Introduction

The Poetry-Film Nexus in Latin America

Ben Bollig and David M.J. Wood

In a special journal issue published in 2014, we set out to explore 'the diverse modes of formal, aesthetic and ideological exchange between the poetic and the cinematic' registers in Latin American cultural production from the early twentieth century onwards (Bollig and Wood, eds., 2014: 115). As we laid out in our introduction, we wished to stimulate research on the 'cross-fertilization and increasing convergence between [these] two artistic media' (123). To do so, we took as our starting point the concept of adaptation, which has been a choice topic for film theorists since the very emergence of the discipline, from André Bazin's early reflections on 'mixed', or 'impure' (to follow the French original) cinema to recent volumes by Speranza (2002), Stam (2005), MacCabe *et al.* (2011), and others. Whereas adaptation studies have tended to focus on narrative literature (prose fiction, theatre) as source material for the screen, our aim was to 'examine the aesthetic and political effects of film's adaptation of poetry, and the mutual and productive relationship between the two forms' (Bollig and Wood, eds., 2014: 116).[1] As a scholar primarily specializing in poetry (Bollig) and another working predominantly on film (Wood), we wanted to explore the many ways in which our two areas of expertise overlapped and interacted both in theoretical terms and in concrete examples of cultural production from across Latin America.

The current volume aims to develop and continue this line of research with a broader theoretical and methodological focus that goes beyond the purview of adaptation by presenting a series of thematically linked chapters that explore the broader aspects of the poetry-film nexus in Latin America, considering diverse modes of intermedial exchange between both forms. As well as the adaptation of poems to film, these include the characterisation of poets on screen; the role of poets as filmmakers and/or screenwriters and vice versa; the concept of the 'poetic film'; approaches to the 'cinema of poetry' (drawing on writings by Pier Paolo Pasolini, in particular); poetic documentaries; poetry's responses to film form and aesthetics; and the appropriation of

[1] It is interesting to see the resonance of this special issue away from Latin American studies: see, for example, Meyer (2019), with its attempt to 'analyze the practices of intermediality in *The Business of Fancydancing*, that is, the conjunction of poetry and film through adaptation, intermedial referencing, and media combination' (36). The article also includes a useful overview of the 'poetry film' in the USA.

poetry in avant-garde film. Contributions range in focus from early silent cinema to contemporary works, and from Mexico and Cuba through Brazil to the Southern Cone. Approaches include close readings of films, culturally informed analyses, and more theoretical considerations of film poetics.

The links between film and poetry can be intense and productive. In a fictional interview with the invented poet Jillian Kwon in the Argentine poet and translator Ezequiel Zaidenwerg's recent collection of heteronymous poetry, we read, as part of a response to the question of how the (invented) poet started to read poetry: 'Y, por supuesto, no podemos olvidarnos de la cita de 'Funeral Blues' de la película *Cuatro bodas y un funeral*. Un clásico de la comedia romántica' ('And, of course, we can't forget the use of 'Funeral Blues' in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. A classic of romantic comedy') (Zaidenwerg 2018: 235). Auden's 'Funeral Blues' started life as a parody of bombastic odes to deceased dictators but morphed into a moving song of loss; in *Four Weddings* it is the means by which Matthew (John Hannah) reveals, in an emotive reading, delivered almost straight to camera, his relationship with and love for the recently deceased Gareth (Simon Callow). The poem is, to paraphrase Speranza, an 'asset' for the film; but the film transformed the status of the poem, and Auden's work more generally, as well as revealing to the general public a tacit homoeroticism not explicit in the piece. And it also, in Zaidenwerg's interpretation, can inspire viewers to become poets. It is such surprising – but intense, and influential – connections that this volume intends to explore.

Any attempt to define poetry would vastly exceed the scope and purpose of this introduction, having to summarize a debate that perhaps starts with Plato and Aristotle and would take in the aesthetics of Kant, Hegel, and in the twentieth century Heidegger, Badiou, and many others – without even beginning to stray from the path of the Western canon. For Kant poetry holds 'the first rank among all arts' (2008: 155); while for Heidegger it is a form of 'projective saying' that summoned up the truth of the nation, from Ancient Greece to Nazi Germany (2001: 71); such has been the importance of poetry over the centuries.

Put more simple, poetry is 'an instance of verbal art', 'bound speech', and 'a heightened mode of discourse' (Preminger and Brogan 1993: 938). Poetry's exceptionality with regard to ordinary language is stressed by many theorists, from the Russian Formalists through to M.H. Abrams and his notion of 'poetic diction', of poetry as a 'different language' (1993: 163). The roots of the term are found in the Greek *poiesis* (ποίησις), or making, and this very general sense stays with us in the use of the term 'poetics', for many an alternative to 'aesthetics' when thinking about film.

For a number of commentators, particularly those with an inheritance from the Romantics or the surrealists, poetry exceeds actual poems as linguistic utterances. For Cocteau – as discussed below – poetry is not a medium, but rather the very essence of art, that cinema and other media could access. Tarkovsky (2017), similarly, while including his father's poems in his films, separates literature and cinema, seeing poetry as a substrate that can be accessed via carefully crafted filmmaking. For Octavio Paz (1967), poetry is a form of knowledge, a powerful means of revealing and potentially transforming the world. In a volume on contemporary Latin American poetry, William Rowe writes of poetry as 'a means of active discovery, and not simply a fulfilment, however well expressed, of what has been theorized already' (Rowe 2000: 5).

The majority of the contributors to this volume stick quite closely to the definition of poetry as verbal art; but the notion of poetics, as shorthand for the technical decisions made by directors and their aesthetic effects in film, is present too. As editors, we have been ecumenical in our approach. This respects a sense found in many of these pieces, and the theories they mobilize, that poetry has an import that goes beyond the words on the page, as a fundamental basis of other arts, or a potentially revolutionary verbal, cultural act.

I. Beyond Adaptation: From Medium Specificity to Intermediality

Ideas around adaptation have been central to the practice and analysis of film since the earliest days of cinema. At the same time, the *specificity* of film as a form in its own right has been stressed by many of its theorists: a notion that film theory in the medium's initial decades itself adopted and adapted from earlier criticism on aesthetics and the fine-arts. As early as 1766, Lessing offered a critique of those commentators who judged painting by the standards of poetry and vice versa. The German philosopher offered instead an argument for specificity in art (1930: 4), what he called 'the peculiar nature of Art and its necessary limits and requirements' (16). Lessing outlined a series of reasons for which classical sculpture differs from contemporary or near contemporary poetry (9). Poetry, he argued, has the advantage of relying on imagination more than painting or sculpture (13): 'the material limits of [plastic] art confine her imitative effort to one single moment' (14); painting can be realised 'only from one point of view' (14), an opinion of course that predates the efforts of cubist and other experimental and avant-garde artists to include multiple perspectives within a single work. Poetry, meanwhile, has more than 'a single line' (17) with which to work or play.

Lessing argued that not 'every feature which the descriptive poet uses can be used with like effect on the canvas or in the marble' (30). And he continued:

> When one says that the artist imitates the poet, or that the poet imitates the artist, this is capable of two interpretations. Either the one makes the work of the other the actual subject of his imitation, or they have both the same subject and the one borrows from the other the style and fashion of the imitation. […] When, however, poet and artist, as not seldom happens, view the subjects that they have in common from an identical standpoint, it can hardly fail that there should be agreement in many particulars without implying the slightest degree of imitation or common aim between them. (33)

In a striking sentence, Lessing seems to anticipate cinematic montage: 'to the poet alone belongs the art of depicting with negative traits, and by mixing them with positive to bring two images into one' (39). The implication, then, is that cinema – inexistent in his day – might escape some of the limitations placed on painting and sculpture: 'what the material painting drawn from [Homer] exhibits the poet leads us up to through a whole gallery of pictures' (51). The effect described is similar to what the successive nature of the images in film can achieve. Cinema's advantage, then, is time: 'if painting […] must wholly renounce time, then continuous actions as such cannot be reckoned amongst her subjects […] Poetry on the other hand --- '[2] (55); and we might add, this all changes with film and montage. Lessing added, tellingly from the point of view of students of the poetry-film nexus, 'charm is beauty in motion' (80). A century and a half later, Eisenstein would connect montage with the Japanese poetic form of haiku, as we discuss below. For the Soviet filmmaker, however, rather than overcoming painting's incapacity to convey time, cinema - and specifically montage - energised an expressive potential already present in painting. In his essay on El Greco, Eisenstein suggested that the sixteenth-century Spanish-Greek painter had already reflected time by placing elements contiguously, rather than continuously as cinema does. If El Greco managed to 'bring together in a single space a series of elements that in fact are dispersed, scattered, too extensive to behold in a single look', cinematic montage 'is a way of "bringing together" in a single space - on the screen - diverse elements (fragments) of a phenomenon that are filmed on different scales from distinct points of view and from various places' (Eisenstein 2014: 13).[3]

[2] Final ellipses in original.

[3] All English translations of non-English language sources are our own unless stated otherwise.

In cinema's first decades, critics and theorists such as Vachel Lindsay, Hugo Munsterberg, Jean Epstein and Rudolf Arnheim drew on the medium-specificity tradition initiated by Lessing in their various efforts to justify the new technological medium's status as art, both establishing links between the motion-picture and more established forms, and identifying the cinema's essential characteristics that differentiated it from its forebears (Stam 2000: 33-37). In his foundational 1911 essay 'The Birth of the Sixth Art', the Italian futurist art critic Ricciotto Canudo celebrated the cinematograph as a wholly original form that brought together what he called the 'Rhythms of Space (the Plastic Arts) and the Rhythms of Time (Music and Poetry)', so creating the 'astonishing apotheosis' of a '*Plastic Art in Motion*' that was capable of rendering '"real" life […] *stylized in speed*'[4] (Canudo 1911: 595-96; 598). Jean Epstein built upon the essay by Canudo - whom he called 'the missionary of poetry in the cinema' - in developing Louis Delluc's concept of *photogénie*, a term that referred to 'the purest expression of cinema'. For Epstein, 'every art builds its forbidden city, its own exclusive domain, autonomous, specific, and hostile to anything that does not belong' (2012: 293). Just as painting should free itself of representational and narrative concerns and literature should turn its back on facile 'twists and turns of plot' that are more proper to 'a charade [or] a game of cards' (293), cinema should dedicate itself to what he called 'photogenic mobility' (294): a four-dimensional mode of spatio-temporal expression by which the film camera lens was capable of 'revealing the inner nature of things'. Thanks to *photogénie*, Epstein claimed that cinema had become 'poetry's most powerful medium' (296). Just as Eisenstein saw cinema as one more medium through which the already-existing temporality of montage could be conveyed, Epstein's comments suggest that, rather than cinema and poetry existing as distinct mediums, poetry can be conceived as an underlying mode or a 'language' that can be expressed through different mediums, whether literary, plastic, or cinematic.

Cinema's early theorists thought of cinema's poetic potential, then, as being both specific to cinema itself and a result of the medium's ability to harness and to advance the properties of existing art forms. As David Rodowick has rightly pointed out, while medium-specificity criticism is 'an injunction against hybrid forms', cinema's specificity is precisely 'how it functions as a hybrid medium'; the fact that 'it is comprised of multiple components irreducible, one would think, to a single essence, and thus remains open to a plethora of diverse and even incompatible styles and formal approaches' (2007: 36). This medial hybridity - or 'intermediality' - is now a central part of the zeitgeist of film and screen scholarship: firstly with the onset of video in the 1980s, as in

[4] Original emphasis.

Raymond Bellour's concept of the 'between-images' (Bellour 2018); and subsequently and more intensely with the rise of the digital technologies that have become so central to the production, dissemination and consumption of moving-images. But the term 'intermedia' itself has a longer history than one might think. As Dick Higgins notes, 'the word 'intermedia' appears in the writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1812 in exactly its contemporary sense – to define works which fall conceptually between media that are already known' (Higgins 1984: 23). Strictly, the term used was 'intermedium', in the singular, in an essay on Spenser and allegory (Coleridge 1836).

In the twentieth century, the term 'intermedia' (re-)emerges in the US experimental art scene – although as RosaLee Goldberg (2011) has noted, the multifaceted practices of US artists can be traced at least back to the avant-gardes, including Dada and Futurism. As Higgins, again, defines it, 'intermedia [is] the fusion of two or more discrete media', including performance, Fluxus, and experimental art. For Higgins, 'the happening developed as an intermedium, an uncharted land that lies between collage, music and the theater' (1984: 22). To give an example, 'in intermedia […] the visual element (painting) is fused conceptually with the words' (24). At the same time, 'the term [intermedia] is not prescriptive' (25): it does not set out a particular recipe or manifesto for how these combinations and encounters should be conducted. The term also emerges in the Buenos Aires art scene at the turn of the 1970s, for example in the 1970 exhibition curated by Jorge Glusberg, *Argentina Inter-Medios* (Kozak 2018: 563).

The term reappears in the 2000s in literary and art scholarship, although now altered slightly, as 'intermediality'. In his study of the term, Julio Prieto observes,

> the appearance of the concept of intermediality in critical discourse is linked to the technomediatic global culture of late capitalism, and in particular the exponential growth of media software linked to new information technologies that have been in continuous development since the appearance of the Internet. (2017: 9)

He argues that, 'intermediality is not a substitute for intertextuality' (2017: 9). Prieto distinguishes between what he calls 'conservative' forms of intermediality (such as certain radio adaptations of literature; or commercial cinema versions of nineteenth-century novels, to use Prieto's examples) and '*transformative* uses', for example: 'the appeal to poetry, political theory and popular *cordel* literature in Glauber Rocha's *cinema novo*'[5] (2017: 13). Furthermore, 'one of the most productive areas in intermedial studies develops in dialogue with visual culture studies and what we could

[5] Italics in original.

loosely term "philosophies of the image" in the second half of the twentieth century' (Prieto 2017: 14). One particular effect of intermediality that he notes is 'intermedial estrangement as an opening towards an*other* vision' (2017: 15). For Walter Bruno Berg, meanwhile, the 'inter-medial' refers to 'the *concomitant* effects of the totality of the media involved'[6] (2002: 128); he stresses the role of both media *and* texts in intermediality (2002: 129). In both Prieto's and Berg's assessments, the notion of *medium* itself is a question that requires further attention. Would poetry and political theory both be media in the same way that *cordel* literature is, for example, the latter referring to a very specific form of printing and circulating popular poetry in north-eastern Brazil? The status of cinema, too, as medium – potentially at the expense of its hard-won status as art in its own right – is also controversial. Such questions are at the forefront of our contributors' analyses.

One important area of constant intermedial experimentation in the twentieth century has been in what many critics refer to as 'expanded cinema'. Walley calls this the 'liberation of cinema from the confines of the standard uses of celluloid film' (2011: 24). These might include 'cinema as performance, as object, as concept, as any alternative material that could serve as projector, filmstrip, screen, etc.' (2011: 47). With reference to Annette Michelson, Walley writes of 'the erasure of boundaries between the arts and the ethic of intermedia at the heart of expanded cinema threatened to derail radical filmmaking's quest for autonomy and drain cinema of its potential power' (25). Related to this is an ongoing debate about the longevity of film itself – as 'a viable alternative to digital that needs to be protected from extinction' (50). In terms of contemporary cinema, we might note for example Mariano Llinás's use of a *camera oscura* for the last part of his 2018 epic *La flor.* This wholly antiquated piece of technology, disassembled in front of the camera in the final reel, is used to create a grainy, sepia look for the final section, a tale of women captured by an indigenous tribe. At the same time, Llinás's film quotes liberally from José Hernández's *gaucho* epic poem of the 1870s, *Martín Fierro*, and in particular part one, known as the *Ida*, or journey out. Thus plot, literary intertext, and technique, meet in striking fashion.

Theories of intermediality have been particular popular amongst German- and Dutch-based scholars in the early years of the twenty-first century. As Kirsten von Hagen puts it, 'research into intermediality seeks to underline the study of reciprocal relationships, intermedial spaces, passages and differences that occur in intermedial dialogue' (2006: 242). Kattenbelt (2008)

[6] Italics in original.

offers a useful taxonomy of terms for referring to forms of cultural production that cross or blur medial boundaries:

> 'multimediality' refers to the occurrence where there are many media in one and the same object; 'transmediality' refers to transfer from one medium to another medium (media change); and 'intermediality' refers to the co-relation of media in the sense of mutual influences between media (2008: 20-21).

Under 'transmediality', she observes that 'most feature films that are based on a novel are transpositions of stories, which do not take into account the specific literary features of the original narration' (2008: 23); we might add that this is all the more the case for poetry.

Intermediality, then, consists of 'co-relations between different media that result in a redefinition of the media that are influencing each other, which in turn leads to a refreshed perception' (Kattenbelt 2008: 25). She sees this as similar to Eisenstein's 'montage of attractions': 'the different elements of the performance should, so to say, crash with each other, with the result that a new energy is released' (Kattenbelt 2008: 26).

As Rajewsky points out, 'much of what is generally treated under the heading of intermediality is in no way a novelty' (2005: 44). She highlights the risks of narrow approaches to intermediality 'when one individual approach […] lays claim to having grasped' the concept (2005: 45). It is, then,

> foremost a generic term for all those phenomena that […] in some way take place *between* media. […] those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media, and which thereby can be differentiated from *intra*medial phenomena as well from *trans*medial phenomena (i.e. the appearance of a certain motif, aesthetic, or discourse across a variety of different media. (2005: 46)

There exists a debate over whether intermediality is 'a fundamental condition or category' or a 'critical category for the concrete analysis of specific individual media products or configurations' (Rajewsky 2005: 47). Use of the term runs of the risk of becoming vague and even meaningless: 'the intermedial quality of a film adaptation, for example, is hardly comparable – or is comparable only in the broadest sense – to the intermediality of so-called filmic writing' (50).

A similarly taxonomic approach can be found in the work of Verstraete (2010): 'the study of intermediality takes as its starting point the specificity of the medium/media involved – a

specificity not unrelated to the autonomy of art – even when this specificity is being radically questioned through the larger media environment within which it is situated' (2010: 8). For Verstraete,

> every medium is always already intermedial […] intermediality as the interaction between, and within, media, is made to critically re-evaluate the function of communication, entertainment, representation, mediation, meaning, expression… by the (singular) medium. This is, of course, where art – marking the usual unusual – comes in. (2010: 9)

In conclusion, she argues, 'intermediality asks difficult questions not only about art and media – and their interrelations – but also about the institutional boundaries we draw around them' (11).

In his study *What Pictures Want*, the critic W.J.T Mitchell looks at the central role of 'poetry' – in the broadest sense – to what he calls 'picturing': 'Poetry (as "making," or *poeisis*) is fundamental to picturing. Pictures are themselves products of poetry, and a poetics of pictures addresses itself to them, as Aristotle proposed' (Mitchell 2005: xv). This forms part of a strong thesis around the impurity of media: '*All media are mixed media*. There are no "pure" media […], though the search for the essence of a medium […] is a utopia that seems inseparable from the artistic deployment of any medium'[7] (Mitchell 2005: 215). We thus need to 'put into question the received idea that a medium has something called "specificity"' (Mitchell 2005: 198).

The assault on specificity is not without its detractors. In their introduction to a collection of essays on 'Impure Cinema', Nagib and Jerslev assess this term, drawn from Bazin, and originally translated into English and popularized as 'mixed cinema'. It is, they argue, a 'method', not an object (2014: xxi). The 'ultimate boundary' of intermediality is the 'division between art and life.' (xxiv). In her contribution to the same volume, Nagib, highlights the special status for Bazin of screen adaptations of theatre and literature for cinema (2014: 24). She goes on to argue that 'the obstinate champions of hybridization, in particular those coming from cultural studies, must confront the fact that this has already been achieved by an overwhelming and irresistible globalization' (2014: 21). Here then is the bind: the attraction of the non-specific, the hybrid, and the impure; alongside the need to acknowledge what is specific in cinema. Nagib continues, proposing 'the intermedial phenomenon not as an accomplished project or an end in itself, but as a problem, that is to say, the site of a crisis, or default of means, that requires other, metaphorical

[7] Italics in original.

procedures in order to fill in a gap which is at the very core of artistic creation' (21). Her conclusion is a Rancierean, dissensus-based reading of the politics of intermediality.

In his chapter in the same volume, Philip Rosen analyses André Bazin's original theorizing around specificity in cinema: 'cinema's specificity is to be not specific'. For Bazin, literary adaptation played an important role in the cinema: 'a key authentic issue propelling the development of […] cinema' (Rosen 2014: 12). As Rosen concludes, 'Bazin's polemic against purist theory entails an insistence on the historicity of cinema and the historicity of its specificity' (13).

To sum up, then, while intermediality and hybridity are now widely used concepts to discuss a variety of contemporary media, including film, one must remember that these are not politically or aesthetically unproblematic terms; and at the same time medium specificity is a particularly pertinent issue for cinema, a medium that seems both to thrive in practice on non-specificity while seeking in theory its own specificity as part of a strategy of artistic self-validation, over the years. For this study, specific points of contact between poetry and film – such as links between montage and haiku – are of particular relevance.

II. Conceptions of Film-Poetry and the Poetic Film in Film Theory and Film Praxis

The debates outlined above are deeply linked to the historical development of ideas about film-poetry and poetic cinema. As we have seen, thinkers such as Canudo, Delluc and Epstein saw cinema's poetic dimension as emanating from the particular configuration of expressive tools that was peculiar to the cinematograph. As we noted in our 2014 work, Sergei Eisenstein (1949: 93) explained his concept of film montage – which for him was the very essence of cinema – as a rendition into moving-images of the Japanese poetic form of the haiku, which for him was composed of 'montage phrases. Shot lists', in which '[t]he simple combination of two or three details of a material kind yields a perfectly finished representation of another kind—psychological'. Likewise, early notions of film-poetry or the *cine-poem*, also originating in the avant-garde traditions of silent and early sound cinema, drew heavily on theoretical and critical discussions that turned between medium-specificity and ideas of hybridity. The surrealists shared Eisenstein's interest in cinema's potential for throwing up visual associations, as well as his fascination for cinema's potential links with Freud's writings on dreamwork. The surrealists saw in cinema an ideal apparatus for the 'liberation of unconscious energies in the juxtaposition of disparate energies' (Sitney 2015: 128) that is in evidence, for instance, in Luis Buñuel and Salvador

Dalí's surrealist masterpiece *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), or in Man Ray's *Emak-Bakia* (1926).[8] In this latter *cinépoème* (as Ray's film proclaims itself to be in the opening credits), the film camera itself features onscreen as a detonator of jarring perspectives through disorienting framing and apparently impossible camera movements, and unsettling juxtapositions through montage. Jean Cocteau likewise stated that his own cine-poetry emerged from the unexpected links between events and image: the basis of a cinematic aesthetic that sought to elevate spectators to a state of sleep-hypnosis that would, in turn, enable to see deep inside themselves (Cocteau 2015: 29). In Cocteau's picture *Le sang d'un poète* (1932) - whose opening intertitles playfully announce the piece as a 'realistic documentary of unreal events' - the French cine-poet sought to 'film poetry the way that the Williamson brothers film the bottom of the sea […]. It meant capturing the poetic state.' (1985: 62).[9] For Cocteau, the poetic was out there for the catching, and cinema an ideal 'weapon' (1994: 31) for hunting it.

For Cocteau (as for the surrealists, with whom he had considerable disagreements), cine-poetry occupied an artistic sphere that was quite separate from commercial narrative cinema, which he rejected as drab and sentimental. By contrast the US avant-garde filmmaker Joseph Cornell – whose work is described by P. Adams Sitney as 'a persuasive test case for the viability of a cinema of lyrical poetry' (2015: 113) – used mainstream narrative cinema as the raw material for his own cine-poetic aesthetics, which worked towards a *deconstruction* of the grammar of the motion-picture. In *Rose Hobart* (1936), widely acknowledged as the foundational work of found-footage filmmaking, Cornell re-appropriated, re-edited, and re-soundtracked footage from the Universal Pictures talkie drama *East of Borneo* (George Melford, 1931), converting and remixing the transitional shots that are the bread-and-butter of Hollywood continuity editing into a poetic choreography of spatial, temporal and narrative discontinuities and non sequiturs. The questions of how cinema could be a vehicle of lyric poetry, and how cinematic lyricism related or might relate to narrative cinema, were central in the American avant-garde cinema of the following decade, not least in the work of Cornell's erstwhile assistant Stan Brakhage.

These questions were addressed by the participants in a 1953 roundtable discussion on 'Poetry and the Film' hosted by the New York film society *Cinema 16* (transcribed in Maas 1963), beginning with a taxonomy laid out by poet and film critic Parker Tyler, distinguishing firstly

[8] Although Man Ray considered *Emak-Bakia* a surrealist film, his surrealist colleagues disagreed, classifying it as a Dadaist piece; see Kuenzli (2007: 96-100).

[9] Cocteau refers here to the work of George M. and John Ernest Williamson, pioneers of submarine cinematography with movies such as *Thirty Leagues Under the Sea* (1914).

between ‘poetry as an auditory medium’ (i.e. verbal or written poetry and music) and ‘poetry as a visual medium’. The latter was exemplified with works of ‘pure cinema’ emphasizing a ‘surrealist poetry of the image’ and generally dispensing with words altogether: the aforementioned *Le sang d’un poète* and *Un Chien Andalou*, and *Lot in Sodom* (James Sibley Watson, 1933); as well as later avant-garde films by the likes of Maya Deren and Kenneth Anger. Tyler further identified the following subsections of poetry as a visual medium:

- the cine-poem, which unlike our discussion of the term above, comprises ‘impressionistic […] pictorial conceptions of city life, of nature’ (presumably referring to city-symphony films such as *Man With a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929) or *A Bronx Morning* (Jay Leyda, 1931)) and which ‘stressed abstract patterns’;
- the ‘poetry of painting in motion—the pure abstract film’, such as the work of Norman McLaren and the Whitney brothers;
- the cinema of ‘naturalistic poetry’ pioneered by Robert Flaherty: that is, the poetic dimension of documentary cinema; and
- the dream and hallucination sequences contained within mainstream narrative cinema.

Tyler then proceeds to categorize the following types of films that illustrate ‘poetry as a visual-verbal medium’:

- the ‘fantasy films of Jean Vigo’ (which he acknowledges as principally visual);
- avant-garde films that are ‘set to poems or to poetic prose’ (naming Sidney Peterson, the roundtable chair Willard Maas, and Ian Hugo as exponents);
- Sergei Eisenstein’s ‘severe formalism’, in which ‘montage borders on pure poetry’ (although it is unclear what the verbal element is to Eisenstein’s films according to Tyler);
- the ‘myth films’ of Cocteau, such as *La Belle et la Bête* (1946);
- ‘naturalistic poetry documents’ such as *The River* (Pare Lorentz, 1938) and *Le sang des bêtes* (Georges Franju, 1949): a category that stands as the sound-film equivalent of the ‘cinema of naturalistic poetry’ above; and

- the ‘fifty-fifty fusion’ (presumably, films that mix visual and verbal poetry in equal measure), such as film adaptations of Shakespeare plays; the BBC TV movie of T.S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral* (1947); and filmed operas.

While Tyler’s taxonomy is undoubtedly useful in distinguishing different uses of poetic devices in different cinematic styles, it tends to fragment and isolate his corpus by separating films and tendencies by genre, and it fails to establish precisely what the *poetic* dimension of each of his categories comprises. In her own interventions, Maya Deren more incisively defined ‘poetic structure’ in cinema as ‘a “vertical” investigation of a situation, in that it probes the ramifications of the moment, and is concerned with its qualities and depth, […and] creates visible or auditory forms for something that is invisible, which is the feeling, or the emotion, of the metaphysical content of the movement’ (Maas 1963). By contrast she conceived *narrative* structure as ‘the “horizontal” attack of the drama, which is concerned with the development’. Deren acknowledged that, across different cinematic genres, any combination of both structures was conceivable: that is, narrative and poetic registers are not opposed but rather exist on a continuum that ebbs and flows through the texture of cinema.[10]

Deren’s expansive vision of cinema’s poetic dimension stands in stark contrast with Italian writer and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini’s notion of the ‘cinema of poetry’ that emerged in the following decade, in what was perhaps the most influential theoretical text on cinema and poetry published in the second half of the twentieth century (Pasolini 1976). Pasolini shared with his surrealist and avant-garde forebears an interest in cinema’s proximity to dream states and the medium’s ‘naturally poetic’ nature (quoted in Sitney 2015: 21). However, quite unlike the historical avant-garde’s self-reflexive, anti-narrative and montage-centric notions of the cine-poem, in which the motion picture apparatus itself figures on occasion as a tool for poetic expression (as in *Emak-Bakia* and *Man With a Movie Camera*, both discussed above), Pasolini’s ‘cinema of poetry’ emphasized immersive narration and the sequence shot. For the Italian, most cinema to date, both commercial and arthouse, had largely adopted what he called a ‘language of prose’: a narration-based style based in which all of cinema’s irrational and oneiric properties were ‘exploited as an unconscious factor of shock and glamour’ in an evasive and spectacular ‘hyptnotic *monstrum*’ (1976: 547). By contrast Pasolini identified a tendency in recent art cinema -

[10] It is worth noting the virulent rejection that Deren was subjected to by the poet Dylan Thomas and the playwright Arthur Miller during the same roundtable discussion, who dismissed Deren’s ideas as an excessively complex pontification on what they saw as a relatively straightforward discussion.

particularly in pictures such as *Red Desert* (Michaelangelo Antonioni, 1964) and *Before the Revolution* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1964) – an ability to tap cinema's specifically poetic 'language', which he located in a rendition into cinematic terms of the literary technique of free indirect style: that is, in which 'the author penetrates entirely into the spirit of his character, of whom he thus adopts not only the psychology but also the language' (1976: 549). Since cinema cannot perform this act with a simple linguistic operation as can, say, the novel, the cinema of poetry works on a stylistic level. In *Red Desert*, to take Pasolini's paradigmatic example, Antonioni conveys the neurosis of his protagonist Giuliana (Monica Vitti) directly through elements of film style that blur the distinction between objective and subjective shots. This is obtained, for instance, by framing Giuliana from what appear to be subjective point-of-view long-shots but without revealing any narrative source, or by generating uncertainty as to whether jarring sound effects are extra-diegetic or internal diegetic elements: stylistic tropes that work Giuliana's paranoia into the very substance of the film. Thus, in Pasolini's words, Antonioni '*has substituted, wholly, the world-view of a sick woman for his own vision, which is delirious with estheticism*'[11] (553). Crucially for Pasolini, this ability for film style to enable the bourgeois filmmakers who practice it (Antonioni, Bertolucci, Godard) 'to speak indirectly — through some narrative alibi — in the first person' (557) makes the cinema of poetry a tool of bourgeois class consciousness: a 'recuperation, by bourgeois culture, of the territory it had lost in the battle with Marxism and its possible revolution' (557). The theorization of the cinema of poetry is, then, a specifically political act. In J.D. Rhodes' words, '[t]he style that, in a sense, constitutes the "cinema of poetry," or art cinema, becomes itself a historical protagonist through which one may perhaps grasp, or begin to fumble toward some sense of, the totality of "neocapitalism"' (2010: 154).

Pasolini's work has been influential in a variety of – at time surprising – ways in Latin America. While his interest in the interconnection between poetry and film remains present, his political critique of the practice of certain directors has perhaps been less well remembered. A number of the pieces in this volume strive to restore precisely that acuity of sociopolitical analysis in their studies of the film poetry-nexus. In many cases, the authors – and others, working elsewhere – assess the fusion of poetic and audiovisual languages in varieties of film that come after Pasolini's moment, including video and digital cinema, and various forms of media art that blur the boundaries between film, media art, poetry, and other forms. The next section looks more specifically at some of these connections in Latin America.

[11] Italics in original.

III. Cinema-Poetry Connections in Latin America

The relationship between film and poetry in Latin America is a two-way street. From cinema's early days in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *modernista* poets such as the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío and the Mexicans Luis G. Urbina and Amado Nervo showed a keen interest in the cinematograph, chronicling the ways in which the emerging form was reshaping everyday experience. In the following years avant-garde writers sought to revolutionize poetic form by suffusing it with cinematic elements, from the Peruvian Carlos Oquendo de Amat's *5 metros de poemas* (1927) to his compatriot César Vallejo's 'poesía nueva' ('new poetry'), which drew upon the expressive potential of filmic properties such as montage, as studied by Maria Chiara d'Argenio (2015) and Michelle Clayton (2012: 170), among others. Meanwhile, national filmmaking traditions have looked to epic poetry for aesthetic inspiration, cultural validation, or sources of ideological critique, as in the case of the Mexican indigenist romance *Tabaré* (Luis Lezama, 1917, of which there is no known extant print), adapted from a nineteenth-century Uruguayan epic poem; or the gaucho genre in Argentina, from the silent epics *Nobleza gaucha* (Humberto Cairo, 1915) and *El último centauro* (Enrique Queirolo, 1924), to the left-wing Peronist *Los hijos del Fierro* (1975) and the children's animation *Martín Fierro: La película* (Norman Ruiz and Liliana Romero, 2007), which variously dramatize or allegorize national history drawing on José Hernández's foundational poem *El gaucho Martín Fierro/La vuelta de Martín Fierro* (1872/1879). To varying degrees, such films seek to integrate epic style into their cinematic renditions of national history through techniques such as panoramic shots, monumental characterization, spatial construction, and narrative voices using epic rhythm and rhyme structures (Bollig 2012); (Suárez 2018).

The original and copy model often found in journalistic or popular assessments of such reworkings of national epics was intrinsic to the ideas of medium-specificity that, as we suggested in the previous section, were behind some of the historical avant-garde's thinking about poetic cinema. Júlia González de Canales Carcereny offers a panorama of links between film and poetry, from Epstein's notion of *photogénie*, which we discussed above, to the different waves of poetic film in the 1920s, 1960s, and today. González de Canales rightly points out that, for Epstein, 'literature and cinema have modes of artistic composition that, although autonomous, are intrinsically linked, with poetry being particularly related to cinema in its desire to suggest rather than to tell' (2017: 119). Here and elsewhere, she further points out that for Russian formalist

critics such as Boris Eikhenbaum (author of a 1927 book on film theory titled *Poetika kino*), Victor Shklovsky, and Yuri Tynianov, the essence and the stylistic autonomy of poetic cinema lay in montage. For Tynianov, 'Shots in film do not "unfold" in a sequential, gradual order, they are precisely *exchanged*. This is the foundation of montage. They replace each other just as a single verse line, a single metrical unit, replaces another one on a precise boundary. Film makes *a jump* from shot to shot, just as verse makes a jump from line to line' (Tynyanov, quoted in González de Canales 2019: 277). González de Canales contrasts these ideas of poetic cinema with those of Pasolini (as discussed above) and Andrei Tarkovsky in the 1960s, showing how both currents inform a certain tendency towards a poetic register in twenty-first-century Latin American cinema: an issue that we will come to shortly.

What is missing from González de Canales' account is the extent to which both avant-garde notions of cine-poetry and Pasolini's writings on the cinema of poetry were either taken up or developed in parallel in avant-garde cultural production in Latin America, in diverse literary and moving-image movements. In his recent study, Sergio Delgado Moya (2017: 32-33) analyses a variety of examples of intermedial connections traced by poetry in Mexico and Brazil, from the avant-garde period and beyond, including the use of medical and advertising language in the poetry of *estridentismo* founder Manuel Maples Arce or the earlier twentieth-century work of 'Parnassian' poets such as Olavo Bilac. He also studies the engagement of Brazilian concrete poets with both advertising and forms of muralism made popular in post-revolution Mexico (2017: 41). In the case of the Mexican poet Octavio Paz – who entered into a productive dialogue with Haroldo de Campos and other Brazilian *concretistas* – Delgado Moya examines his simultaneous critique and employment of examples of contemporary consumer culture in experimental poems from the 1960s (2017: 42; also Chapter Three); he observes that, 'The replicas of mass culture and advertising Paz built into his most experimental poems emerge as powerful reflections on language in the age of consumer culture' (152). This is closely related to an interest on the part of Paz, inherited from the early twentieth-century avant-gardes, in the possibility of 'convergence between cinema and poetry' (148), and takes place against a backdrop of 'renewed interest in interartistic collaboration' in Mexico in the 1960s. This would feed into Paz's attempts to create a movie from his experimental 'simultanist' poetry book, *Blanco* (1967): 'a cinematographic projection of the book, or, better said, the projection of its reading (silent at times, out loud at other times)' (Paz, cited in Delgado Moya 2017: 150). Delgado Moya continues: 'In the film adaptation of *Blanco*, both the world as sensible image and language as instrument are bracketed out to make way for the act of reading' (151). Paz's plans for the film – which never came to

fruition in his lifetime – also set the course for his increasing participation in Mexican television, in particular for the media conglomerate Televisa, later in his career. Ángel Miquel, who has also written on Paz's relationship with cinema, has pointed out the poet's affinity with Luis Buñuel, with whom he shared a hostility towards classical Mexican narrative cinema, and whose films Paz described as 'la primera irrupción deliberada de la poesía en el arte cinematográfico' ('poetry's first deliberate incursion into film art') (Paz, quoted in Miquel 2015: 121-22). In a 1953 roundtable discussion, Buñuel set out his own conception of cinema as an 'instrument of poetry', in turn citing Paz's statement that 'Basta que un hombre encadenado cierre sus ojos para que pueda hacer estallar el mundo' ('A chained man only needs to close his eyes to make the world explode') (Paz, quoted in Buñuel 1958: 1). Buñuel claimed that cinema, in the hands of a free poetic sprit - that is, freed of the constraints of industry - was 'capaz de arrebatarlo [al hombre] como ninguna otra expresión humana' ('capable of captivating [man] like no other human expression') (Buñuel 1958: 2) by 'expresar el mundo de los sueños, de las emociones, del instinto' ('express[ing] the world of dreams, of emotions, of instinct') (Buñuel 1958: 2). Closely aligned with his surrealist counterparts such as Man Ray (whom he cited in his talk) as well as Jean Cocteau, Buñuel singled out cinema's capacity for flexible, non-realist spatial and temporal dynamics as central to its ability to express the unconscious. His own films consistently bear this out, constantly upbraiding the spatial and temporal logic of narrative continuity, playfully replacing conventional film syntax with absurd parataxis and merging the temporality of dream into that of waking life.

Buñuel was a key reference point for the multifarious 'New Cinemas' that emerged and developed in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s, many of which tapped the expressive and subversive potential of the poetry-film nexus in diverse ways. A little-known but brilliantly executed example is the work of the Mexican writer Salvador Elizondo, whose rediscovered 1965 film *Apocalypse 1900* combines shots of still images with music and poetry readings. The images include period representations of Paris, erotic art, images of factories, surgery, as well as human illness and infirmity; the music is taken from Wagner, Chopin, and others; with male and female voice-overs of texts from Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Bataille, Breton and Cocteau. The film creates an at times breathless rhythm by cutting from still to still, with a provocative interplay between image, text and music: a multimedia production in keeping with the dissident surrealist aesthetics that informed Elizondo's best-known novel, from the same year, *Farabeuf o la crónica de un instante*. Importantly, the different materials work together without discernible hierarchy.

More directly political instances of intermedial exchange between cinema and poetry can be found in the work of the Cuban filmmaker Santiago Álvarez, who used what Maria Chiara D'Argenio, in our previous edited work, called 'poetic patterns' to construct a revolutionary filmmaking praxis that combined 'actual poems, […] poetic devices such as metaphors and […] genres close to poetry such as songs, the use of still photography and found footage and a 'poetic' experimental approach to documentary' (2014: 130). Carolina Larraín (2009) also analyses Santiago Álvarez's use of poetic elements in his 1973 film *El tigre saltó y mató, pero morirá… morirá…* on the 1973 coup in Chile against Salvador Allende, comparing it with analogous strategies in Patricio Guzmán's *Salvador Allende* (2004). Larraín shows how the two filmmakers approach poetry both as a textual medium that is read or performed in their films, and as an expressive structuring device that allows them to confront trauma through metaphor, rhythmic expression, figurative language and semantic ambivalence. Such work demonstrates the extent to which Latin American filmmakers have engaged the relationship between film-poetry and liberation struggles, both in a directly political sense and in terms of the poetic register's ability to train the viewer's eye and ear to think beyond received meanings, to unthink conventional signifying processes, and to resist closure. Similarly Álvaro Vázquez Mantecón (2015), drawing on Walter Benjamin, has shown how in their avant-garde films of the 1960s and 1970s, Mexican cineastes Rubén Gámez, Gelsen Gas and Alfredo Gurrola used diverse poetic registers in their search for allegorical modes of expression, opposed to conventional modes of cinematic narrative, as part of a wider critique of capitalism, developmentalism, modernization and State violence.

Contemporary experimental cinema and media art has also frequently resorted to this anti-narrative, lyrical avant-garde poetic mode. To cite one example, the Colombian filmmaker Felipe Guerrero drew on the countercultural *nadaísta* movement of the 1950s and 1960s in his 2006 experimental film *Paraíso,* as Wood (2014) examined in our previous edited collection. Although *nadaísmo* centred more on poetry and public happenings than film, Guerrero's work achieves a transtextual approach to the *nadaísta* verse of Jaime Jaramillo Escobar (known as X-504), deploying found footage and visual and aural montage to express the historical density of the audiovisual archive of violence in Colombia. In the same collection, Constanza Ceresa analysed Martín Gambarotta's poetry collection *Punctum* (1996) alongside Martín Rejtman's film *Silvia Prieto* (1999), showing how both artists forged an emancipatory, anti-narrative 'nueva economía del lenguaje' ('new economy of language') (Ceresa 2014: 180) capable of criticising the emerging neoliberal order in 1990s Argentina from within the relations of production of the present, also following Walter Benjamin. The abstract, political, archival media art made by contemporary

artists such as Bruno Varela or the Los Ingrávidos collective, both in Mexico, is another case in point. Varela, for instance, generates creative, intentionally duplicitous interplay between text and image in his work, confronting documentary or fake-documentary images with parallel poems written in the form of subtitles that do anything but fulfil their conventional, explicative function. Varela's films often take the form of unsolvable puzzles; the sound and images that populate them frequently bear the marks of analogue, magnetic or digital decay (which itself is sometimes faked): poetic ambiguity and its material substrate.

By contrast contemporary art cinema has, as González de Canales (2017) has noted, looked more towards Pasolini's notion of the cinema of poetry, as well as Tarkovsky's lyrical cinema. Tarkovsky becomes a key figure for both Lisandro Alonso and Carlos Reygadas – and, as Adam Feinstein argues in this volume, also the Chilean cineaste Pablo Larraín. González de Canales offers a theory that Reygadas makes 'filmic haiku' (2017: 117ff). This consists of observation of nature (128-29), using ambient sound and sparse dialogue, alongside ordering that appears simple but is in fact complex: it explicitly rejects realist or neorealist observation, incorporating elements of haptic cinema (133) and what Gonzalo Aguilar has called a 'poetics of indetermination' (Aguilar, quoted in González de Canales 2017: 130). Laura Martins has also drawn parallels between Tarkovsky and the Argentine documentary filmmaker Gustavo Fontán, who fixes his gaze on 'the materiality of nature' (Martins 2014: 168) through long, contemplative shots that heighten vision so as to render the invisible visible; to create a 'sensorial experience in which the *textual* value of the image unfolds' (171); and, ultimately, to teach us 'to look, to glimpse, to listen' (175). And the influence, at varying levels of directness, of Pier Paolo Pasolini has been felt in both poetry and film throughout the Americas – in the poetry of Sergio Raimondi, or the films of Glauber Rocha, Raúl Perrone or José Celestino Campusano, to give just some examples – as studied in the essays compiled by Kohen and Russo (2017), in their collection *Los condenados*, taking a particular interest in Pasolini's active engagement with and championing of the struggles of oppressed groups both at home and in post- and neocolonial contexts, often within a tricontinental frame that linked Latin American artists and activists to, for example, counterparts in Africa or the Middle East. For his part, Adalberto Müller draws extensively on both Pasolini's cinema of poetry and Cocteau's poetic cinema in analysing three different cinematic approaches, from the 1980s to the 2000s, of the mid-century Brazilian poet Manoel de Barros. Müller is particularly interested in Pasolini's casting of the cinema of poetry as an expressive mode that allows reality to be revealed rather than masked. He argues that, just as de Barros's ecological poetry adopts new dramatic perspectives and personae from which to view nature, those who sought to render de Barros's

verse into film needed to find new filmic registers to do so: 'they compel cinematic language to change its "nature" just as nature compels Manoel de Barros to change his poetry' (Müller 2014: 195). Elsewhere, in his analysis of the films of Lisandro Alonso, and in particular *La libertad,* Gonzalo Aguilar writes of a 'poética de la indeterminación' ('poetics of indeterminacy') (2008: 61) at work in the portrayal of the character Misael, a solitary woodcutter whom the film follows for its entire length. 'This indeterminacy allows each of us to project, on that trace, his or her own idea of liberty and to respond to Alonso's provocation' (61), in a fashion that turns the film's protagonist into something like sage for the viewer.

The works mentioned above might constitute examples of what Laura Marks (2000) calls 'hybrid cinema'. Marks notes the importance of hybrid cinema for certain filmmakers operating away from the major centres of cinematic production, and in particular for cinema-practitioners in the developing world or who form part of diasporic communities therefrom:

> The term 'hybrid cinema' also implies a hybrid form, mixing documentary, fiction, personal, and experimental genres, as well as different media. By pushing the limits of any genre, hybrid cinema forces each genre to explain itself, to forgo any transparent relationship to the reality it represents, and to make evident the knowledge claims on which it is based. (2000: 8).

This hybridity has been an important feature of many Latin American works in recent years – from Albertina Carri's autofictional documentary *Los rubios* (2003) and her later semi-autobiographical fiction film, with its incorporation of a variety of mixed media *La rabia* (2008), through to Gustavo Fontán's use of intervened found material in his 2008 *La orilla que se abisma* (a film, after all, partly about the life of the poet Juan L. Ortiz) or his incorporation of his family home and relatives in *El árbol* (2006) and *La casa* (2012). One might also cite the Brazilian Eduardo Coutinho's films, in particular *Jogo de cena* (2007) with its understated yet at times unsettling blending of film documentary, theatrical performance, and anthropological research.

In her recent study, *Mundos en común*, Florencia Garramuño analyses what she identifies as a recent trend toward *non-specific* art. Her corpus includes Brazilian contemporary installation art, recent poetry from Argentina, the prose of Clarice Lispector, and a series of multi-media art works, including that of Jorge Macchi, for example his *Buenos Aires Tour* (2004), which incorporated intervened maps, texts, sound, visuals, and chance actions such as shooting a pane of glass. Garramuño argues that such works call into question ideas of belonging, pertinence,

individuality and specificity in art. They do not belong to a specific genre, and through breaking with ideas of suitable forms and sites for particular types of work, strike a connection to both spectator/reader and the wider world, calling for a move from aesthetic to ethical considerations of art: 'abriendo un espacio en el que lo común, lo en común y la comunidad se definen ya no por esencias compartidas o características propias –específicas–, sino por la apertura de ese espacio hacia lo otro de sí mismo' ('opening a space in which the common, the in-common, and community are defined now not by shared essences or their own – specific – characteristics, but by the openness of that space towards its other') (Garramuño 2015: 155).

In response to Garramuño's assertions, above, with regard to a tendency to non-specificity in contemporary Latin American art, Jens Andermann comments thus on Santiago Mitre and Juan Onofri's *Los posibles* (2013):

> the film transforms the 'original' spectacle into something else by bringing into the equation the essential elements of cinematic language, such as frame composition, depth of field, camera movement, and so forth. Different from the audience point of view of the original dance production, the camera literally takes to the stage, almost – but not quite – becoming yet another of the dancers swirling around one another, touching, clashing and separating again. But this intermediate position of the cinematic apparatus vis-à-vis the dance troupe is key here, as not quite another member of the ensemble yet also no longer merely an external viewer, and thus also held in the balance between 'documentation' and 'adaptation', between cinema as register of something else and as the medium of the latter's recreation. (2018)

Los posibles messes up our conceptions of what we are seeing: what looks like a rehearsal cannot be, with the camera in amongst the dancers; and the filming records a performance that took place *after* the original theatrical run of Onofri's dance work. The film plays with notions of time, genre, and the documentary function of film. It raises again, too, the important question of medium specificity: in a work that seems to refuse to occupy a particular genre or form, nevertheless analytical tools drawn from film and dance, which reference specific features of these forms, are required for detailed analytical work. The capacious, promiscuous nature of film is key to many of the works analysed in this volume; but the existence of particular features that characterize film and poetry is central to this analysis.

IV. The Poetry- Film Nexus in Theory and Practice.

The chapters in this volume range across the length of Latin America and span almost its entire filmic history, from proto- and early cinematography to films from the 2010s. The corpus is as varied as the time-frame is extensive, including early silent cinema and what is often called 'pre-cinema'; experimental works of the avant-gardes; political cinema from the 1960s; and recent projects, from independent shorts through to big-budget productions. The chapters are united in their exploration of what we have called the 'poetry-film nexus', but their subject matter and methodological approaches are richly diverse. Aesthetic and technical questions around the presence of poetry on screen abound; with it are ethical debates around the filmmaker's relationship to the material being employed. What is more, a number of the pieces note the urgent political issues addressed in poetry-films and raised by directors who screen poetry.

Two pieces focus on some of the earliest cinematic tendencies in the region. Chrystian Zegarra offers a pioneering reading of the work of the Peruvian poet José María Eguren and its engagements with the earliest forms of cinema. Eguren is widely regarded, along with César Vallejo, as the founder of modern poetry in Peru, a bridge between late Spanish-American *modernismo* and the twentieth-century avant-gardes. Zegarra adds a new angle to readings of Eguren: his engagement in two collections from the 1910s with early cinema, via Gunning's influential concept of the 'cinema of attractions'; and studies of cinema and magic including Solomon's work on the 'film trick' and 'up-to-date-magic'. Eguren can thus be seen as a pathbreaker for the 'cinematic' poetry of the 1920s and beyond (Oquendo de Amat, Abril, Westphalen), drawing on the technical feats of early cinema pioneers, such as Méliès, Guy, or Chomón, to feed the original design of his poetry.

Nicolás Suárez similarly focusses on the legacy of turn-of-the-century and early-twentieth century literature and film, specifically the figure of Faust as reimagined in Argentina within the *gauchesca* or *criollista* tradition. From the seminal literary reworking of the Faust legend by Estanislao del Campo in 1866, Suárez reads through a series of its film incarnations, *Fausto* (1922), by Ernesto Gunche y Eduardo Martínez de la Pera; *El Fausto criollo* (1979), by Luis Saslavsky; and *El Fausto criollo* (2011), by Fernando Birri. The gaucho is one of the most keenly contested and politicized figures in Argentine literary culture; curiously, in all three cases, their rendering of Faust was the director or directors' last film. Suárez thus mixes considerations of political cinema with

questions of ‘late style’ (Adorno, Said) to offer a historical reading of the development of the gaucho figure and the long afterlife of del Campo’s poem.

Erica Segre’s piece moves the volume into mid-century explorations of the legacy of the avant-gardes, in both film and poetry. While Mexico’s Juan Rulfo is rightly famous for his prose fiction, little attention has been paid to his poetry, and still less to a filmic adaptation of his poem ‘La fórmula secreta’, by the Mexican filmmaker Rubén Gámez, in a reading by the poet Jaime Sabines. Segre examines the experimental assemblage of free verse and cinematographic aesthetics, which allows Gámez to reconceive film as a discrepant instrument of altered and haunted vision, capable of unlocking what Luis Buñuel called ‘the liberating world of poetry’. Rulfo himself qualified the film as an ‘ANTI-film […] anti everything,’ including lyric poetry itself, depersonalized and redeployed in Gámez’s provocative and dizzying work.

The Brazilian filmmaker and theorist Carlos Adriano adds a unique perspective on the poetry-film nexus through his exploration of the poetics of found-footage films, drawing on a series of philosophical reflections on questions of recycling, collage and reuse, including the Brazilian Anthropophagist (or Cannibalist) Manifesto, while at the same time analysing his own practice as a filmmaker. With an approach that mirrors Adriano’s magpie-like enthusiasm for found material, he offers, if not an exhaustive theory of this particular ‘subgenre’, then a series of historical and aesthetic hypotheses that demonstrate how found footage is a singular field of poetic operation in cinema and how the found-footage ‘cine-poet’ can create artistic ‘constellations’ from the encounter between visual and sonic material and the written word.

Two of the pieces look at more commercially-minded productions, but nevertheless highlight the destabilizing work that poetry can carry out and the unsettling aesthetic results for the viewer. Eduardo Paredes Ocampo examines two films by the Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, with a specific focus on the use of narration within his modern-day reworkings of the fantasy ghost story and the fairy tale. Paredes’s narratological approach enables a thorough unpicking of del Toro’s use of narrators in the films’ prologues and epilogues. Both *The Devil’s Backbone and The Shape of Water* draw on poems, converting the narrator into a poet in a gesture that not only tests the formal constraints of the (literary) genre but also expands the limited language of the media in question. The narration offers not only a self-referential reflection on the nature and possibilities of cinema, but also a poetic means on incorporating undecidability and ambiguity into otherwise more conventional screen narratives, with the poet, the ghost, and the monster working together to destabilize our understanding of the stories we are told.

Adam Feinstein is renowned as Pablo Neruda's biographer, and as such was closely involved in the development of Pablo Larraín's film of the Chilean poet's life, in particular the latter's dramatic escape from political persecution in the late 1940s. Feinstein's piece draws on more traditional adaptation- or fidelity-studies approaches to ask: can the dangers of artistic freedom with a real life sometimes prove greater than the perils of excessive reverence to the facts of a biography? If Larraín happily accepts the 'anti-realist' moniker – despite a trilogy of films exploring some of the darkest moments of Chilean history – does he make too many sacrifices in his effort to employ the poetry of cinematic language to create a Borgesian meta-fictional labyrinth? Feinstein's close reading of the historical tweaks and tricks played by *Neruda* allows a broader exploration of Larraín's aesthetics and engagement with the history of poetic cinema, in particular the strong presence of Andrei Tarkovsky's work and ideas, not least the Russian's very personal take on poetry as a non-linguistic or non-verbal substrate of artistic creation.

Several of the chapters in this volume address more directly political or even activist filmmaking. Camila Gatica explores the work of Sergio Bravo, one of the most productive members (and founders) of the Cine-Club of the Universidad de Chile. From 1956 onwards Bravo enjoyed a fruitful career making short documentaries that focused on everyday elements of popular culture; but one particular film, *Láminas de Almahue* (1961), a documentary about the construction of the titular rims of cart wheels in a rural Chilean town, employs a poem by Efraín Barquero to voice a sense of 'the popular' that was central to both the New Chilean Cinema of the 1960s and Bravo's own political filmmaking. Like Bravo, Barquero often used items from the popular world as his inspiration; thus *Láminas de Almahue* brought together Bravo and Barquero's interest in Chilean national culture, giving depth to the circularity (and physicality) of the images through the poet's words. Gatica explores what she calls 'the cinematographic poetics' of Sergio Bravo, understanding *Láminas de Almahue* as the centre of Bravo's attempt to find in poetry a corollary for his exploration of popular culture in Chile.

Irina Garbatzky explores the legacy of 1960s New Latin American Cinema in Jesús Díaz's documentary film *Cincuentaicinco hermanos* (1978). Díaz's film and accompanying book explore the lives and experiences of a group of Cuban exiles who had left as children for the USA in the wake of the Revolution and returned to the island with the blessing of its government in the 1970s as part of a radical activist group known as the Antonio Maceo Brigade. Garbatzky combines a consideration of the poetic mode of documentary filmmaking (*pace* Bill Nichols) with an

exploration of the iconic figure of José Martí, whose own poetic rendering of exile and dreams of return, in an earlier and very different political context, informs Díaz's film.

Ben Bollig's piece looks at the question of how to screen the life of a poet, via two very different projects, María Luisa Bemberg's 1990 biopic about the seventeenth-century Mexican poet-nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Nicolás Pereda's 2009 fragmented and playful screening of a performance based on Sor Juana's important long poem, *Primero Sueño*, by the activist and theatre-practitioner Jesusa Rodríguez. While Bemberg's film employs a series of intermedial techniques and genre-bending references – baroque portraiture, Golden Age theatre, other contemporary films – to make a feminist point about the life of Sor Juana, Pereda's aesthetic of failure, a ludic variant on so-called 'contemporary contemplative' or 'slow' cinema, uses Sor Juana's work as the basis for an urgently political interrogation of activism and feminism in contemporary Mexico.

Jessica Wax-Edwards similarly explores a highly necessary intervention into contemporary Mexican politics with her analysis of two stylistically divergent films centred on the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity, a civil protest movement founded by the Mexican poet and essayist Javier Sicilia who, after the murder of his son Juan Francisco as a direct result of drug war violence, announced his 'retirement' from poetry and convened a massive protest march against the violence, as well as rallies across the country. The first of the films, a PBS documentary entitled *El poeta* (Kelly Duane de la Vega and Katie Galloway, 2012) follows Sicilia on his journey across Mexico, in an experiential and often visually poetic, representation of the poet/activist, despite its largely conventional TV documentary format; a visually poetic register co-exists with the traditional didactic mode of expository documentary. Sicilia's final poem, as well as his personal struggle form the basis for the second film, Pablo Orta's short *El hijo del poeta* (2012). Here the relationship between poetry and violence is interrogated through a form of visually poetic filmmaking. Despite its brevity, its topic of representation is ambitious as well as pertinent to Mexico's current crisis. In both visual texts the titular poet constitutes a 'microcosmic node' where the effects of sustained national violence and collective loss intersect. Wax-Edwards explores the characterization of the poet figure onscreen in both documentary and fiction narratives and examines the capacity of poetic language (both visual and verbal) to contend with violence and trauma.

The variety of poetic and filmic techniques on display in these analyses is testament to the vibrancy and dynamism of the poetry-film nexus in Latin America. It is also striking that from what

may seem initially purely aesthetic concerns, many of the pieces move into questions of ethics and politics, highly revealing of the cultural context in contemporary Latin America. The authors demonstrate that an awareness of the multiple ways in which engagements between screen and page may blur the limits between the two forms does not preclude close readings and analyses that are sensitive to the – always historicizable – specificities of film and poetry. Implicitly they trace, too, connections in theme, method, and forms of political engagement, across the region and over the length of the film century, and beyond. The poetry-film nexus defines a constellation of artistic practices that creatively explore, exploit, and at times explode, the connected and multiple resources of image, sound and text.

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