AFFECTS AND FORMS IN LGBTQ CINEMA

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When one thinks of interventions into theories of sexuality and gender in and about Latin American cinema, the towering figure of David William Foster is inescapable. But before getting to his work on film, it is important to look at his prior trajectory. Foster's *Gay and Lesbian Themes in Latin American Writing* (1991) was a forerunner in the 1990s,[1] anticipating a series of monographs and anthologies that would explore non-normative and non-heterosexist identities, structures, and expressions in Latin American fiction. In this trend, of course, we can include the essential *¿Entiendes? Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings* (1995), edited by Emilie L. Bergmann and Paul Julian Smith,[2] and *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America* (1997), edited by Daniel Balderston and Donna J. Guy.[3] Foster's own *Sexual Textualities: Essays on Queer/ing Latin American Writing* (1997) would further innovate this line of critical inquiry by directly engendering a dialogue with queer studies,[4] a field that matured in the mid to late 1990s.

Working with ideas by theorists from the Anglo academy in which queer theory first sprouted, *Sexual Textualities* importantly sought local inflections and nuances to the queer potential of Latin American writing. In other words, Foster resisted the facile smoothening out of difference (understood here as geographical, linguistic, identitarian, and even epistemological, among other possibilities) through the application of theory, preferring instead an interrogation of how texts and readings—and their broader sociocultural milieu—at times worked with but also challenged ideas by such critics as Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Adrienne Rich. To note in this effort is Foster's dialogue with Alexander Doty's definition of the queer and its potential in cultural production and analysis, which was an attempt to break with the focus on lesbigay writings that had defined the earlier *Gay and Lesbian Themes*.

Writing about sexuality and gender in Latin American literary studies was not born from this early work. To make such a claim would be egregiously misleading, as feminist interventions had already been in progress, constructing a theoretical scaffolding of analysis and self-analysis vis-à-vis the canon. But Foster's writings did open the door for a queer/ing lens, a peak under the

curtain of heteronormativity that for so long had dominated writings and their accompanying critique in the continent. Foster was aware of the magnitude of the task at hand. In the preface to *Gay and Lesbian Themes*, he writes:

> To attempt to pursue doggedly a topic that has no ontological status in most realms of literary criticism, and specifically much less so in the case of Latin American culture, which is generally considered to be even more taboo-circumscribed than American society, is to set oneself up for a heavy dose of frustration. The difficulty of identifying appropriate texts, setting parameters for which texts to examine, and establishing the dialogic relationship between them that critical analysis implies, makes the critic wonder whether he had embarked on a reasonable course of research. (vii)

Fundamental to this research, to this mapping of a field that was always really there but had never been charted, was the recognition that any such work would enter "into a minefield of issues, ideologies, and opinions" (vii). We cannot forget that Foster was doing this work in the wake of the HIV/AIDS panic that had quickly scapegoated and abjected gay men (though one can argue that this hysteria never fully abated). It is in this context that the broader import and impact of Foster's early work on the topic can be addressed, as his writings moved Latin American criticism into a polemic public realm.

This tension between criticism and the public sphere was continued in the sequel to *Gay and Lesbian Themes*, as a salient concern in *Sexual Textualities* is the relationship between the literary and the broader cultural horizon, that is, that literary texts exist within a complex assemblage of which they are only a singular cog. Chapter 4, "Queering the Patriarchy in Hermosillo's *Doña Herlinda y su hijo*," merits particular attention in a book that is about "writing," as Foster focuses instead on a film that is part of any canon on Latin American LGBTQ cinema. The choice is not surprising given the broad appeal and popularity of Hermosillo's work, but it does raise an eyebrow given the book's self-proclaimed focus on the literary. Even when discussing Héctor Babenco's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1979), Foster repeatedly returns to Manuel Puig's *El beso de la mujer araña* (1976), the hypotext of the adaptation that was made for Anglo audiences. This, however, is not the case in the chapter on *Doña Herlinda* (1985); in fact, it is quite surprising that Foster makes no mention whatsoever of Jorge López Páez's homonymous short story that was first published in 1980 (López Páez's story would go on to be published in a collection of stories in 1993 after the success of the film). I consider Foster's omission to be important in that in doing so, we see film being elevated to the rank of the literary, as a dialogic art so central to understanding the social condition. This interest would eventually push Foster to explore these same issues in the

cinema of Latin America at length, first developed in *Gender and Society in Contemporary Brazilian Cinema* (1999),[5] but only fully manifested in the now canonical *Queer Issues in Contemporary Latin American Cinema* (2003).[6]

Queer Issues furnishes an initial though problematized discussion of homosexual-themed cinema in Latin America. Importantly, Foster does not seek out or define a proper queer cinema, but rather teases out the queer issues, identities, and desires present in a representative selection of Latin American films. There are, however, several drawbacks to this effort, including the very lack of a definition of a queer cinema and an overbearing focus on the representation of gay men over other identifications and orientations. This is evident in the preface to the manuscript, as Foster rehearses several concerns and approaches to queer studies, without fully embracing a particular angle of attack.

But I prefer a more contextualized situating of the monograph: *Queer Issues*, in my opinion does several things quite well. First, it expands the queer lens away from literary texts onto the cinema, an art form that we well know enables a more explicit and intimate relationship with the social body and the cultural zeitgeist. The moving image (at that time mostly sequestered to multiplexes, VHS/DVD rentals, and over-the-air reruns) comes into contact with individual and collective bodies exponentially vis-à-vis the printed novel or poem or other literary artifact. If anything, dedicating the time and space to the cinema is an effort to understand the relationship between art and the popular, which is at the very center of the type of analysis that *Queer Issues* and its antecedents are concerned with. Second, Foster's book encourages readers to develop a cognizant notion of queer reading, one which is aware of the broader, transnational optic but also one that recognizes such a smoothening. It is a reading that is aware of the siloing of art to a particular national genealogy or timeline, but also one that encourages the viewer to think beyond. This, of course, comes as a result of the broader import of Latin American cinema on the world stage. As he eloquently writes:

> It is my hope, in the end, that the reader will perceive how I have not read these texts as entries into an international lesbigay/homoerotic/queer canon but as texts firmly grounded in specific issues of Latin American national societies and a continental (although primarily urban) understanding of sexuality. These are Latin American cultural productions, and I wish them to be understood primarily as such. If they also contribute to transnational debates about same-sex desire, patriarchal heteronormativity, homosociality, and homophobia, it is a consequence of the growing internationality of Latin American filmmaking in terms of the ambitions of directors and production companies, the wish to bring certain internationally debated issues to a national and continental grounding, the technical quality of many of

> the films being made, and—quite simply—the international recognition that so much Latin American filmmaking is now beginning to obtain. (xviii)

While there is value in national readings, *Queer Issues* also puts forth a masterful comparative study that encourages scholars to identify and slowly put together a more comprehensive apparatus—fueled by theorists and theories from a variety of academies—for understanding the human condition and its plural expressions.

Appearing in print some twenty years ago, *Queer Issues* was the point of departure for research into non-normative Latin American cinema in the first decade of the twenty-first century, though it concerned itself primarily with films from previous decades. *La Virgen de los sicarios* and *Plata quemada*, both from 2000, however, were included in the analysis, films that in certain regards would herald a new era in LGBTQ cinema in the region. The new millennium would bring with it a boom in production, in terms of representation and the sheer output of films.[7] This shift in production and circulation coincided with legislative and social movements towards visibility and inclusion, and a broader conversation with transnational circuits and festivals. Regarding the latter, many films from Latin America would first gain audience and critical interest abroad in the United States and Europe, such as Alfonso Cuarón's *Y tu mamá también* (2001) or Miguel Ferrari's *Azul y no tan rosa* (2012). Sebastián Lelio's *Una mujer fantástica* (2017) would be the crowning glory of this genealogy, winning the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2018. Directors such as Julián Hernández and Marco Berger would develop their own styles and thematics across several films. Many of these directors and films would go on to feature in academic monographs, articles, undergraduate and graduate classes, dissertations and theses—indeed the door unlocked by *Queer Issues* has been blown open by scholars across academies in subsequent years.

Foster's work informed my own *New Maricón Cinema: Outing Latin American Film* (2016),[8] which sought to understand recent films within an archaeology of difference in the Latin American screen. While Foster focused primarily on queer issues and identities, what I aimed to undertake was an interrogation into *how* queerness is portrayed and to what collective effect. Instead of focusing solely on narratological traits and developments, I was instead concerned both with the praxis and composition of representation and how this may have evolved since the early days of films that simply mocked non-normative desires and bodies. In short, I argued that early films in the genealogy (including all those present in *Queer Issues*), tended to privilege a scopic regime, whereas films made in the twenty-first century may be characterized by a self-conscious movie-making that explicitly addresses and then breaks with the ethical distance established in earlier films between the image

and the viewer. In this new wave of films, directors preferred an affective schema, wherein a plurality of images, sounds, techniques and textures engender a haptic relationship between the (surfaces of the) viewer and the (surfaces of the) screen. In these films, we are not sectioned off from the erotics and ethics of the film but are instead encouraged to feel and to connect with difference. This feeling of the image is a product of the generation of strong affective intensities and their transmission, which then, I argue, creates a communal orientation to and identification with non-normativity. The affective economies, to borrow Sara Ahmed's terminology, created in and around these movies cyclically and counter-cyclically shape the bodies, markets, and production assemblages of cinema.

My focus on the *how* was informed primarily by affect theory and phenomenological film analysis, that is, I was interested in how the concept of affect and its movement, embodiment, and dispersal allows for a phenomenological approach to Latin American LGBTQ cinema. Important here, furthermore, is a focus on the ethics of the image, or as Ward E. Jones argues, "a spectator's confrontation with a narrative is ethically significant because the narrative (1) manifests an evaluative *attitude* toward its own characters, events, and context, and (2) encourages the spectator . . . to adopt a similar attitude" (4, emphasis in the original).[9] In other words, I was interested not only in how queerness was represented and digested, but also to what effect. Tacit in this exercise is the relationship between form and function, affect and politics.

The latter dyad is at the center of *Affect, Gender and Sexuality in Latin America* (2021), edited by Cecilia Macón, Mariela Solana, and Nayla Luz Vacarezza,[10] which, though it focuses on gender in a broad array of cultural artifacts, does include several studies on cinema. The plural nature of this book as it pertains to objects of study (which include the non-material per se [or perhaps a conglomerate of other materialities], such as social movements) signals the relationship between the moving image and the social body that was gestured to in the evolution of Foster's study of gender and sexuality in Latin America. In essays by Denilson Lopes and Daniel Kveller, affect is studied as a vector of difference, as a means to understand the broader relationship between non-normativity, on the one hand, and, on the other, alternative, viable (and inviable), non-conforming avatars of community and the nation. What *Affect, Gender and Sexuality in Latin America* does very well when read across its organized chapters is demonstrate the interconnectivity of cultural production, of which the cinema is an integral component, as an always-in-construction assemblage that morphs and evolves in a dialectic with social attitudes and political positions.

Affect, here, is not merely a point of entry, but rather also an intervention in situating that which has been often considered as secondary to reason within a primary epistemological plane, that is, that affect here is elevated to

an object of study through a focus on form and praxis. The book, furthermore, seeks to situate LGBTQ movements and advances within the neoliberal turn in Latin America. Finally, the editors affirm in the introduction that the essays that follow take as a point of departure a contestation of the axiom that theory is universal in that they explicitly question the facile overlaying of theories that may have originated in the Global North onto the South, where the "Global North is positioned as a producer of concepts" and "Latin America is portrayed as a region flooded with emotions and affect but empty of thought" (5). We must remember that this is a gesture that was implicit in Foster's *Sexual Textualities* more than two decades ago. It was also present in *New Maricón Cinema*, which now in retrospect did not sufficiently address the issue, even if the theorization of a Maricón and New Maricón cinema intended to be a localized designator that resisted the globalizing umbrella of a queer cinema writ large. Indeed, when read within this timeline, it would seem that the primacy of theory from the North is still very much in place, and still very much a problem, and one that may not necessarily surmount this impasse. Perhaps that is a dilemma that criticism should take up in the coming twenty-five years.[11]

The approach to affect in several essays in *Affect, Gender and Sexuality in Latin America* is grounded in its reading vis-à-vis form and praxis, a strategy very much informed by Eugenie Brinkema's indispensable *The Forms of the Affects* (2014).[12] In this capacious work, the critic lays out a method for reading affect that is based on what she calls a radical formalism. *The Forms of the Affects* parts from the axiom that affect (as theory, epistemology, ontology) is now front and center in many a debate in culture, philosophy, and politics; yet, what is of concern to Brinkema is the turn to affect itself. In other words, we need to interrogate this turn, or as she states, we need to engage in a "meta-turn that turns toward the turning toward affect itself" (xi). What I find most appealing about Brinkema's book is the way it lays out in a clear and concise fashion the issues at stake when it comes to working on affect theory. These issues can very much inform not only what Latin American theory about LGBTQ cinema, but also, even more broadly, Latin American cinema, should be doing in the coming years.

The preface to the book is titled "Ten Points to Begin" wherein Brinkema lays out in a logical manner the stakes at hand.[13] In point four, the author quickly summarizes how affect is often thought of and referred to:

> "Affect," as turned to, is said to: disrupt, interrupt, reinsert, demand, provoke, insist on, remind of, agitate for: the body, sensation, movement, flesh and skin and nerves, the visceral, stressing pains, feral frenzies, always rubbing against: what undoes, what unsettles, that thing I cannot name, what remains resistant, far away (haunting, and ever so beautiful); indefinable, it is said to be what cannot be written, what

> thaws the critical cold, messing all systems and subjects up. (xii)

This description of affect as a critical tool should not be unfamiliar even to a generalist reader who may have come upon an article in their particular field that subscribes to the affective turn. Indeed one may have even sat through a conference presentation where the presenter goes through a series of movie stills or clips while describing this ephemeral thing called affect that is seemingly in movement in, through, and outside the image, often leaving some in the audience to raise a speculative eyebrow. Brinkema addresses these eyebrows when she explains that "[o]ne of the symptoms of appeals to affect in the negative theoretical sense—as signaling principally a rejection: not semiosis, not meaning, not structure, not apparatus, but the felt visceral, immediate, sensed, embodied, excessive—is that 'affect' ... has been deployed almost exclusively in the singular, as the capacity for movement or disturbance in general" (xii-xiii).

She goes on to argue that "[w]hen affect is taken as a synonym for violence or force (or intensity or sensation), one can only speak of its most abstract agitations instead of any particular textual workings" (xiii). The latter part of this sentence merits special attention, as it is the textual working of the image (or text or assemblage) that tends to be analyzed in our work for its affective potential. Again, returning to the conference presentation and the raised eyebrows, the presenter will often point out a particular component or vector of the mise-en-scène as a point of reading affect, of reading intensities, movements, etc. It is here, in that actual reading of a character, surface, movement, sound, color, lighting, touch, etc., that Brinkema wants us to pause, almost in an epistemological sense as she interrupts the countdown of the preface to introduce point zero that is neatly couched between points five and six: "*Affect is not the place where something immediate and automatic and resistant takes place outside of language. The turning to affect in the humanities does not obliterate the problem of form and representation. Affect is not where reading is no longer needed*" (xiv). I would venture to say that those of us who have turned to affect have not argued against reading, but rather have tried to read for affect in different ways, with varying degrees of success. What Brinkema homes in on here, however, is a definitive focus on form, wherein any reading must be grounded in particular forms (as she notes in point seven). Indeed she calls for a suture between "specific affects" and "specific forms" (xv), and the only way to do so, she argues, is close reading.

Brinkema's insistence on form is a repudiation of film phenomenology, the framework and/or point of entry that has tended to guide recent introspections on affect in the cinema. She writes: "Affect, as I theorize it here, has fully shed the subject, but my argument goes a step further and also loses for affects the body and bodies. This book regards any individual affect as a self-folding exteriority that manifests in, as, and with textual form" (25). There

is much to unpack and to break down here, especially when read in tandem with the close readings that she performs in the remaining chapters. As several critics of *The Forms of the Affects* have noted, these analyses are often guided by the very phenomenological approach that the author so quickly dismisses. Surely there must be a middle ground between a completely disembodied (and radical, Brinkema would argue) formalism and the vagueries of an untethered phenomenology?

In the contentious balance (at least for Brinkema) between the two poles, my compass gravitates towards an insistence on form that acknowledges that any reading of affect must move through the body, that is, form can only be productively interrogated for affect (as signifier of particular affects) when its relationship to a spectatorial body is taken into consideration. In other words, the "shedding of the subject" propitious to close reading as method cannot entirely be shed, as affects and the moving image require some degree and sort of ekphratic contextualization and verbiage. The mise-en-scène must be textualized (and not solely textured) by criticism for any reading to take place. In what other way can the moving image be verbalized for a close reading, if not through ekphrasis, which by nature introduces the subject as an epistemological vector? I would take this even a step further and argue that any reading for affects and forms must consider the multiple bodies and circulations at play, whether it be between a singular movie and a multitude in the audience, or many movies as interpreted by the singular viewer. These multiplying configurations are at the core of any formalist identifying of form vis-à-vis affect. To think otherwise would be a single interpretation not too different from the phenomenological perspectives critiqued by Brinkema.

Here, I am, of course, channeling the well-known ideas of Sara Ahmed regarding affect and its stickiness, and the object or sign as central to what the critic calls affective economies (*The Cultural Politics* 45).[14] For Ahmed, circulation is imperative, as it is also this circulation that permits an identification of a particular form with a particular affect. The dyad of affect/form is doubly centripetal for Ahmed. That is, not only does circulation lead to certain affects materializing in certain forms, but also "the circulation of signs of affect shapes the materialization of collective bodies" ("Affective Economies" 121).[15] Affects and forms, thus, at least implicitly rely on subjects to make sense of their relationship: the dyad by itself is impotent without some sort of intercognitive mechanism of cyclical production and reception. All this is just to say that a focus on affect and form, for me, is exactly what Latin American film theory should be doing in the next quarter century as it pertains to the representation, problematization, and multiplication of genders and sexualities. We must write and think about affect as grounded in form, not characterized by some unanchored, nebulous hermeneutics but rather a schema of analysis that is grounded in particular filmic and pro-filmic elements and vertices. Indeed the

path forward is already taking shape and form.

I want to draw our attention to a book published a little over two decades after Foster's *Queer Issues in Contemporary Latin American Cinema*: Geoffrey Maguire's *Bodies of Water: Queer Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Cinema* (2024).[16] In this study, Maguire focuses on particular forms that all share a common, molecular origin: water. The critic observes that "Rivers, swimming pools, lakes, beaches, and oceans . . . recur with remarkable frequency in recent queer world cinema, urging and enticing us to question the intimacies between queerness and the aquatic.[17]" Maguire's homing in on the aquatic is a fundamental characteristic that I had identified in *New Maricón Cinema*, as the aqueous serves both "as metaphor and as haptic texture . . . as a Deleuzian vector of difference . . . to build affective ties between the viewer and the narrative.[18]"

While I was more interested in tracing a local genealogy of LGBTQ film in Latin America, Maguire embarks on the task of studying Latin American films within a global genealogy. For Maguire, then, the aquatic is a point of contact between the films he studies and a global queer cinema and, more importantly, a global humanities: "I urge readers to move beyond the prevailing critical focus in cultural studies that has thus far restricted the potential of cinematic waters to their abstract narrative function as symbols of merely the fluidity of sexuality or gender identity" (2). What is at stake in *Bodies of Water* is not solely sexual and gender fluidity, as Maguire instead views the aqueous as "historically, politically, socially, and cinematically constructed" (2), and that its analysis unlocks "fresh theoretical and epistemological frameworks for grasping how film can engage queerly with a number of pressing political and theoretical concerns: issues, that is, centered on modes of (trans)national belonging, racial and sexual histories of colonialism, cinematic temporalities, and the environmental urgencies of the Anthropocene" (2-3). *Bodies of Water* thus positions itself at another turn, the blue turn that encourages us to think of these films through a broader, poly-valenced lens.

Maguire thus reads form in queer Latin American film in a centrifugal force that pushes outwards, vaporizing the boundaries that have otherwise kept these films in their own, neatly packaged regional silo; a similar gesture carried out by Foster more than two decades ago when he gave LGBTQ cinema its own space and/of thought.[19] *Bodies of Water* is an admirable point of departure for the next quarter century of scholarship, and very much channels Foster's closing remarks in the preface to *Gay and Lesbian Themes*: "Nevertheless, criticism should be dirty work, if it is ever to deal with the real issues of human history and the social dynamics that disable the individual's quest for decency and dignity" (viii).

NOTES

[1] David William Foster, *Gay and Lesbian Themes in Latin American Writing* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991).

[2] Emilie Bergmann and Paul Julian Smith, Ed., *¿Entiendes? Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

[3] Daniel Balderston and Donna J. Guy, Ed., *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

[4] David William Foster, *Sexual Textualities: Essays on Queer/ing Latin American Writing* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997).

[5] David William Foster, *Gender and Society in Contemporary Brazilian Cinema* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999).

[6] In the preface to *Queer Issues*, Foster outlines his own interest and trajectory into the representation of gender in Latin American film. See David William Foster, *Queer Issues in Contemporary Latin American Cinema* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003).

[7] Jorge Ruffinelli observes, "como uno de los avatares del traspaso a otra época, el cine latinoamericano multiplicó sus referencias, personajes, temas de la diferencia sexual" (67). See Jorge Ruffinelli, "Dime tu sexo y te diré quién eres: La diversidad sexual en el cine latinoamericano," *Cinémas d'Amérique Latine* 18 (2010): pp. 58–71.

[8] Vinodh Venkatesh, *New Maricón Cinema: Outing Latin American Film* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016).

[9] Ward E. Jones and Samantha Vice, Ed., *Ethics at the Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[10] Cecilia Macón, Mariela Solana, and Nayla Luz Vacarezza, Ed., *Affect, Gender and Sexuality in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

[11] The flows of theory are not simply from North to South, but also between disciplines. We can see, for example, how trends in Latin American literary studies have overlapped with film, especially since many scholars straddle both fields within academic departments. Given the broader attack on the humanities writ large, I can only see how these seemingly separate fields will only move closer and closer together, towards a global theory or unit of culture, to survive the administrative/fiscal/enrollment onslaught that shows no signs of fading.

[12] To some extent, my approach to affect in *New Maricón Cinema* is heavily informed by Brinkema's call to focus on form, and specific forms, though her intervention over

lapped with the writing and production schedule of my work. See Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

[13] What a marvelous way to begin any academic book, succinctly laying out the state of the field, points of contention, and the principal hypotheses that guide the remaining pages for those of us who love bulleted points.

[14] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

[15] Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22.2 (2004): pp. 117–139.

[16] Geoffrey Maguire, *Bodies of Water: Queer Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Cinema* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2024).

[17] Maguire, *Bodies*, 1.

[18] Venkatesh, *New Maricón Cinema*, 16-17.

[19] I read Maguire's book immediately before screening *Cassandro* (2023) as part of our annual Film Festival at Virginia Tech. While watching the film, it becomes quickly evident to the viewer that the aquatic forms so pervasive in recent queer Latin American film abound in this production. In fact the opening scene shows the protagonist, Saúl Armendáriz (played majestically by Gael García Bernal), walking towards a *lucha libre* event in Ciudad Juárez when he is unexpectedly caught in a downpour. He pauses and tilts his head upwards, almost acknowledging the queer affect that the liquid enacts and circulates. But it is difficult to think of *Cassandro* as a "Latin American" biopic, as it is co-produced by U.S. and Mexican companies (Escape Artists and Panorama Global), directed by a U.S. director (Roger Ross Williams), and distributed by a U.S. media conglomerate (Amazon MGM Studios). The fact that Amazon has primarily distributed the film through streaming also forces us to think about distribution in very real terms as movie theaters are shutting their doors and streaming platforms (including Netflix) that previously only hosted films and television series are increasingly producing their own feature films. While it is easy, then, to think about *Cassandro* in a global genealogy and through global networks, there are still indices and forms that insist on a very local reading: this is the case in a later scene in the movie when the protagonist and his mother take a clandestine swim in the swimming pool of a house that he wants to someday buy her after becoming a successful wrestler. The camera pauses in this scene, submerging underwater and amplifying the effect and affect of sound as it moves through the aqueous. In one close shot, we see Saúl resting his head on the edge of the pool, in deep thought. One cannot help but think of an eerily similar scene from *Y tu mamá también* (2001) when García Bernal was still an upcoming actor. Indeed, it is the swimming pool scene that is so important to unpacking the queer potential in Alfonso Cuarón's masterpiece; the presence

of its *calque* almost two decades later in a very global production is an explicit call to thinking about queer film along multiple and productive genealogies, especially since the swimming pool scene in *Cassandro* has no narrative import.