes him away, yelling: "Get the fuck away from me what is wrong with you?" (41:12-41:15). After learning of this encounter, Freddy confronts Bishop's girlfriend and threatens to call the police (seg. 27). Later at the party inside the apartment, Freddy, Chino, Mo, and Polly make crude drawings of human-like figures



labelled “Bishop.” One image shows the figure with bloody gashes and an axe lying next to its leg (44:00-44:07). These collaborative drawings reflect the animus of Freddy’s family towards Bishop. They also exemplify the parallel between art and reality in the film: the characters will enact these violent images.



### *Death to Bishop*

As they draw, Chino offers a suggestion to the group involving his gift to Polly: “Why don’t we go throw the stink bombs to The Bishop’s place” (44:17-44:20). Freddy, Mo, and Polly accede to Chino’s plan to use Polly’s gift and they follow him outside. The camera tracks Freddy and Polly as Chino and Mo move ahead of them to plant the stink bomb. As they walk toward Bishop’s apartment, Freddy tells Polly: “Let’s enjoy the revenge” (44:35-44:36). Polly, who wears her concern on her face, replies: “There’s nothing to enjoy” (44:37-44:38). Freddy, is incredulous: “Come on, don’t lie, you like this idea” (44:39-44:41). Polly’s decision to accompany the group and witness the act of revenge gives credence to Freddy’s observation. The camera stays behind Freddy as Chino and Mo, in the background, plant the stink bomb inside the window of Bishop’s apartment (44:41-44:51). The distance between the camera and the action underscores Freddy and Polly’s doubts about the attack. The two of them remain on the other side of the street, unwilling to fully participate in this violation of Bishop’s home. The camera’s remove from Chino and Mo as they plant the stink bomb also functions to give viewers space with which to reconsider their relationship to the protagonist and his family. The genial

characters shown in close-ups inside the warmly lit space of Freddy's apartment in earlier sequences are depicted as devious actors in this obstructed long-shot on the dark street. Polly's equivocation about the decision to plant the stink bomb are confirmed when a woman with a child emerge from the apartment fleeing the noxious odor. Freddy and Polly survey the scene while crouched behind a parked car. Polly registers the terror that they have caused, noting: "This, this is fucked up" (45:20-45:22). Freddy echoes her sentiment: "Yeah, it's kind of not that funny" (45:23-45:24).



*Chino and Mo plant a stink bomb in Bishop's apartment*

The stink bomb attack epitomizes the film's representation of the limits of cosmopolitanism. Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that cosmopolitanism is not just a celebration of diversity, it also entails reaching out to others: "A form of cosmopolitanism worth pursuing need not reflexively celebrate human difference; but it cannot be indifferent to the challenge of engaging with it" (*The Ethics of Identity* 222). For the cosmopolitan Freddy, Bishop embodies difference, in class, race, and worldview. However, Freddy sees the mentally unwell Bishop not just as someone who is different, but as an antagonist who threatens him and his family with homophobic slurs and harassing behavior. Instead of choosing to dialogue with Bishop, Freddy opts for violence. St. Augustine writes that the inability to speak the same language or otherwise communicate is fatal to the establishment of a community:

For if two men meet, and are forced by some compelling reason not to pass on but to stay in company, then if neither knows the other's language, it is easier for dumb animals, even of different kinds, to associate together than these men, although both are human beings. For when men cannot communicate their thoughts to each other, simply because of difference of language, all the similarity of their common human nature is of no avail to unite them in fellowship. So true is this that a man would be more cheerful with his dog for company than with a foreigner. (861)

Although Freddy and Bishop speak the same language and live in the same neighborhood, they are unwilling and unable to communicate with each other. The two men do not view each other as neighbors, but as foreigners who uneasily occupy the same space. Their resentment towards one another calcifies after the stink bomb incident, as Freddy, acting with the help of Mo, Polly, Chino, and Richard, resorts to violence to rid the neighborhood of Bishop.

The stink bomb attack presages the film's violent climax, in which Freddy and his family and friends murder Bishop and dispose of his body. This sequence (segs. 44-47) reveals the limits of Freddy, Mo, and Polly's cosmopolitanism and obligations to a poor, transient, and marginalized neighbor like Bishop. It also functions as a counterpoint to the sequence at Mo's parents' house, where Mo's decision to create a family is portrayed as a rebuttal to his sister's homophobia. The murder of Bishop and disappearance of his corpse reveals that the trio's desire to forge a family is not merely shaped by love, self-satisfaction, and openness, but also by the impulses of self-defense and a need to ensure the safety and integrity of their family.

The fatal encounter between Bishop and Freddy begins in a convenience store where Freddy is purchasing beer (seg. 44a). Bishop confronts his artist neighbor inside the establishment. He yells at Freddy, calling him "a fucking faggot" (1:11:46-1:11:47) and "a

terrorist” (1:11:59-1:12:00). Freddy responds to Bishop’s vitriol with a barbed plea for compassion: “Shut the fuck up man, I’m not having a good day” (1:12:01-1:12:03). The protagonist is referring to his tumultuous visit to the art gallery to screen “Nasty Baby.” With the fate of his artistic project uncertain, Freddy seeks to avoid a confrontation. However, Bishop is not willing to back down.



*Vitriol in the convenience store*

As Freddy walks home through the dark streets, Bishop pursues him (seg. 44b). He picks up a rock and throws it at Freddy. In response, Freddy turns around and hits Bishop in the head with the bag containing his cans of beer. As Freddy moves to strike Bishop, a distorted electric guitar and drums plays on the soundtrack, emphasizing Freddy’s fearful state of mind, as well as the violence unfolding onscreen. After being struck, Bishop collapses onto the sidewalk. Freddy prods Bishop and calls out his name. The wounded man groans in response and Freddy carries him to the stoop of his apartment, before heading upstairs alone. Inside his apartment, a distressed Freddy calls 311, the non-emergency service and information hotline of the City of New York (seg. 44c).<sup>430</sup> As he is on the phone, Bishop enters the apartment, taking advantage of Freddy’s failure to close the doors to the building and his home. Ironically, Freddy’s rushed and bumbling efforts to seek out help leaves him vulnerable to Bishop’s attack.

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<sup>430</sup> Earlier in the film, Freddy calls this same telephone number when Bishop uses the leaf blower (seg. 23).

As Bishop walks through the kitchen he grabs a knife and lunges at Freddy. On the soundtrack a clacking percussion and a fast-paced guitar underscore the violent and tense atmosphere. Looking to defend himself, Freddy grabs a small razor he uses to crop photographs of baby animals and humans. The protagonist stabs Bishop in the neck with the razor, dealing an incapacitating blow. In its dual role as an artistic tool and weapon, the razor functions as a symbol of the intertwined and ambiguous relationship between creation, destruction, and family. Freddy is not only physically wounding Bishop, but also—to use a cinematic metaphor—cutting him from his home, neighborhood, and the film itself.



*Freddy stabs Bishop with a tool of his trade*

After Bishop collapses, Freddy carries his still-breathing victim to the bathroom and places him inside the bathtub, before leaving and closing the door behind him. The protagonist turns on music and lights a candle, presumably to mask Bishop's screams and smell. As Freddy picks up his phone, Mo and Polly enter the apartment, ready to tell Freddy about Polly's positive pregnancy test (seg. 44d). Upon seeing them, Freddy breaks into tears. "Guys, I fucked up. I fucked up. It was an accident," he says (1:17:40-1:17:45). The artist leads Mo and Polly into the bathroom, where the bloodied Bishop lies face-up in the bathtub. Polly, who is a doctor, briefly places a towel over the gash in Bishop's neck, before the group retreats from the bathroom. Polly asks Freddy whether he called for help and Mo asks for clarification about the timeline of events. As Bishop moans and screams off-screen, Polly reassures her inconsolable friend. "Calm down,

it's ok," she says (1:18:46-1:18:47). She proposes a plan of action: "Listen, we're gonna call the cops, we're gonna tell them it was an accident, we're gonna call the ambulance, we're calling the police!" (1:18:52-1:18:56). Mo interrupts her: "You can't call the police" (1:18:56-1:18:57). Polly replies that Bishop is yelling and the neighbors will hear the noise. Mo, his figure silhouetted against the dimly-lit space, urges Polly to consider the consequences of alerting the authorities: "He's gonna get deported, you're pregnant, we're not calling anyone. You gotta think" (1:18:59-1:19:02). Mo presents doing the ethical and responsible thing—calling the police— as a danger to the integrity of their family. He argues that if his family is to survive, Bishop must die. Stressing the urgency of the moment, Freddy's partner omits the possibility that safeguarding their family and seeking help for Bishop may not be mutually exclusive. Ironically, in advocating for the death of Bishop, Mo encourages the death of the open, diverse, and cosmopolitan society he, Freddy, and Polly seek to propagate through their efforts to create of a family.

Freddy, who is hyperventilating on the couch next to Polly, decides to take action. He stands up and grabs a plastic bag from under the sink. Polly, realizing what he is about to do, cries out: "Please don't!" (1:19:22). Inside the bathroom, Freddy says "I'm sorry man" (1:19:24-1:19:25), before placing the bag over Bishop's face, asphyxiating him. Mo enters the bathroom and holds down Bishop's legs as Freddy sustains the bag over the victim's nose and mouth. In asphyxiating Bishop, Freddy literally and symbolically silences a character who challenged his otherwise peaceful and prosperous existence through his homophobic rants, use of the leaf blower, and poverty. The death of Bishop also carries a political and racial significance in the context of a series of high profile cases of the deaths of unarmed African American men in the

years before the release of *Nasty Baby*.<sup>431</sup> In an interview at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, Silva comments that the suffocation of Bishop should be seen through this recent history:

In the context of American politics, I felt that this movie felt right. It was perfect timing. You know, there were many cases . . . Eric Garner as one example where you would see cops getting away with the murder of black kids . . . That's what happens in this movie, but you make it look like an accident, right. So I think one of the biggest achievements as a director or as an artist in this movie is to make my audience cry for the perpetrators of the crime more than for the victim, because when Freddy and his friends are strangling or asphyxiating The Bishop, you, most people, I mean like I would say one hundred percent of the people that approached me after the movie they told me how sorry they felt for them and not for The Bishop. So you are creating a huge moral sort of dilemma there.

(“Nasty Baby Press Conference Berlinale” 6:15-7:18)

Although Silva draws a distinction between the “victim” (Bishop) and “perpetrators” (Freddy and his family), the series of violent actions committed by Bishop, Freddy, and Freddy’s family deepen viewers’ “moral dilemma” in attributing blame for Bishop’s death.

The camera depicts the suffocation of Bishop (1:19:23-1:20:25) in close-ups and medium-close ups that fragment Bishop’s body into bloody pieces and highlight the intimate nature of the violence. These shots of Freddy, Mo, and Bishop are a morbid and warped version of “Nasty Baby,” which features similar shots of the heads and body parts of Freddy’s family and friends as they lay on their backs imitating the movements and cries of babies (seg. 40b).

The metacinematic qualities of this scene are also reflected in the setting of the bathroom, which evokes the famous shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock’s horror film *Psycho* (1960). The

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<sup>431</sup> Three of the most high-profile cases involved the deaths of Trayvon Martin (2012), Michael Brown (2014), and Eric Garner (2014). See Baker et al., “Beyond the Chokehold: The Path to Eric Garner’s Death.”

connection to *Psycho* is further stressed when Polly, framed in a close-up and over-the-shoulder reverse shot, opens the door to peek into the bathroom, where she encounters a bloody scene straight out of a horror movie (1:19:46-1:19:48). The camera's framing and the act of looking behind the door self-reflexively evoke spectatorship.







### *Asphyxiating Bishop*

The trio is still in shock when Chino arrives in the apartment looking to use the bathroom (seg. 44e). After Freddy emerges from the bathroom, Polly holds him in a maternal embrace. Freddy, who is in a state of shock, adopts the posture and manner of the character he plays in the “Nasty Baby” video: an inconsolable child. Before anyone can react, Chino opens the door to the bathroom and sees Bishop. Freddy covers his eyes and leads him back to the couch, commanding him to “¡Cierra los ojos, cierra los ojos!” (1:22:28-1:22:30; “Close your eyes, close your eyes!”). Like Polly, Chino is a witness to a gruesome scene out of a horror film. With his entrance into this site of murder and carnage, Freddy’s family are witnesses to and accomplices in this unfolding tragedy and crime.

Amid this tumult, Richard, who saw Bishop enter Freddy’s building, rings the doorbell. Freddy goes downstairs to let his neighbor inside (seg. 44f). The protagonist leads the “mayor of

Adelphi street” upstairs to the apartment (11:15-11:17).<sup>432</sup> Inside the bathroom, Richard lifts the towel covering Bishop’s head. Unlike Freddy, Richard remains calm. A two-shot of Freddy and Richard standing in the bathroom with Bishop’s body next to them off screen, underscores Richard’s role as a paternal figure for the family, who takes charge of the situation (1:25:04-1:25:10). Freddy, who stares at the floor, is depicted out-of-focus in the foreground, while Richard is shown in focus in the background staring towards Freddy. Although neither of them speak, the characters’ body language and the camera’s focus on Freddy’s neighbor highlight Richard’s authority within the household and neighborhood. Without speaking, the characters begin the process of destroying evidence and covering up the crime. Polly dons plastic cleaning gloves and the four men carry Bishop’s corpse, wrapped in a black trash bag, down the stairs (1:25:13-1:25:30). The camera cuts (1:25:30) to a lateral tracking shot of Richard’s Land Rover as it moves down the highway. The omission of a discussion about the disposal of Bishop’s body or the clean-up of the apartment reflects the characters’ sense of guilt and shame, while also suggesting that the characters see this as the only course of action, thereby precluding the need for a debate about the morality of their actions.



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<sup>432</sup> Adelphi Street is located near Fort Greene Park.



*Cleaning up the crime scene*

As Freddy, Mo, and Richard travel outside of the city to dispose of Bishop's body, Polly and Chino clean up all traces of Bishop in the apartment (seg. 45). During this sequence, the film cross cuts between these two groups of characters and locations. Freddy, Mo, and Richard unload Bishop's corpse at a rural property. They dig a hole in which to bury Bishop and proceed to burn his body. In their actions to cover up the crime, the characters reprise Norman Bates' efforts to clean up the bathroom and dispose of Marion Crane's body in *Psycho*. The destruction of Bishop's cadaver could also be seen as an allusion to the systemic murder and disappearances of victims by the military dictatorship in Chile. Although the film is not an allegory of the military dictatorship, Silva and Freddy's identities as Chileans give added historical and political resonance to Bishop's death and the destruction of his corpse.

Ironically, the division of labor in this sequence reflects a traditional concept of family and gender that Freddy, Mo, and Polly otherwise reject. The older men take on the hard, manual labor (the disposal of Bishop's body), while Polly and Freddy's younger brother remain at home to do the traditionally feminine task of cleaning the house. Notwithstanding this traditional division of labor, their actions eliminating evidence of the crime unite them in a macabre fellowship. The use of crosscutting between the wooded area where Freddy, Mo, and Richard burn Bishop's body and the apartment where Polly and Chino scrub away blood emphasizes the characters' shared complicity in concealing Bishop's murder. They are joined by their

obligations to one another, but also by their participation in this act of violence. In an interview at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, Silva notes that he sought to make audiences try to reconcile the happy, peaceful family of the film's first two acts with the family that covers up Bishop's murder and destroys his body: "the idea [was] to betray my audience and make them judge my characters" ("Nasty Baby Press Conference Berlinale" 5:27-5:30). This act of judgement is underscored by the appearance of a deer on the road as they return home (seg. 46). The deer meets Freddy and the viewer's gaze, inviting Freddy and the viewer to reflect on the character's destructive actions (1:28:59-1:29:13).





*A family of accomplices and the lone deer*

Whereas Freddy's initial blow to Bishop on the street and his stabbing of Bishop with the razor in the apartment are depicted as legitimate acts of self-defense; the collective decision to not call for medical assistance, the asphyxiation of Bishop, and the subsequent disappearance of his body are acts which go beyond a reasonable desire for security and self-preservation. Mo deceptively presents his murder as a binary choice between saving the family or saving Bishop. The destruction of Bishop is a means of avoiding a reckoning what he represents: mental health, race, homophobia, displacement by gentrification, and poverty. In killing and disappearing

Bishop, Freddy and his family reveal the limits of the cosmopolitan and diverse family they project in the “Nasty Baby” video and in their own lives.

Despite Bishop’s violent death and disappearance, the film concludes on an ambiguous note, depicting the integrity of Freddy’s family, but also raising the specter of Bishop’s death. The morning after Bishop’s death, Freddy, Mo, and Polly wake up in the same bed at Freddy and Mo’s apartment (seg. 48). They are framed in a three-shot, which suggests their complicity in the act the night before, but also underscores their newfound identity as parents. Freddy picks up a tiny shoe lying on top of the bed, which Polly tells him is a gift from Chino for the baby. In the final sequence (seg. 49), the three characters venture into the neighborhood. They pass by Bishop’s basement apartment, where three people stand outside looking around—from their gestures, viewers could infer that they are a real estate agent and prospective buyers (1:32:30-1:32:47). The trio encounters baby Arthur with his mother on the sidewalk. Notably, Freddy previously used Arthur as the model for the child Mo and Polly’s future offspring, turning the child into a of real-life version of the photos on his wall (seg. 12). This young black child embodies the future offspring of Mo and Polly. However, in the aftermath of Bishop’s death, the toddler acquires another meaning: Freddy, Mo, and Polly could also be looking at Bishop’s son or a young Bishop himself. In representing both Polly’s child and Bishop, Arthur is an ambiguous symbol of the characters’ guilt and a promise of the future.

Finally, the end credits sequence (seg. 50) presents a fuller view of the city in which the narrative unfolds. Freddy, Chino, Mo, and Polly roller skate at a gym with a racially diverse group of New Yorkers. The gym, full of skaters enjoying each other’s company, represents a synecdoche of New York City and its diverse inhabitants. Although it is unclear whether the actors are in or out of character, they form part of the crowd. The camera shifts between Freddy,

Mo, and Polly and other skaters. This crosscutting underscores the trio’s identity as New Yorkers, while also drawing attention to the film’s narrow focus on Freddy and his family.



*The morning after and roller skating*

## 6.2. Making Babies: Satire and Metacinema

Parallel with the representation of the creation of Freddy’s non-traditional family, *Nasty Baby* depicts the making of a cinematic family through Freddy’s “Nasty Baby” work, a piece that combines experimental video and performance. In showing the pre-production, production, and exhibition of “Nasty Baby,” the film offers a metacinematic and satiric reflection of

cosmopolitanism, the process of filmmaking, and the film itself. This representation of filmmaking echoes the portrait of an amateur filmmaking crew in Silva's first feature, *La vida me mata*. Silva describes "Nasty Baby," which he first conceived of for a dance festival in Chile, as a satire of the art world: "It was just a funny, stupid idea, but there are so many funny stupid ideas in the art world that become installations. So this is kind of a joke about that" ("Interview: Sebastián Silva"). The "Nasty Baby" video shows Freddy's family and friends as they cry, suck on a pacifier, and roll around on their backs, imitating the sounds and movement of an infant. The performance element entails Freddy reprising his role as a baby. He tells Marcus that he envisions performing while naked on the floor against a black background as the video is projected on a screen above him (04:00-04:05). In addition to showing the making of the film component of "Nasty Baby," which is shot on digital video by Freddy and his assistant Wendy (Alia Shawkat), the film also depicts Freddy's pitch to the gallery owner to secure a space to exhibit the work. "Nasty Baby" functions as a self-reflexive and metacinematic satire of Freddy's efforts to create a family and film in his own image.

With "Nasty Baby," Freddy follows in the footsteps of Chilean experimental filmmakers and video artists Juan Downey (1940-1993) and Gloria Camiruaga (1940-2006), both of whom lived and worked in the United States.<sup>433</sup> In combining performance with experimental film, Freddy shares much in common with Downey's multi-media approach to art. In works like *Plato Now* (1973), Downey integrates performance, technology, and viewer participation.<sup>434</sup> In the

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<sup>433</sup> Camiruaga studied video art at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1980. She is most well-known for *Popsicles* (1982-1984), a short video in which a succession of young women, their mouths framed in extreme-close ups, lick popsicles containing green plastic figures of soldiers as they recite the Ave Maria prayer. Downey lived in New York from 1969 until his death in 1993. For an overview of Downey's life and work see Smith, "Juan Downey: The Invisible Architect" (17-39).

<sup>434</sup> The text accompanying the original exhibition of *Plato Now* at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York describes the work as follows: "Nine performers in meditation attempt to produce alpha-waves. Their brain activity controls the recurrence of pre-recorded quotations from Plato's dialogues" ("Plato Now" 7).



film's opening sequence, Freddy tells the gallery owner Marcus that his incursion into video represents a new phase in his career (seg. 2). Although he is working in a new medium, Freddy does not seek to push the limits of the film form or document life outside of his city or neighborhood. Instead, he sticks to familiar themes: himself and his family.

Freddy's discussion of his new art project with Marcus establishes the satiric tone of *Nasty Baby* and emphasizes the self-reflexive qualities of the experimental video and performance piece (seg. 2). The visit begins with Freddy showing Marcus his apartment. As he walks Marcus through the kitchen and living room of the apartment, Freddy tells the gallerist, "this is where I live and work"—a statement that alludes to the theme and casting of the larger film and his new art project (02:08-02:10). Marcus, whose gallery is hosting the group show in which Freddy hopes to participate, is represented as a fickle and aloof character—he does not want to touch Sula because he is allergic to cats—, who also lacks a sense of humor—he does not get that the photograph of Jennifer Aniston on Freddy's refrigerator is a "joke" (02:16). Marcus's conservative sensibility is also on display when he asks Freddy: "What are you doing going into video?" (02:36-02:38). Freddy describes his move as "not like an extreme decision," but that "it just felt kinda like a great opportunity to explore that subject matter" (02:40-02:28).

Marcus asks about the impetus behind the film: "Why? Tell me, tell me why is Dirty Baby right for identity and heritage? Why? How?" (02:47-02:54). With his question, Marcus frames Freddy's prospective work as a self-reflexive exploration of the weighty topics of "identity" and "heritage." Freddy responds that the project is actually called "Nasty Baby," which, in his opinion, is a "more catchy" title (02:59-03:00). The protagonist explains the inspiration behind his new project:

So I've been trying to make a baby with my best friend for the last six months. And so since we started I've been obsessed with the idea that eventually there is gonna be a creature that resembles me and is made out of my genes. And like it's so, it's such a selfish act to just keep on making babies when there's so many that you can adopt, but now I want to. Yeah, now I want to. And then I feel so guilty about it that I feel that I need to pay a price and the price is to go through the embarrassment of me portraying a three-month-old baby. (03:01-03:37)

Freddy establishes a direct connection between the act of creating a real baby and the making of "Nasty Baby." As he puts it, the work is self-inflicted punishment for his "selfish act" of trying to conceive a baby with Polly. Freddy underscores the satiric qualities of this anti-coming-of-age artwork, noting "the embarrassment" he will put himself through performing the role of a baby. Freddy's sentiment recalls the prologue to John Vanbrugh's 1697 play *The Provok'd Wife*, which functions as a summation of satire:

Since 'tis th' intent and business of the stage,  
To copy out the follies of the age;  
To hold to ev'ry man a faithful glass,  
And show him of what species he's an ass . . . . (A2)

Although he ironically frames it as an act of castigation and penance, Freddy's video is a "selfish act," born out of its creator's deep fascination with himself. Like the director Max Longo, who credits himself for all the technical roles in his cinematographic adaptation of Dumas's novel in José Bohr's 1947 satire *La dama de las camelias* (*The Lady of the Camellias*), Freddy's filmmaking is inextricable from himself.



*Freddy discusses “Nasty Baby” with Marcus*

The inward-looking focus of “Nasty Baby” is confirmed when Freddy shows Marcus a wall plastered with pictures of himself as a young child alongside a variety of baby animals. As he points out a photo of himself as a toddler dressed in red overalls in a pastoral setting, he tells Marcus that through his work he seeks to “go back to this time, you know, and portray this sort of like gross cuteness” (03:45-03:51).



*Baby Freddy*

On Marcus’s request, Freddy offers a preview of the performance element of “Nasty Baby.” Framed in a close-up, he rolls on his back like a toddler and emits high pitched wails and cries. The image freezes with Freddy looking directly at the camera. The image jitters and an electronic whirl plays on the sound track, while title credits flash like strobe lights first showing the film’s title and then the disclaimer “BASED ON A TRUE STORY.” Simultaneous with these effects, a baritone voice-in-off states the title of the film and video: “Nasty Baby” (04:53-04:56). This freeze-frame of Freddy looking at the camera combined with the disclaimer blurs the lines

between Silva and his character, fact and fiction, and film genre. The juxtaposition of Freddy's face with the text emphasize the "true" aspects of the film: Silva plays Freddy and the story is loosely based on Silva's own experiences. However, Freddy's direct gaze into the camera underscores the artifice of the story, which is told through narrative film. The disclaimer suggests that it is a narrative film rooted in the real world—a fact underscored by the casting, location, and situations in the film. However, the comedic tone of the sequence and freeze-frame undermines or at least questions this claim to truth. The appearance of the title over this freeze-frame also epitomizes the film's porous and self-reflexive qualities. This image of Freddy performing "Nasty Baby" combined with the superimposition of the film's title, reflects the communicating vessel relationship between "Nasty Baby" and the larger film. Moreover, the freeze-frame underlines *Nasty Baby's* status as an art film and a film about making art.



*Gross cuteness*

While Freddy initially describes "Nasty Baby" as an expiation for his selfish desire to conceive a child with Polly, the work takes on a new meaning after he learns that his sperm is

infertile (seg. 3). The project transforms into Freddy's singular baby and, rather than functioning as a reflection on procreation of a child, the work acquires a new significance as a reflection on the formation of family. Notwithstanding this change in his personal circumstances, Freddy remains the center of attention in the piece. During a pre-production meeting at his apartment with his assistant Wendy, he says: "I'm feeling a little more open, like I don't want to be like a self-absorbed freak like Marina Abramović, . . . I don't want it to be about me" (22:52-23:01). Although he professes a desire to distance himself from Abramović, who is the literal center of attention in works like *The Artist Is Present* (2010), Freddy is the focal point of "Nasty Baby."<sup>435</sup>

The shoot for the "Nasty Baby" video (seg. 36) underscores the film's self-reflexive, ironic, and satiric qualities. The shoot takes place after Mo agrees to father a child with Polly (seg. 34), a decision which reaffirms the notion that the video is Freddy's baby. This sequence begins with a medium-close-up of Freddy lying prostrate on a white sheet with a stuffed animal bunny above his head. He emits a wail and writhes around as his friends and the film crew look on (1:00:16-1:00:22). The camera cuts between Freddy and those arrayed around him in a circle, who look on as he performs before the camera (1:00:22-1:00:44). While some smile, Mo and Polly bear expressions of concern. Despite his earlier declaration to Wendy about not wanting to be a "self-absorbed freak," Freddy is the focus of the camera, actors, crew, and viewers. The disjuncture between his stated desire to not be the center of attention and the video shoot exemplifies the ironic nature of *Nasty Baby*. Although the video makes a fool of everyone, Freddy cannot help but portray himself as the biggest baby of them all. Even as he violates his

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<sup>435</sup> Abramović, born in 1946 in Yugoslavia, is one of the most well-known contemporary performance artists. MoMA's website contains the following description of *The Artist is Present*: "Seated silently at a wooden table across from an empty chair, she waited as people took turns sitting in the chair and locking eyes with her. Over the course of nearly three months, for eight hours a day, she met the gaze of 1,000 strangers, many of whom were moved to tears" ("The Artist Is Present").

promise not to make himself the center of attention, Freddy's film serves to unite and reproduce his own family and neighborhood. The casting for the video mirrors the casting of the larger film, with Mo and Polly playing screaming infants. Although Freddy cannot father a child, he creates a work which reflects and parallels his efforts to form a family with Mo and Polly.





*The “Nasty Baby” shoot*

The film’s final scene visually parallels the video shoot (1:32:54-1:33:37). Freddy, Mo, and Polly greet Arthur, a young black child, and his mom, who, like Polly, is white. Replicating the position of the crew and actors around Freddy during the “Nasty Baby” shoot, Freddy, Mo, and Polly stand in a semi-circle over the toddler, who lies in a stroller. Arthur, on his back and looking skywards, replicates Silva’s position in the video. The camera cuts between shots of Arthur and the three adults as they look on from above. Whereas Freddy was the center of attention during the filming of the video, in this scene the focus shifts to Arthur. The scene and film end with a low-angle close-up of Freddy, unsmiling, as he looks down at Arthur. Taking into account the black infant’s ambiguous identity as a model offspring and a symbol of Bishop, while gazing on Arthur, Freddy contemplates both the future of his family and his past crimes.



### *Gazing on Baby Arthur*

After the “Nasty Baby” shoot, Freddy edits the footage on his computer at home (seg. 37). In depicting the editing of the experimental video, *Nasty Baby* emphasizes its own self-reflexive nature. As Freddy edits, Mo walks up to his partner. Mo observes the footage of himself with a pacifier in his mouth and says: “It’s so humiliating” (1:00:56-1:00:59). Before heading back to bed, Freddy’s partner declares “I feel unclean” (1:01:02-1:01:03). Underscoring the metacinematic qualities of Mo’s pronouncement and Freddy’s work editing “Nasty Baby,” the camera cuts to a shot of Freddy cleaning himself in the bathtub as his cat Sula watches (seg. 38). With this cleaning, the film suggests that Freddy, and by extension Silva, have made a mess of themselves playing nasty babies.

The representation of the process of cinematic creation culminates with Freddy’s visit to Marcus’s contemporary art gallery, where he screens his film (seg. 40b). In this sequence, Freddy seeks Marcus’s approval to include his work in the group show. He arrives with Wendy for the screening. Before meeting with Marcus, Freddy takes a photograph of Wendy in front of



large-scale collage featuring the head of the pop star Michael Jackson appended to a naked body with an erect penis (1:02:51-1:02:57). This juxtaposition of popular culture and homoerotic imagery ironically evokes the theme of reproduction that also marks Freddy's work. The screening of "Nasty Baby" takes place in the back of the gallery. The camera alternates between shots of Freddy, Wendy, Marcus, and Marcus's assistant as they watch the video (1:03:21-1:04:13). The camera's focus on the spectators, with occasional cut-ins to the film, emphasizes their role as spectators. Freddy's anxiety about the reception of the film is evident in his sideways glances at Marcus as they watch the video. Midway through the video, as Polly appears onscreen chewing on a blue stuffed animal, Marcus reaches over and pauses the video. Freddy implores him to continue watching, but Marcus expresses concern about Polly, inquiring: "Sorry, who is that?" (1:04:22-1:04:23). Freddy tells him it is the woman with whom he wanted to have a baby and then asks: "You don't want to finish it?" (1:04:34-1:04:35). Marcus says "no, no, no we do, we will," before asking his assistant to turn on the lights (1:04:35-1:04:36).



*Watching "Nasty Baby"*

Freddy asks Marcus whether he likes the film. Although the gallery owner says that he does, his assurance lacks conviction. Of the video, Freddy says: “it’s a little different” (1:04:47-1:04:48). Marcus is not so sanguine. “Uh, it’s a lot different,” he tells the artist (1:04:49-1:04:50). Freddy proposes that for the performance component of “Nasty Baby” the gallery install a small elevated stage below the screen. Marcus does not commit to the idea: “Um, space is. . . it’s a group show” (1:04:57-1:04:59). On whether “Nasty Baby” will feature in the show, Marcus says: “we’ll put it to the oracle. I will call you” (1:05:02-1:05:04). Freddy, confused, asks “But is it going to be part of it?” (1:05:03-1:05:05). The gallery owner, frustrated with Freddy’s question, explains how the selection process works: “I, I, I don’t make those decisions. The oracle makes those” (1:05:08-1:05:10). When Freddy makes it clear that he is not familiar with the oracle, Marcus tells Freddy to follow him.

The gallery owner leads Freddy and Wendy into another room where he shows them a bone-colored phallic-shaped sculpture perched atop a dish filled with white-colored pebbles standing against a cement wall. After Marcus confirms that this sculpture is the mysterious oracle, Freddy smirks and looks at Wendy, who smiles back. In a hushed tone, Marcus describes how the oracle functions as the gallery’s curator: “we light the candles, we sit the question, ok, in our hearts” (1:05:43-1:05:47). Freddy responds with laughter and incredulity to this scenario. He asks Marcus how a sculpture is qualified to make a curatorial decision: “What do you mean? How you gonna consult to that whether I can be in the show or not?” (1:05:51-1:05:58). Marcus replies: “Don’t be tense. The questions are asked and the answers come” (1:06:05-1:06:08). Freddy is unsatisfied with the gallerist’s response and asks for an explanation. Marcus adopts a condescending tone: “Did you, did you study Greek or Latin ever? Have you ever gone to high school, Freddy?” (1:06:18-1:06:23). Marcus insults Freddy’s intelligence and presents the oracle

as an heir to the Oracle of Delphi, who curates the gallery without the messiness of emotions. Upset, Freddy tells the gallery owner: “Yeah, no, I went to high school. You don’t need to get sassy Marcus” (1:06:23-1:06:25). Marcus raises his voice: “There’s nothing personal about it. You talked to me about honesty and embarrassment just a short while ago in your place. You opened up something to me and you, you were blushing. You were blushing now seeing that” (1:06:31-1:06:45). The protagonist contests Marcus’s assertion that his emotional vulnerability is the issue. Freddy refuses to accept that the sculpture controls the gallery’s selection process: “Yeah, I’m blushing now with this fucking oracle thing. Like it’s honestly . . . I’m sorry. It’s just so weird. I don’t get it” (1:06:44-1:06:53).

Marcus says the oracle is beyond understanding and denigrates Freddy and his video: “You don’t have to get it. That’s the whole point. It has nothing to do with the intellect and, and, and being cute and having all your friends have a fucking slumber party, excuse me. This is not ‘Picasso Baby,’ ok? This is not a guest list of a bunch of friends” (1:06:54-1:07:10). Freddy rejects the comparison to “Picasso Baby” (2013), a performance art piece by Jay-Z, in which the hip-hop artist performs his song “Picasso Baby” before a small audience at New York’s Pace Gallery. The performance was documented in an eponymous short film directed by Mark Romanek. The Pace Gallery website describes the audience as the confluence of two cultural spheres: “Guests in attendance included people from the worlds of art and music, celebrating the intersection of both” (“Jay-Z’s ‘Picasso Baby’”). The audience for the performance included Marina Abramović, the actor Taraji P. Henson, and the filmmaker Jim Jarmusch.<sup>436</sup> Freddy

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<sup>436</sup> The Pace Gallery website lists the “special guests” as follows: “Marina Abramović (b. 1946, Belgrade, Yugoslavia), whose 2010 “The Artist Is Present” at MoMA inspired JAY-Z, George Condo, Alan Cumming, Tara Donovan, Agnes Gund, Maya Lin, Glenn Lowry, Jenna Lyons, Marilyn Minter, Brooke Neidich, Adam Pendleton, Rosie Perez, Lisa Phillips, Dianna Widmaier Picasso, Dana Schutz, Andres Serrano, Mickalene Thomas, Lawrence Weiner, Kehinde Wiley and Fred Wilson among others” (“Jay-Z’s ‘Picasso Baby’”).

rejects Marcus's comparison to Jay-Z's performance piece: "Don't compare me with 'Picasso Baby' ok? That's a fucking circus" (1:07:09-1:07:12). By distancing himself from "Picasso Baby," Freddy defends his multi-media artwork as a serious endeavor. The similarities in the titles of these two works, however, belie Freddy's declaration that his work has nothing in common with Jay-Z's "circus." Both works focus on defined spheres of culture and society—the art world and entertainment in "Picasso Baby" and family in "Nasty Baby"—and offer a self-reflexive representation of performance. After this tense interaction with Marcus, Freddy decides he has had enough and leaves the gallery with Wendy in tow.



*The oracle*

The film's portrayal of Marcus as a caricature of a contemporary art gallerist, satirizes the role of cultural gatekeepers and, by extension, film festivals in the filmmaking process. Although he positions himself as a serious arbiter of taste, a quality denoted by his costume of a blazer and collared shirt, Marcus makes curatorial decisions in an absurd fashion by outsourcing them to a phallic-shaped sculpture. Notwithstanding the oddity of this ritual, there is also an element of deceit and obfuscation. Marcus disguises his role as a gatekeeper behind the oracle. He claims that appealing to the sculpture removes "intellect" and human judgement from selecting artists and pieces to show at his gallery. Although the oracle is ostensibly tasked with deciding what is displayed at the gallery, ultimately Marcus has the final word.

In addition to satirizing the contemporary art world, the depiction of Marcus and the oracle represents an oblique allusion to film festivals and their role as producers and arbiters of taste. Freddy decides to make "Nasty Baby" in part to participate in the group show at Marcus's gallery. Although Marcus does not provide financing for Freddy's film, he does solicit the artist's participation in the exhibition and, despite his reservations, encourages his work with video. In these ways, Marcus performs a role similar to the Hubert Bals Fund and other film festival-affiliated organizations, which offer financing and the opportunity to exhibit films at their parent festivals. The gallery owner also represents the critical role of film festival programmers in selecting works for exhibition. Like Marcus, these programmers determine what works gets exhibited and, as such, wield significant power, even without the benefit of the oracle. The connection between Marcus and film festival programmers gains an extra layer of in light of Silva's interactions with the Toronto Film Festival as it was considering screening *Nasty Baby*. According to Silva, the Toronto Film Festival told him the film would be considered for selection only if he altered the third act. Silva refused the offer, which he viewed as an

unwelcome incursion into the creative process (“Sebastian Silva on Why Toronto Rejected ‘Nasty Baby’”). In addition to constituting a borderline unethical intervention in the filmmaking process, this action by the Toronto Film Festival programmers reveals the large amount of leverage they perceive they have to shape the films they exhibit.

### 6.3. Giving Birth to Horror: *Nasty Baby* and *Rosemary’s Baby*

Roman Polanski’s horror film *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968) is a key cinematic intertext of *Nasty Baby*.<sup>437</sup> *Rosemary’s Baby* tells the story of Rosemary as she experiences a pregnancy and defends her unborn child against her neighbors’ satanic cult. Although *Nasty Baby* does not explicitly reference Polanski’s film, these two works share multiple elements in common.<sup>438</sup> The connections between *Nasty Baby* and *Rosemary’s Baby* encompass their titles, settings, mise-en-scène, characters, genre, and portrayal of conception as a metaphor for artistic creation.

Both titles include “baby,” a word which underscores the centrality of birth and creation in each film. Their titles also reflect their metacinematic qualities. Rosemary’s baby is both her child and a manifestation of her frightening dreams and paranoia. A similar duality exists in *Nasty Baby*. The baby in Silva’s film is both Polly’s child and Freddy’s experimental artwork. The setting and mise-en-scène of the two films are another point of connection. Both works are set in present-day New York City (the action in *Rosemary’s Baby* takes place in 1965 and 1966). *Rosemary’s Baby*, largely unfolds in the imposing Bramford apartment building, which stands in contrast to the light-filled apartment in *Nasty Baby*. However, both apartments share a common feature: a multitude of plants. In both films, this abundant plant life is linked to fecundity,

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<sup>437</sup> Polanski’s film is an adaptation of Ira Levin’s 1967 novel of the same name.

<sup>438</sup> In interviews, Silva does not mention *Rosemary’s Baby*’s relationship to *Nasty Baby*. However, Silva does cite Polanski’s film as an inspiration for his horror film *Magic Magic*. See Silva, “Bad Trip: A Conversation with Sebastián Silva.”

violence, and death. Rosemary (Mia Farrow) and Guy Woodhouse's (John Cassavetes) new apartment, where they plan to raise their child, is filled with the dead plants of the previous occupant. Rosemary wears the necklace containing the mysterious "tannis root" and drinks the herbal supplement provided by Minnie Castavet (Ruth Gordon). Although Rosemary's neighbor claims that this beverage will sustain her fetus, it also leaves Rosemary weakened and pale. The ambiguous association of these plants with life and death also characterizes *Nasty Baby*. Plants line the shelves and floor of Freddy and Mo's apartment. Mo, Freddy tells Marcus, is a plant fanatic: "it's my boyfriend's obsession. He gets one every other day" (01:44-01:48). The proliferation of plants in Freddy's apartments marks the space as a creatively productive environment. It is here where the artist comes up with the idea for "Nasty Baby" and edits the video. The link between plant life and conception is also manifest in Freddy and Mo's visit to the nursery (seg. 4). Surrounded by plastic pots and greenery, Freddy asks Mo if he would be willing to father a child with Polly. In addition to their association with life, plants are also linked to violence and death: Bishop harasses Polly as she carries a plant to Mo for his birthday and a plant hangs above the bathtub where Freddy and Mo asphyxiate Bishop.



*Life, death, and plants*

The characters of Guy and Freddy represent another point of intersection between *Rosemary's Baby* and *Nasty Baby*. The parallels between these characters encompass their identities as artists and their metacinematic qualities. Guy is an actor whose credits are mostly limited to television commercials. However, he gets his big break when the star of the play he auditioned for suddenly loses his sight (the film leaves viewers to decide whether it is bad luck or the result of supernatural intervention by the Castavets). Guy's first taste of success parallels Freddy's first venture into experimental video. Additionally, Guy's role in the play and Freddy's performance in "Nasty Baby" both entail limited physical mobility: Guy plays a character on crutches and Freddy plays an infant confined to screaming and writhing around. The physical attributes of their performances reflect Guy and Freddy's limitations and shortcomings as fathers: Guy rapes Rosemary and is enthralled with the Castavet's satanic cult while Freddy is infertile. Finally, both Guy and Freddy are played by filmmakers. The casting—and, in the case of *Nasty Baby*, self-casting—of Silva and Cassavetes in the role of artists underscores the



metacinematic qualities of these films and their characters. Moreover, Guy and Freddy both watch themselves performing (Guy on television and Freddy at Marcus's gallery). These self-reflexive acts of spectatorship highlight the actors' identities as filmmakers.

The incorporation of elements and allusions to the horror genre in *Nasty Baby* also link it to *Rosemary's Baby*, a defining work of the horror film genre. In *Nasty Baby*, the murder of Bishop represents a departure from the comic and satiric qualities of the earlier part of the film and herald a shift towards horror. In depicting the "bodily excess" of violence in the murder of Bishop the film self-reflexively embraces the horror genre (Williams, "Film Bodies" 5). As noted above, the murder of Bishop in the bathroom also represents an allusion to the classic horror film *Psycho*. And the reaction of Polly as she opens the door and looks on as Freddy and Mo asphyxiate Bishop embodies the act of watching a horror film (1:19:46-1:19:48). Finally, the destruction of Bishop's body at night in the woods incorporates another convention of horror cinema: the symbiotic relationship of darkness, isolation, and violence.

Finally, Polanski's and Silva's films present conception as a metaphor for artistic creation and, more specifically, filmmaking. Rosemary's arduous and painful pregnancy is inextricable from the narrative. The film depicts her pregnancy from conception until birth and ends with Rosemary's first encounter with her newborn. Lucy Fischer observes that *Rosemary's Baby* establishes a connection between motherhood, birth, and the horror film. She argues that Polanski's movie "heralds both the birth of horror and the horror of birth in modern cinema" (4). Rosemary's pregnancy and her determination to uncover the truth behind the Castavets sends her probing into a world of paranoia and terror, exemplified by the film's three oneiric sequences, which themselves have a communicating vessel relationship with the primary narrative level. In her efforts to unravel this supernatural conspiracy, Rosemary emerges as a double of the

spectator, working to understand the truth behind her dreams and troubled pregnancy. When Rosemary gazes upon her child for the first time, it is a self-reflexive and metacinematic act: as a mother she gains a more acute and fully-formed sense of perception. *Nasty Baby* ends with a similar visual motif: Freddy looks down upon young Arthur, a child who symbolizes his future and past crimes. In *Nasty Baby*, conception encompasses both Polly's struggles to conceive a child and Freddy's "Nasty Baby" experimental video and performance piece. As in *Rosemary's Baby*, conception and the formation of a family are difficult endeavors, thwarted by infertility and the Bishop. Freddy faces a similar challenge making and securing an opportunity to exhibit "Nasty Baby." *Rosemary's Baby* and *Nasty Baby* depict conception and its counterpart, filmmaking, as labors of love.

## 6.4. Segment Summary

Copy utilized: DVD, distributed by Sony Pictures

(The beginning and end time, as well as the duration of each segment are noted in parentheses)

### Part 1: Fertility Problems

Seg. 01	(00:00-00:29)	Opening credits	(0'29")
Seg. 02	(00:29-04:57)	Freddy shows Marcus the concept for "Nasty Baby"	(4'28")
Seg. 03	(04:57-08:24)	Freddy and Polly at the rock climbing gym, Polly tells Freddy his sperm count is low	(3'27")
Seg. 04	(08:24-9:40)	Freddy and Mo at the nursery, Freddy asks Mo if he would be willing to be Polly's sperm donor	(1'16")
Seg. 05	(09:40-10:14)	Freddy and Mo outside at a restaurant	(0'34")
Seg. 06	(10:14-10:55)	Freddy and Mo encounter Richard on the street	(0'41")
Seg. 07	(10:55-11:45)	Enjoying a libation inside Richard's apartment	(0'50")
Seg. 08	(11:45-14:38)	Mo agrees to be a donor, Chino teaches Polly guitar	(2'53")
Seg. 09	(14:38-15:23)	"I wish I could get you pregnant"	(0'45")
Seg. 10	(15:23-15:48)	Freddy looks at childhood photos of himself	(0'25")
Seg. 11	(15:48-18:01)	Bishop wakes Freddy with a leaf blower	(2'13")
Seg. 12	(18:01-19:35)	Freddy and Polly at the café surrounded by babies, Freddy takes a photo with young Arthur	(1'34")
Seg. 13	(19:35-20:19)	At the furniture workshop, Mo responds to Freddy's message	(0'44")
Seg. 14	(20:19-22:02)	Freddy and Polly buy a lamp and terracotta pot from Bishop	(1'43")
Seg. 15	(22:02-23:29)	Wendy arrives to discuss the shoot with Freddy	(1'27")
Seg. 16	(23:29-23:49)	Polly dumps lamp on sidewalk	(0'20")
Seg. 17	(23:49-25:30)	Mo meets Polly at the clinic in Fulton for his sperm test	(1'41")

### Part 2: Discord Among Family and Neighbors

Seg. 18	(25:30-27:40)	Second leaf blower incident: Freddy and Mo go for a run, Freddy confronts Bishop	(2'10")
Seg. 19	(27:40-28:14)	Freddy superimposes his face onto babies	(0'34")
Seg. 20	(28:14-29:49)	Nico "buzzes" Bishop with his pickup truck, Freddy follows Bishop home	(1'35")
Seg. 21	(29:49-35:54)	Mo tells Polly he "can't do it"	(6'5")
Seg. 22	(35:54-37:42)	Bishop confronts Polly about the lamp, Richard intervenes	(1'48")
Seg. 23	(37:42-39:23)	Third leaf blower incident: Mo watches Freddy's video, Freddy calls 311	(1'41")
Seg. 24	(39:23-40:26)	Freddy and Wendy discuss "Nasty Baby"	(1'03")
Seg. 25	(40:26-41:40)	As Polly carries a plant to Mo's birthday party Bishop accosts her again	(1'14")

Seg. 26	(41:40-42:05)	Polly tells Freddy and friends about her encounter with Bishop	(0'25'')
Seg. 27	(42:05-43:00)	Freddy, Chino, and Wendy visit Bishop's apartment, speak with his girlfriend	(0'55'')
Seg. 28	(43:00-44:28)	Mo's birthday party	(1'28'')
Seg. 29	(44:28-45:40)	Revenge with stink bombs	(1'12'')
Seg. 30	(45:40-46:32)	Return to the party and off to bed	(0'52'')
Seg. 31	(46:32-49:05)	Fourth leaf blower incident: Freddy wrestles leaf blower from Bishop, police officer intervenes	(2'33'')
Seg. 32	(49:05-50:44)	Freddy, Polly, and Mo leave the city	(1'39'')
Seg. 33	(50:44-54:24)	Dinner with Mo's family	(3'40'')
Seg. 34	(54:24-58:53)	Family photo albums and artificial insemination	(4'29'')
Seg. 35	(58:53-1:00:13)	Return to the city: crying babies and poo	(1'20'')

### Part 3: The Birth of "Nasty Baby" and the Death of Bishop

Seg. 36	(1:00:13-1:00:44)	"Nasty Baby" shoot	(0'31'')
Seg. 37	(1:00:44-1:01:08)	Freddy edits "Nasty Baby"	(0'24'')
Seg. 38	(1:01:08-1:01:44)	Freddy bathes with Sula the cat	(0'36'')
Seg. 39	(1:01:44-1:02:11)	Freddy lies in bed	(0'27'')
Seg. 40	(1:02:11-1:07:25)	Freddy presents "Nasty Baby" at the art gallery a) Freddy and Wendy travel to the gallery (1:02:11-1:02:17) b) Screening "Nasty Baby" and submitting to "the oracle" (1:02:11-1:07:25)	(5'14'')
Seg. 41	(1:07:25-1:09:08)	Polly tells Mo that she's pregnant	(1'43'')
Seg. 42	(1:09:08-1:10:50)	Wendy and Freddy discuss their meeting with Marcus, interruption by Jewish Woman, Polly calls Freddy	(1'42'')
Seg. 43	(1:10:50-1:11:00)	Freddy sits on bench overlooking Manhattan	(0'10'')
Seg. 44	(1:11:00-1:25:30)	The death of Bishop a) Encounter in the convenience store (1:11:00-1:12:26) b) Fight on the street (1:12:26-1:15:20) c) Freddy goes inside, Bishop follows him home, and a struggle ensues (1:15:20-1:17:37) d) Mo and Polly arrive, Freddy and Mo asphyxiate Bishop (1:17:37-1:20:25) e) Shock and dismay, Chino arrives (1:20:25-1:24:01) f) Richard arrives, the removal of the body (1:24:01-1:25:30)	(14'30'')
Seg. 45	(1:25:30-1:28:29)	Cleaning the apartment, burning the body	(2'59'')
Seg. 46	(1:28:29-1:29:41)	Driving home, encounter with a deer	(1'12'')
Seg. 47	(1:29:41-1:30:42)	Lights out	(1'01'')
Seg. 48	(1:30:42-1:32:07)	Morning in bed	(1'25'')
Seg. 49	(1:32:07-1:33:51)	Venturing out into the neighborhood	(1'44'')
Seg. 50	(1:33:51-1:41:09)	End Credits: Roller-skating	(7'18'')

## 6.5. Technical Summary

Country: USA/Chile/France  
Languages: English and Spanish  
Year: 2015  
Shooting Format: Digital, Color  
Running Time: 101'09"

Director: Sebastián Silva  
Screenplay: Sebastián Silva  
Cast: Sebastián Silva (Freddy), Kristen Wiig (Polly), Tunde Adebimpe (Mo), Reg E. Cathey (The Bishop), Mark Margolis (Richard), Agustín Silva (Chino), Alia Shawkat (Wendy), Lillias White (Cecilia), Anthony Chisolm (Mo's Father), Marsha Stephanie Blake (Mo's Sister/Haimy), William Oliver Watkins (Mo's Brother-In-Law), Constance Shulman (Bishop's Girlfriend), Neal Huff (Gallery Owner), Jessie Thurston (Gallery Owner Assistant), Catrina Ganey (Policewoman), Toni D'Antonio (Nurse), Judy Marte (Abused Woman), Becky London (Jewish Woman), Cara Seymour (Nosy Neighbor), Ina Parker (Brooklyn Mom), and Nico Arze (Nico)

Producers: Juan de Dios Larraín and Pablo Larraín  
Executive Producers: Peter Danner, Pape Boye, Violaine Pichon, Sebastián Silva, and Christine Vachon

Producers: Charlie Dibe, David Hinojosa, and Julia Oh  
Co-Producer: Alia Shawkat  
Editor: Sofía Subercaseaux  
Director of Photography: Sergio Armstrong  
Music: Danny Bensi and Saunder Jurriaans  
Creative Consultant: Pedro Peirano  
Costume Designer: Mark Grattan  
Production Designer: Nico Arze  
Casting Directors: Jessica Daniels and Katja Blichfeld  
Unit Production Manager: Charlie Dibe  
1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director: Daniel Lugo  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director: Jeff Weber  
Production Supervisor: Scott Bredengerd  
Script Supervisor: Jocelyn Jacobs  
Sound Mixers: Kevin Kniowski, Eric Branting, and Heather Fink  
Camera Operator: Giovanni Autran  
Make-Up Artist: Anouck Sullivan  
Hair Artist: Kaela Dobson  
Art Director/Set Decorator: Naomi Munro  
Art Coordinator: Mariko Munro  
Music Supervisor: Juan Ignacio Correa

Post Production Supervisors: Charlie Dibe and Julia Oh  
Visual Effects: Neal Jonas  
Sound Supervisor: Michael Barry  
Sound Designer: Ruy García  
Production Companies: Fabula (Chile), Funny Balloons (France), Versatile (France)  
Associate Production Companies: Diroriro (Chile/USA)  
Distributors: BF Distribution (Chile), The Orchard (USA)  
Funding: The New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development  
Premiere: January 24, 2015 (Sundance Film Festival)  
Theatrical Release: October 23, 2015 (USA), December 10, 2015 (Chile)  
Spectators: 1,027 (Chile)

Shot in New York City in 2013

## A Hollywood Ending

*Me nació de cosas  
que no son país;  
de patrias y patrias  
que tuve y perdí;  
de las criaturas  
que yo vi morir;  
de lo que era mío  
y se fue de mí.*  
—Gabriela Mistral

In his essay “Exilios” (“Exiles”), Roberto Bolaño reflects on the enduring myth of Chile as an island nation: “Mi país de origen es una isla. Pero eso no es lo peor. Mi país de origen es o cree ser la isla de Pascua (de soberanía nacional, por otra parte). Y, como los antiguos pascuenses, los nativos de mi país creen ser el ombligo del mundo, pero a lo bestia” (51; “My homeland is an island. But that’s not the worst thing. My homeland is or believes itself to be Easter Island (under national sovereignty, by the way). And, like the old Easter Islanders, the natives of my country believe they are the navel of the world, but fervently”). Bolaño uses irony to poke fun at the proponents of this myth. The author’s own peripatetic life belies the idea that Chile, by virtue of its geography, history, or culture, sits apart from the rest of the world.

Like Bolaño, Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva are cosmopolitan Chilean artists whose careers and films span the globe. They hold a variety of jobs in the cinematographic industry and other cultural fields, working as directors, producers, professors, musicians, and writers. They eschew labels and present themselves as citizens of the world. Consistent with their strong cosmopolitan identities, these four filmmakers embrace a transnational approach to filmmaking that encompasses the production, distribution, and exhibition of their works. These transnational practices include shooting in multiple countries; the casting of actors from Hollywood and elsewhere; the use of co-production mechanisms; circulation at film festivals;

and, in the case of Fuguet, the creation of the Cinémeta online distribution and exhibition platform.

The cosmopolitan practices of Fuguet, Larraín, Scherson, and Silva extend to the themes of their films. *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby* depict cosmopolitanism, which I define as “an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (Hannerz 29) manifest through “common conversations” (Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* 258) across borders, peoples, and groups. The protagonists of these films practice cosmopolitanism through cinephilia and filmmaking. Gastón’s work as the composer of the soundtrack for *Las hormigas asesinas*, Raúl Peralta’s obsessive viewings of *Saturday Night Fever*, Bianca’s cinephilic relationship with Maciste, and Freddy’s experimental video “Nasty Baby” exemplify the interrelated practices of cinephilia and filmmaking. Although these characters are all cosmopolitan cinephiles, they watch and create film and art in distinct ways, ranging from Gastón’s self-reflexive relationship to *Las hormigas asesinas* in *Se arrienda*, Raúl’s myopic cinephilia in *Tony Manero*, Bianca’s omnivorous consumption of film and television in *Il Futuro*, and Freddy’s satiric experimental video in *Nasty Baby*. These four films present cinephilia and filmmaking as manifestations of the common conversations that are at the core of cosmopolitanism.

Complementing their cosmopolitan themes, these four films exemplify the porous qualities of art cinema. They incorporate a range of intertexts from film and other cultural fields, including the peplum film and the Gothic novel *Jane Eyre* in *Il Futuro*; the 1988 Human Rights Now! concert in Mendoza and the discussion about Julio Iglesias in *Se arrienda*; *Saturday Night Fever* in *Tony Manero*; and *Rosemary’s Baby* in *Nasty Baby*. And like other art films, these four films encourage active spectatorship. The communicating vessel relationship between narrative



levels in *Se arrienda*; the dialogue between *Saturday Night Fever* and *Tony Manero*; the relationship between Bolaño's *Una novelita lumpen* and *Il Futuro*; and the juxtaposition between "Nasty Baby" experimental video and Freddy's efforts to form a family in *Nasty Baby* exemplify the ways in which they foment active viewers.

Since 2015, Chile's film industry and the country's art cinema have continued to develop. In 2016, eighteen Chilean productions and co-productions were released in local cinemas, a decline from 2014 when forty films were released, but only slightly below the average between 2005 and 2015 ("El cine en Chile en el 2016" 18). Of these eighteen films, eight, or 44 percent, were supported under the industry's "Convenio de colaboración," which took effect in 2014 (24). In 2016, local cinemas recorded 27,659,999 admissions for Chilean and non-Chilean films, a 6 percent increase over 2015. This translated to an average of 1.52 annual per capita visits to the cinema (4-5). Audiences for Chilean productions and co-productions increased 86.5 percent over the previous year, for a total of 1,738,336 admissions (17). However, continuing a trend, Chilean films garnered a limited portion of box-office receipts. In 2016, Chilean movies comprised 6.5 percent of total admissions at local cinemas (17). Nicolás López's *Sin filtro* accounted for the majority of these tickets, attracting 1,290,926 viewers, a record surpassed only by the 2012 film *Stefan v/s Kramer* (15). *Sin filtro* was the only Chilean movie in the top ten most-viewed films that year (7).

In 2017, local cinemas recorded 27,744,674 admissions, surpassing the previous year for the highest total since 1974 ("El cine en Chile en el 2017" 7). The number of screens in the country's independent and multiplex cinemas grew to 424 in 2017, a 46.4 percent increase over 2010 (12). Twenty-four Chilean productions and co-productions premiered in local movie theaters in 2017 (15-16). Sixteen of these films, or 67 percent, participated under the "Convenio

de colaboración” (23). However, despite these record audiences, audiences for local films were the lowest since 2000, when 157,490 admissions for domestic movies were recorded (18). In 2017, there were 199,441 spectators for Chilean films, with each film averaging 8,310 admissions (18). The most popular film that year, Diego Rougier’s *costumbrista* comedy *Se busca novio. . . para mi mujer*, attracted 52,078 viewers. Sebastián Lelio’s *Una mujer fantástica* (*A Fantastic Woman*), which went on to win the 2018 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, was the second most-watched film of 2017, attracting 43,842 spectators (18).<sup>439</sup> Although Chilean films accounted for 11 percent of releases, they attracted only .7 percent of audiences. This decline in viewers relative to previous years accentuates the enduring tension between the dearth of spectators at home, the prominent circulation of Chilean cinema at film festivals, and the accumulation of prestige and awards by Chilean filmmakers and their films. The lack of audiences for local films in an otherwise thriving film industry again elicits Andrew Higson’s question: “For what is a national cinema if it doesn’t have a national audience?” (46).

In the years after 2015, the state continued to expand its investment in the cinematographic industry. A seventy-six-page report published by the National Council of Culture and the Arts in 2016 emphasizes the centrality of cinema in the government’s cultural policy during Bachelet’s second administration. The report, *Política Nacional del Campo Audiovisual 2017-2022 (National Policy Towards the Audiovisual Sector: 2017-2022, 2016)*, calls for increased state participation in the film sector, with a special emphasis on the “formación de audiencias para el cine nacional” (Ottone, “Presentación” 9; “formation of audiences for national cinema”). In the section “Objetivo General” (“General Objective”), the authors of the report sum up the government’s goals: “Fomentar el desarrollo equitativo y

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<sup>439</sup> *Una mujer fantástica* earned just over two million dollars at the U.S. box office (Box Office Mojo, “A Fantastic Woman”).

sustentable del campo audiovisual nacional promoviendo la participación, el acceso, el respeto a los derechos, la diversidad territorial y cultural y la equidad de género” (55; “Foment the equitable and sustainable development of the national audiovisual field promoting the participation, access, respect for rights, territorial and cultural diversity, and gender equity”).

Between 2015 and 2018, the government deepened its role in the country’s film industry through increased investment, legislation, and the creation of a digital distribution and exhibition platform, among other initiatives. In November 2017, Congress passed Law 21.045, which established the Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio (Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Patrimony). This new government organ, commonly known as the Ministerio de Cultura (Ministry of Culture), operates as a standalone ministry and replaces the National Council of Culture and the Arts. The creation of the Ministry of Culture exemplifies the government’s commitment to the arts and underscores the high value the state places on the country’s cultural industries. The Ministry has its headquarters in Valparaíso and holds a wide-ranging mandate to:

Promover y contribuir al desarrollo de la creación artística y cultural, fomentando la creación, producción, mediación, circulación, distribución y difusión de las artes visuales, fotografía, nuevos medios, danza, circo, teatro, diseño, arquitectura, música, literatura, audiovisual y otras manifestaciones de las artes; como asimismo, promover el respeto y desarrollo de las artes y culturas populares. (“Crea el Ministerio de las Culturas, Las Artes y el Patrimonio,” Chapter 1, Article 3; Promote and contribute to the development of artistic and cultural creation, promoting creation, production, mediation, circulation, distribution and diffusion of visual arts, photography, new mediums, dance, circus, theater, design, architecture, music, literature, audiovisual, and other artistic

manifestations; as well as promoting the respect and development of popular arts and cultures)

The Ministry took over responsibility for managing the Audiovisual Fund. In 2016, the Fund's budget measured 7,917,755,000 Chilean pesos, a 16 percent increase over the previous year (*Estadísticas culturales: informe anual 2016*, 354).

In addition to establishing the Ministry of Culture, the Chilean government supported a number of initiatives aimed at fomenting the production, distribution, and exhibition of Chilean film between 2015 and early 2018. In 2017, the CNCA launched the online distribution and exhibition platform OndaMedia. The service, which is limited to Chilean citizens and residents, hosts feature-length and short films, as well as recordings submitted by amateur filmmakers. Films by Larraín, Scherson, and Silva are available to stream on the platform. Viewers can watch a limited number of movies per month. Upon the launch of the streaming platform, then Minister of Culture Ernesto Ottone described the venture as a means of expanding the reach of Chilean cinema: “OndaMedia permitirá el fortalecimiento del acceso a la cultura y a las artes por parte de la ciudadanía” (González, “OndaMedia: nace la plataforma”; “OndaMedia will allow the strengthening of access to culture and art by the citizenry”). Although Ottone emphasizes OndaMedia as a means of making cinema more accessible to Chileans, the platform overlaps with other online film archives and platforms including Cinémeta, the Cineteca Nacional, the University of Chile's Cineteca, and Netflix. OndaMedia represents an effort by the state to insert itself further into the business of cinema. In addition to OndaMedia, there are several other significant initiatives implemented by the government, among them the passage of a law normalizing authorship rights for filmmakers in 2016<sup>440</sup>; the publication of an updated

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<sup>440</sup> The law is known as the “Ley Ricardo Larraín” after the late filmmaker. See Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, “Extiende la aplicación de la Ley N° 20.243.”

filmmaking guide, titled *Chile en Acción: Guía para Rodar (Chile in Action: A Guide for Filming)*, 2018) by the Ministry of Culture and Film Commission Chile; the implementation of a 30 percent cash rebate for international productions that spend at least two million dollars and team with a Chilean co-producer in 2017,<sup>441</sup> and an April 2018 decree that reduces tariffs on the importation of certain kinds of filmmaking equipment.<sup>442</sup>

Even as the state continues to expand its footprint in Chile's cinematographic industry, filmmakers explored innovative ways of making films without relying on state support. The most emblematic example is Alejandro Fernández Almendras's *Aquí no ha pasado nada (Much Ado About Nothing)* (Chile/USA/France, 2016). The film is the loosely fictionalized story of a real-life scandal involving Martín Larraín, the son of Carlos Larraín, a prominent Chilean politician.<sup>443</sup> Fernández Almendras launched a crowdfunding campaign to finance part of the film. In addition, the actors and crew waived their fees in exchange for a share of future earnings (Fernández Almendras, "Aquí no ha pasado nada"). The cast and crew's solidarity and determination to bring this politically-charged story to the screen reflect the strength of the "kinship network" that binds the country's film community (Kemp, "Stardom in Spanish America" 49).

Finally, in the years after 2015, Chilean cinema acquired a new level of global visibility with historic Oscar wins at the 2016 and 2018 Academy Awards. At the 2016 Academy Awards, Gabriel Osorio's *Historia de un oso* (2014), an allegory of exile during the Pinochet dictatorship,

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<sup>441</sup> See De la Fuente, "Chile Offers 30% Cash Rebates to Int'l Films, TV and Digital Location Shoots."

<sup>442</sup> See Ministerio de las Artes, las Culturas y el Patrimonio, "Crece listado de bienes de capital para la industria audiovisual."

<sup>443</sup> See González, "Aquí no ha pasado nada: llega a salas la cinta que se inspiró en el caso Martín Larraín."

won Best Animated Short Film, becoming the first Chilean film to win an Oscar.<sup>444</sup> Osorio's short beat out a film from Disney's Pixar studio, a result which *BBC Mundo*'s Valeria Perasso called a "batalla de David versus Goliat" ("battle of David versus Goliath"). An article in *El Mercurio* was similarly exultant, labelling the win "un quiebre en la historia del cine chileno" ("Historia de un oso' gana el Oscar"; "a turning point in the history of Chilean cinema"). Echoing statements by the press and film industry professionals in the aftermath of the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, Minister of Culture Ottone described the film's Oscar as evidence of the success of the state's efforts to foment a national cinema (*La historia de un oso* received support from CNCA, CORFO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DIRAC, ProChile, and the Chilean Embassy in the United States). Ottone described the award as a part of an upward trajectory of the country's national cinema in recent years:

Este premio de la Academia se suma a la serie de reconocimientos que el cine chileno, en todas sus expresiones—documental, largometraje y ahora animación—, está cosechando en los más importantes Festivales de Cine del mundo y también es un llamado para nosotros como Consejo de la Cultura, y para los diversos organismos públicos que apoyan el Audiovisual, a que sigamos fortaleciendo nuestro cine, y perfeccionando nuestras herramientas para apoyar aún más a géneros con tanto potencial internacional, como la animación. ("Presidenta Bachelet felicita en La Moneda"; This prize from the Academy adds to the series of recognitions that Chilean cinema, in all of its expressions—documentary, feature-length film, and now animation—, is harvesting in the most important Film Festivals in the world, and it is also a call for us as the Council of Culture and for the diverse public organs that support the Audiovisual sector, to

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<sup>444</sup> In 2013 the Chilean Claudio Miranda won the Oscar for Best Cinematography for *Life of Pi* (2012). See *BBC News*, "Claudio Miranda, el Oscar latinoamericano."

continue strengthening our cinema, and perfecting our tools to further support those genres with so much international potential, like animation)<sup>445</sup>

Ottone frames the Oscar win through the language of the agriculture business and the export economy, using words and phrases like “harvesting,” “perfecting our tools,” and “international potential.” Like ProChile’s work facilitating and promoting the sale of Chilean wine and fruit abroad, the Minister of Culture proposes that the state assume a more proactive role in cultivating the country’s national cinema with an eye towards the global market.

The 2018 Academy Awards further solidified the prestige and visibility of Chilean cinema on the global stage. Sebastián Lelio’s *Una mujer fantástica* garnered the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, the first Chilean film to win the award.<sup>446</sup> At the awards ceremony, the movie’s star, Daniela Vega, introduced the performance of an original song from the film *Call Me by Your Name* (2017). *Una mujer fantástica* was co-produced by the Larraín brothers’ Fabula and tells the story of Marina (Vega), a transgender woman dealing with the aftermath of her partner’s sudden death. Prior to the Academy Awards, *Una mujer fantástica* screened in competition at the 2017 Berlinale, where the film won the Silver Bear award for Best Screenplay (awarded to Lelio and Gonzalo Maza), the Teddy Award for Best Feature Film, and a Special Mention from the Ecumenical Jury. The film’s success at both the Berlinale and the Academy Awards exemplify the overlap between Hollywood and art cinema, as well as their shared roles as arbiters and brokers of cultural prestige.

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<sup>445</sup> As part of the 2017 Audiovisual Fund, the CNCA awarded a grant to Osorio and the production company Punkrobot to adapt *La historia de un oso* into a feature-length film. See *Emol*, “‘Historia de un oso’ se convertirá en largometraje y será financiado por los Fondos de Cultura.”

<sup>446</sup> Three films by Chilean filmmakers were previously shortlisted for the Best Foreign Language Film: Larraín’s *No* and Littin’s *Actas de Marusia* (*Letters from Marusia*) and *Alsino y el condor* (*Alsino and the Condor*). *No* was nominated by Chile at the 2013 Academy Awards, *Actas de Marusia* was nominated by Mexico at the 1976 Academy Awards, and *Alsino y el condor* was nominated by Nicaragua at the 1983 Academy Awards.

*Una mujer fantástica*'s participation in the Academy Awards and its Oscar win were described in the Chilean and international press as seminal moments for Chilean and Latin American cinema and milestones for transgender people. In an article in *The Washington Post* titled "The big winners of the 2018 Oscars: Latin American artists," Stephanie Merrie highlights the four awards won by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro's film *The Shape of Water*, *Una mujer fantástica*'s Oscar win, and Vega's role in the ceremony: "this year, winners from Latin America were a running theme. The best foreign language film was the Chilean drama 'A Fantastic Woman,' and the star of that movie, Daniela Vega, made history by becoming the first transgender actor to present onstage." This and other reports echo those from the 2015 Berlinale, inasmuch as they describe the film's win as a high-point of Chilean cinema's accumulation of prestige at film festivals and in Hollywood. Rodrigo Miranda's article "El gran momento del cine chileno" ("The great moment of Chilean cinema"), published in *La Tercera* before the Oscars, connects Lelio's participation to the success of a generation of early-21st-century Chilean filmmakers: "Esta noche, Sebastián Lelio puede hacer historia y dar a Chile su primer Oscar a Mejor Película Extranjera, pero el director de *Una mujer fantástica* no está solo: forma parte de una generación de realizadores que ha logrado proyección internacional, atención de la crítica extranjera y un reconocimiento sin precedentes para el país" ("Tonight, Sebastián Lelio can make history and give Chile its first Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, but the director of *Una mujer fantástica* is not alone: he forms part of a generation of filmmakers that has achieved international exhibition, the attention of foreign critics, and a recognition without precedents for the country"). Miranda's insistence on Lelio's affiliation with a "generation" of Chilean filmmakers and his stress on the historical nature of the nomination recall accounts of



the 2005 Valdivia Film Festival, in which disparate Chilean filmmakers are grouped into a single generational category.

In an article in *El Mercurio* by Constanza Troncoso, published after the ceremony, three critics, Ana Josefa Silva, Iñaki Goldaracena, and Pablo Marín, affirm that *Una mujer fantástica*'s Oscar win is the result of the development of Chile's film industry over the preceding years. The critics highlight Fabula's growth into a globally-recognized production house, the accumulation of awards by Chilean films, and the quality of the films themselves. Silva describes the award as marking "un antes y después" ("a before and after"). Goldaracena calls the Oscar "una culminación de varios logros que Chile se ha ido adjudicando" ("the culmination of various successes Chile has been attaining"). And Marín says the award is "un síntoma de cosas que están pasando en la industria del cine nacional" ("a symptom of the things that are happening in the national film industry"). Notably, these three critics share the belief that *Una mujer fantástica*'s Oscar win was neither sudden nor unexpected; rather, it was the result of a process of methodical growth of Chile's film industry that coincided with the increasing prominence of the country's cinema on the world stage. Chilean filmmaker Orlando Lübbert is less optimistic about *Una mujer fantástica*'s Oscar and its capacity to stimulate local audiences' interest in Chilean cinema: "Es una falsa ilusión pensar que el Oscar va a arreglar el cine chileno. Tenemos un gran problema de audiencia. Algunos periodistas dicen que el cine chileno está atravesando por su mejor momento, pero la misma cinta de Lelio antes del Oscar no tuvo público" ("It is a false hope to think that the Oscar will fix Chilean cinema. We have a great problem of audiences. Some journalists say that Chilean cinema is going through its best moment, but Lelio's same film had no audience before the Oscar"). In pointing to the lack of spectators for Lelio's film, Lübbert

echoes the observations of critics from 2005 onwards regarding the scarcity of domestic audiences for Chilean cinema.

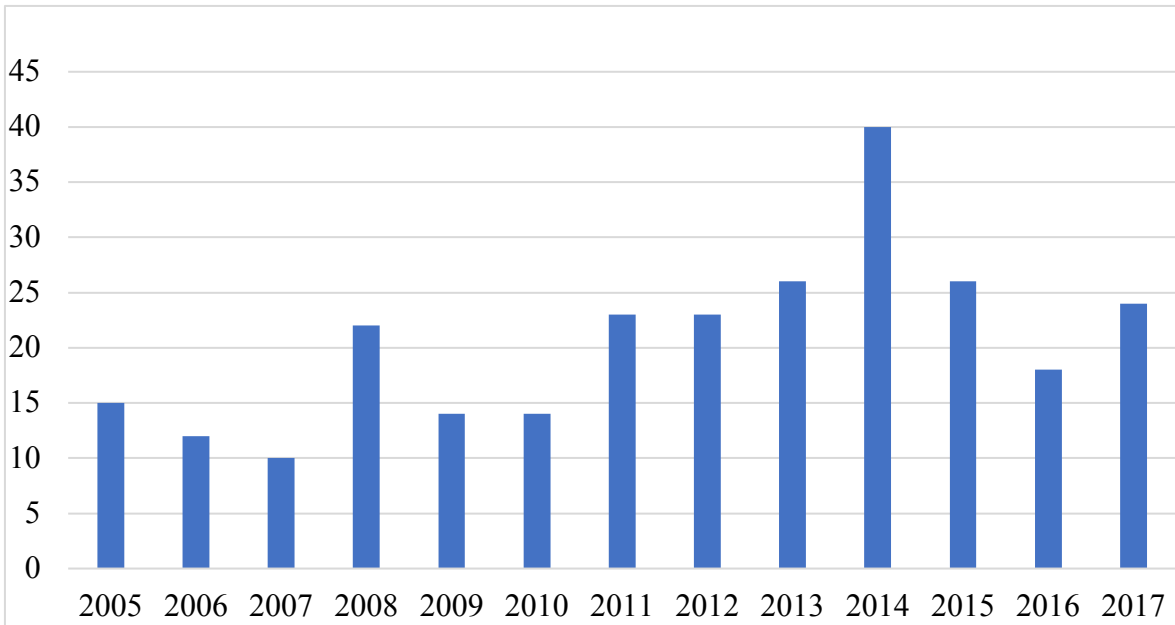
In addition to making history as the first feature-length Chilean film to win an Oscar, *Una mujer fantástica*'s Hollywood victory had political repercussions at home. Following the Academy Awards, pressure increased on Chile's Congress to pass a gender equality bill, first proposed in 2013, that would allow transgender people to legally change their names and gender identities.<sup>447</sup> President Bachelet alluded to this legislative project in two tweets praising the film and its representation of a transgender woman. On March 4, the night of the Oscars, Bachelet tweeted: "El premio, que nos llena de orgullo, no sólo reconoce a una película de gran calidad, sino a una historia de respeto por la diversidad que nos hace bien como país" ("The award, which fills us with pride, doesn't only recognize a movie of great quality, but also a story of respect for diversity which does us good as a country"). On March 6, the cast and crew of the film visited La Moneda Palace. In a tweet accompanied by a photo of the cast and crew of the film, Bachelet wrote: "Un honor recibir en La Moneda, la casa de todos, al equipo de #UnaMujerFantástica. Como otras grandes expresiones de nuestro arte, esta película ha impulsado conversaciones sobre avances sociales que Chile demanda" ("An honor receiving in La Moneda, the house of all, the crew of #UnaMujerFantástica. Like other great expressions of our art, this movie has spurred conversations about social advances that Chile demands"). In facilitating a dialogue about transgender rights, *Una mujer fantástica* parallels the common conversations and engagement with others that characterize *Se arrienda*, *Tony Manero*, *Il Futuro*, and *Nasty Baby*.

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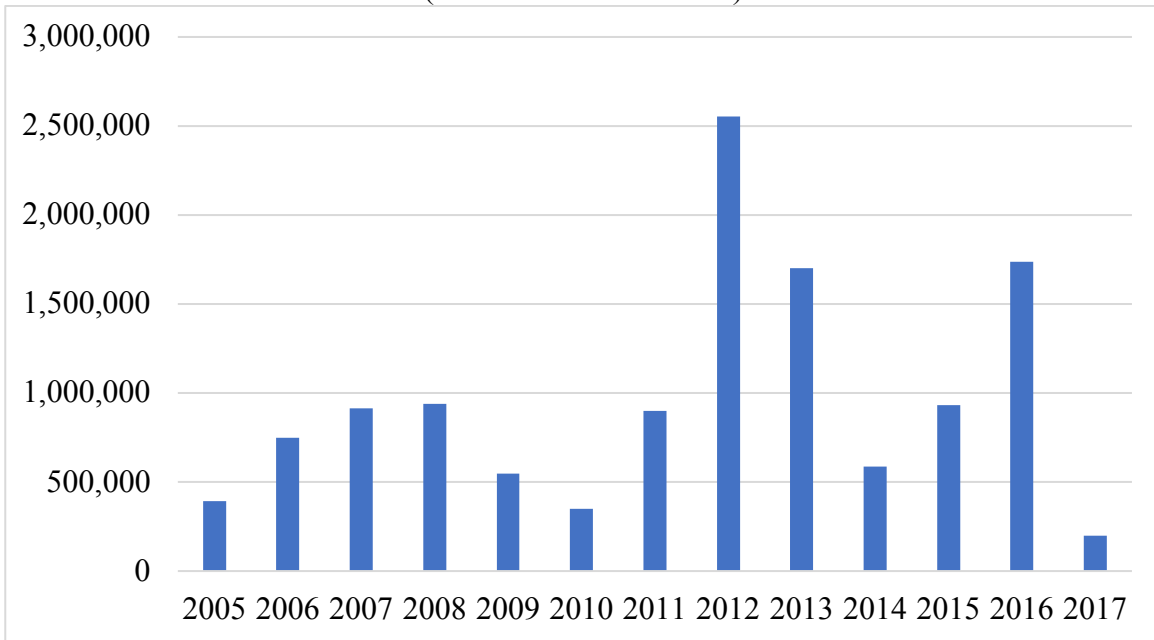
<sup>447</sup> See Londoño and Bonnefoy, "Chile's Oscar for 'A Fantastic Woman' Bolsters Gender Identity Bill."

Appendix: Chilean Films and Audiences

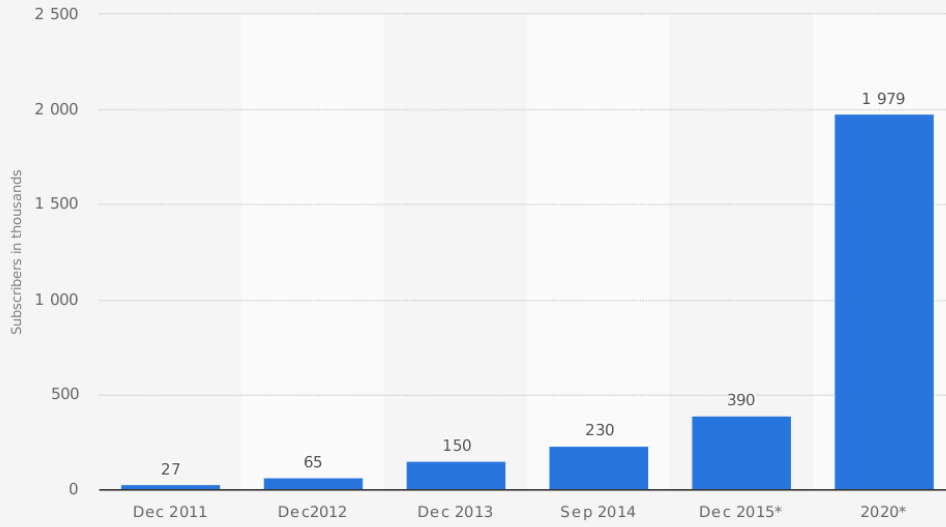
Number of Chilean Films Premiering in Local Cinemas: 2005-2017



Audiences for Chilean Films in Local Cinemas: 2005-2017  
(Number of Admissions)



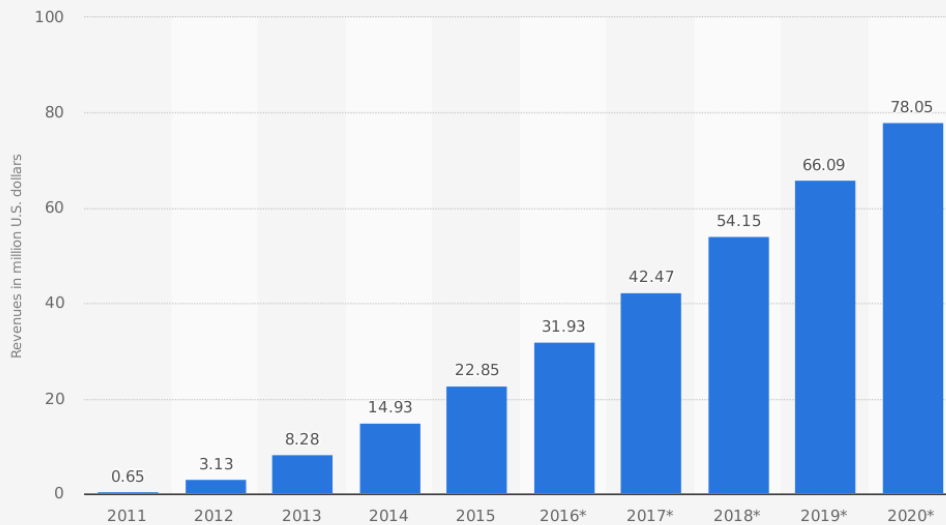
**Number of Netflix paying streaming subscribers in Chile from 2011 to 2020 (in 1,000s)**



**Sources**  
Netflix; Digital TV Research; eMarketer  
© Statista 2018

**Additional Information:**  
Chile; Digital TV Research; Netflix; December 2011 to September 2014

**Estimated streaming revenues of Netflix in Chile from 2011 to 2020 (in million U.S. dollars)**



**Source**  
Nakono  
© Statista 2018

**Additional Information:**  
Chile; 2011 to 2015

## Image Credits

Images from *Se arrienda* used with the permission of Alberto Fuguet and Cinémeta

Images from *Il Futuro* used with the permission of Alicia Scherson and La Ventura

Images from *Tony Manero* and *Nasty Baby* used with the permission of Juan de Dios Larraín and Fabula

## Filmography

*2 horas*. Directed by Alberto Fuguet, Cinépata, 2008.

*28 Days Later*. . . Directed by Danny Boyle, DNA Films, 2002.

*2001: A Space Odyssey*. Directed by Stanley Kubrick, MGM—Stanley Kubrick Productions, 1968.

*Actas de Marusia*. Directed by Miguel Littin, Corporación Nacional Cinematográfica—P.C. Arturo Feliú, 1975.

*Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes*. Directed by Werner Herzog, Werner Herzog Filmproduktion—Hessischer Rundfunk, 1972.

*Allende en su laberinto*. Directed by Miguel Littin, Fundación Villa del Cine—La Taguara—VPC Cinema Video—Zetra Films, 2014.

*Alsino y el cóndor*. Directed by Miguel Littin, Instituto Nicaragüense de Cine—Productora Cinematográfica Latinoamericana de México—Cooperativa Cinematográfica Costarricense—ICAIC—CRFC—Latin-American Film Releasing—NFI, 1982.

*Anónimo*. Directed by Renato Pérez, Universidad del Desarrollo—Producciones del Desarrollo, 2010.

*Aquí no ha pasado nada*. Directed by Alejandro Fernández Almendras, Arizona Films—Brisa Films—Jirafa, 2016.

*Ardiente paciencia*. Directed by Antonio Skármeta, Prole Filme—Von Vietinghoff Filmproduktion, 1983.

*Around Two Hours*. Directed by Tantor Films, Tantor Films—La Comisión Fílmica de Chile, 2012, <https://vimeo.com/41148388>.

*¡Átame!* Directed by Pedro Almodóvar, El Deseo, 1990.

*Aurora*. Directed by Rodrigo Sepúlveda, Caco Films—Forastero, 2014.

*Ausência*. Directed by Chico Teixeira, Bossa Nova—Anhangabaú Produções—Wood Producciones—Ciné-Sud Promotion, 2014.

*B-Happy*. Directed by Gonzalo Justiniano, Sahara Films—Cinecorp SAC—Igeldo Communication S.L.—Joel Films, 2003.

*Baño de mujeres*. Directed by Alicia Scherson, Parox—Orange, 2005.

*Blade Runner*. Directed by Ridley Scott, The Ladd Company—Shaw Brothers—Warner Brothers—Blade Runner Partnership, 1982.

*Blow Out*. Directed by Brian De Palma, Cinema 77—Geria Productions—Filmway Pictures—Viscount Associates, 1981.

*Bonsái*. Directed by Cristián Jiménez, Jirafa, 2012.

*Brigada Ramona Parra*. Directed by Álvaro Ramírez, Samuel Carvajal, and Leonard Céspedes, Centro de Cine Experimental, 1970.

*Cabiria*. Directed by Giovanni Pastrone, Itala Films, 1914.

*Call Me by Your Name*. Directed by Luca Guadagnino, Frenesy Film—La Cinéfacture—RT Features—Water’s End Productions—M.Y.R.A. Entertainment, 2017.

*Caluga o menta*. Directed by Gonzalo Justiniano, Arca—Televisión Española—Filmocentro, 1990.

*Carne de perro*. Directed by Fernando Guzzoni, Ceneca Producciones—JBA Production—Hanfgarn and Ufer Filmproduktion, 2012.

*Crying Underwater*. Directed by Alicia Scherson, Alicia Scherson, 2002.

*Crystal Fairy & the Magical Cactus and 2012*. Directed by Sebastián Silva, Fabula—Diroriro, 2013.

*Dance Dance Dance*. In *Madly*. Directed by Sebastián Silva, Mad Love Productions, 2016.

*Dawson, Isla 10*. Directed by Miguel Littin, Azul Films, 2009.

*De jueves a domingo*. Directed by Dominga Sotomayor, Forastero—Cinestación—Circe Films, 2012.

*Der Himmel über Berlin*. Directed by Wim Wenders, Road Movies—Argos—WDR—Wim Wenders Stiftung, 1987.

*Diálogos de exiliados*. Directed by Raúl Ruiz, Raúl Ruiz—Percy Matas, 1974.

*Dog Day Afternoon*. Directed by Sidney Lumet, Warner Brothers—Artists Entertainment Complex, 1975.

*Dolfun*. Directed by Sebastián Silva, Borscht Corporation, 2016.

*Dos hermanos (en un lugar de la noche)*. Directed by Martín Rodríguez, Roos Film, 2000.

*Dracula*. Directed by Tod Browning, Universal, 1931.

*Easy Rider*. Directed by Dennis Hopper, Pando Company—Raybert Productions, 1969.

*Educación física (P.E.)*. Directed by Pablo Cerda, La Nena, 2010.

*El año del tigre*. Directed by Sebastián Lelio, Fabula, 2011.

*El botón de nácar*. Directed by Patricio Guzmán, Atacama—Valdivia Film—Mediapro—France 3 Cinema, 2015.

*El chacal de Nahueltoro*. Directed by Miguel Littin, Cine Experimental de la Universidad de Chile—Cinematográfica Tercer Mundo, 1970.

*El chacotero sentimental*. Directed by Cristián Galaz, Cebra Producciones, 1999.

*El cielo, la tierra y la lluvia*. Directed by José Torres Leiva, Charivari Films—Jirafa—Rommel Film, 2008.

*El circuito de Román*. Directed by Sebastián Brahm, Escala Humana—Doménica Films, 2011.



*El Club*. Directed by Pablo Larraín, Fabula, 2015.

*El entusiasmo*. Directed by Ricardo Larraín, Cine XXI—Paraiso—Cartel, 1998.

*El hombre nuevo*. Directed by Aldo Garay, Cerdón, 2015.

*El recurso del método*. Directed by Miguel Littin, Conacite Uno—France 3—ICAIC—K.G. Productions, 1978.

*El verano de los peces voladores*. Directed by Marcela Said, Jirafa, 2013.

*El zapato chino*. Directed by Cristián Sánchez, Cristián Sánchez, 1979.

*En la cama*. Directed by Matías Bize, Ceneca Producciones—CMW Film Company—Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2005.

*Frankenstein*. Directed by James Whale, Universal, 1931.

*Fuerzas especiales*. Directed by José Miguel Zúñiga, Sobras, 2014.

*Fuga*. Directed by Pablo Larraín, Fabula, 2006.

*Gatos viejos*. Directed by Sebastián Silva, Elephant Eye Films—Diroriro—Jirafa, 2010.

*Généalogies d'un crime*. Directed by Raúl Ruiz, Gemini Films, 1997.

*Gloria*. Directed by Sebastián Lelio, Fabula—Nephilim, 2013.

*Grease*. Directed by Randal Kleiser, Paramount—Robert Stigwood Organization—Allan Carr Production, 1978.

*Historias de fútbol*. Directed by Andrés Wood, Wood Producciones—Roos Films, 1997.

*Huacho*. Directed by Alejandro Fernández Almendras, Carivari Films—Jirafa—Les Audis de Vanves—Pandora Filmproduktion, 2009.

*Idénticamente igual (el Charles Bronson Chileno)*. Directed by Carlos Flores del Pino, Foco Films, 1984.

*Il colosso di Rodi*. Directed by Sergio Leone, Produzioni Atlas Consorziate—Cine-Produzioni Associate—Procusa—CFPC—CTI, 1961.

*Il Futuro*. Directed by Alicia Scherson, Jirafa—La Ventura—Pandora Film Produktion—Movimento Film—Astronauta Films—Jaleo Films, 2013.

*Il Postino*. Directed by Michael Radford, Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica—Penta Film—Esterno Mediterraneo Film, 1994.

*Ilusiones ópticas*. Directed by Cristián Jiménez, Retaguardia Films—Jirafa—Roos Films—Filmes Fundo—Les Films du Requin, 2009.

*Invierno*. Directed by Alberto Fuguet, Cinépata, 2015.

*Ixancul*. Directed by Jayro Bustamante, La Casa de Production, 2015.

*Jackie*. Directed by Pablo Larraín, Jackie Productions—Protozoa—LD Entertainment—Fabula—Wild Bunch—Why Not Productions, 2016.

*Johnny Cien Pesos*. Directed by Gustavo Graef Marino, Catalina Cinema—Arauco Films—Visión Comunicaciones, 1993.

*Journal d'un curé de campagne*. Directed by Robert Bresson, Union Générale Cinématographique, 1951.

*Joven y alocada*. Directed by Marialy Rivas, Fabula, 2012.

*Julio comienza en julio*. Directed by Silvio Caiozzi, Andrea Films, 1979.

*Kill Bill: Vol. 1*. Directed by Quentin Tarantino, Miramax—A Band Apart—Super Cool ManChu, 2003.

*Kill Bill: Vol. 2*. Directed by Quentin Tarantino, Miramax—A Band Apart—Super Cool ManChu, 2004.

*L'Atalante*. Directed by Jean Vigo, Jacques Louis-Nounez, 1934.

*L'eclisse*. Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, Cineriz—Interopa Film—Paris Film, 1962.

*L'enfant endormi*. Directed by Yasmine Kassari, Les Films de la Drève—Les Coquelicots de l'Oriental, 2004.

*La buena vida*. Directed by Andrés Wood, Wood Producciones—Mamoun Hassan—Tornasol—BD Cine, 2008.

*La dama de las camelias*. Directed by José Bohr, Chile Films, 1947.

*La ducha*. Directed by María José San Martín, Marianne Mayer-Beckh, 2010.

*La frontera*. Directed by Ricardo Larraín, Cine XXI—TVE—Ion Producciones—Filmocentro Chile—TVN, 1991.

*La furia di Ercole*. Directed by Gianfranco Parolini, Cinematografica Associati—Comptoir Français du Film Production, 1962.

*La grande bellezza*. Directed by Paolo Sorrentino, Indigo, 2013.

*La Jetée*. Directed by Chris Marker, Argos, 1962.

*La jubilada*. Directed by Jairo Boisier, Escala Humana—Zapik, 2012.

*La mujer de barro*. Directed by Sergio Castro San Martín, Storyboard Media, 2015.

*La nana*. Directed by Sebastián Silva, Forastero—Diroriro—Tiburón—Puntoguiónpunto, 2009.

*La odisea de Ulises*. Directed by Lorena Manríquez and Miguel Picker, Andes Media, 2014.

*La promesa*. Directed by Alicia Scherson, Alica Scherson, 2007.

*La vida me mata*. Directed by Sebastián Silva, Fabula, 2007.

*Largo viaje*. Directed by Patricio Kaulen, Alberto Parilla—Alberto Tasselli, 1967.

*Las hormigas asesinas*. Directed by Alberto Fuguet, GOA Films—El Asombro—Cinépata—Lastarria 90, 2005.

*Las niñas Quispe*. Directed by Sebastián Sepúlveda, Dolce Vita—Fabula, 2013.

*Le fatiche di Ercole*. Directed by Pietro Francisci, Galatea Film—Oscar Film—Urania Film—Embassy Pictures, 1958.

*Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*. Directed by F.W. Murnau, Prana Film, 1922.

*Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht*. Directed by Werner Herzog, Werner Herzog Filmproduktion—Gaumont—ZDF, 1979.

*La pasión de Michelangelo*. Directed by Esteban Larraín, Piranha Films, 2012.

*La sagrada familia*. Directed by Sebastián Lelio, Horamágica—Zoofilms—TVE—Canal Plus, 2005.

*Le Mépris*. Directed by Jean-Luc Godard, Les Films Concordia—Rome Paris Films—Compagnia Cinematografica Champion, 1963.

*Locaciones: Buscando a Rusty James*. Directed by Alberto Fuguet, Cinépata—Universidad Diego Portales, 2013.

*Los deseos concebidos*. Directed by Cristián Sánchez, Foco, 1982.

*Lucía*. Directed by Niles Attallah, Diluvio, 2010.

*Luna*. Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, Fiction Cinematografica—Twentieth Century Fox, 1979.

*Machuca*. Directed by Andrés Wood, Wood Producciones—Tornasol, 2004.

*Maciste*. Directed by Vincenzo Dénizot and Romano Luigi Borgnetto, Itala Film, 1915.

*Maciste alpino*. Directed by Giovanna Pastrone, Itala Film, 1916.

*Maciste all'inferno*. Directed by Guido Brignone, Fert-Pittaluga—Itala Film, 1925.

*Maciste contro i Mongoli*. Directed by Domenico Paoletta, Alta Vista—Jonia Film, 1963.

*Maciste, l'uomo più forte del mondo*. Directed by Antonio Leonviola, Leone Film, 1961.

*Magic Magic*. Directed by Sebastián Silva. Braven Films—Rip Cord—Killer Films—Cine Sur—Chile Films, 2013.

*Malta con huevo.* Directed by Cristóbal Valderrama, Cinémeta—Forma Producciones, 2007.

*Mami te amo.* Directed by Elisa Eliash, Escuela de Cine de Chile, 2008.

*Mamma Roma.* Directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini, Arco Film, 1962.

*Manhattan.* Directed by Woody Allen, Jack Rollins-Charles H. Joffe Production, 1979.

*Manos libres.* Directed by Alicia Scherson, La Ventura, 2010.

*Mar.* Directed by Dominga Sotomayor, Cinestación—Frutacine, 2014.

*Masters of the Universe.* Directed by Gary Goddard, Golan-Globus, 1987.

*Matar a un hombre.* Directed by Alejandro Fernández Almendras, Arizona Films—El Remanso, 2014.

*Matías va a terapia (Mala onda: Matías va al sociólogo).* Directed by Alberto Fuguet, Cinémeta, 2008.

*Memorias primera victoria.* Directed by Marco Jiménez, Grupo Proceso, 1990.

*Mi mejor enemigo.* Directed by Alex Bowen, Alce Producciones—Matanza Cine—Wanda Visión, 2005.

*Mi último round.* Directed by Julio Jorquera, Umana Films—Básica Cine, 2011.

*Mi vida con Carlos.* Directed by Germán Berger-Hertz, Todo por las niñas—Cinedirecto, 2010.

*Missing.* Directed by Constantin Costa-Gavras, PolyGram, 1982.

*Morir un poco.* Directed by Álvaro Covacevich, Sud Americana Films, 1966.

*Música campesina.* Directed by Alberto Fuguet, Cinémeta—Vanderbilt University, 2011.

*Nasty Baby.* Directed by Sebastián Silva, Fabula—Funny Balloons—Versatile, 2015.

*Navidad.* Directed by Sebastián Lelio, Horamágica—Divine, 2009.

*No.* Directed by Pablo Larraín, Fabula—Participant Media—Funny Balloons—Canana Films, 2012.

*Nostalgia de la luz*. Directed by Patricio Guzmán, Atacama Producciones—Blinker Filmproduktion—Cronomedia, 2010.

*Obsession*. Directed by Brian De Palma, Columbia—Yellowbird Productions, 1976.

*On the Waterfront*. Directed by Elia Kazan, Columbia—Horizon, 1954.

*Picasso Baby*. Directed by Mark Romanek, Anonymous Content—SC Enterprises—Rocnation, 2013.

*Pickpocket*. Directed by Robert Bresson, Compagnie Cinématographique de France, 1959.

*Pinochet: fascista, asesino, traidor, agente del imperialismo*. Directed by Sergio Castilla, Svenska Filminstitutet, 1974.

*Play*. Directed by Alicia Scherson, Parox—La Ventura—Paraiso Production Difussion—Morocha Films, 2005.

*Popsicles*. Directed by Gloria Camiruaga, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo—Facultad de Artes Universidad de Chile, 1982-1984.

*Post Mortem*. Directed by Pablo Larraín, Fabula—Canana Films—Autentika Films, 2010.

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