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Imagining Cuba's New Revolutionary Communities through Film (1959-1989)ⁱ

Jessica Gordon-Burroughs

Newsreel 49 (1961)—a visual mythology of origin—creates a dividing line between the old and new, conceptually eliminating what came before the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959. One sequence depicts a man with a sledgehammer removing the letters of the Warner Brothers sign in Havana one by one, embodying a cinematic protest against foreign representations and the symbolic inauguration of new aesthetic visions. The durational value of this image of destruction but also of the “new”—the new nation, the “new man”—overlaps with complementary discourses surrounding the long 1960s and the social ebullience that the period represented for Latin America, and for the international left, in relation to culture and to cinema, wherein Cuba was an epicenter.ⁱⁱ Even as that triumphant beginning has been increasingly problematized,ⁱⁱⁱ revisiting the legacies of pre-Revolutionary cinematic traditions, the foundational rupture embodied by the scene of *Newsreel 49* has been stubbornly, and understandably, persistent in the retelling of the history of Cuban film, and of Latin American cinema more broadly.

This chapter's periodization, which extends from the founding of the ICAIC, or Cuban Film Institute, in 1959 to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, spans the history of New Latin American Cinema (NLAC); its endpoint marks the dusk of the Cold War, which gave shape to much of this period's intellectual and aesthetic debates. In Cuba, this also coincides with the threshold to the Special Period in the Time of Peace, a time of economic shortage following the end of Soviet subsidies, which corresponded with broader symbolic fissures in the Cuban revolutionary project. This arc of three decades also implies evolving conceptions surrounding the Cuban nation and its people. Starting with an oft-cited collective sensibility in the 1960s—“the gravity of dreams” (García Borrero, “La utopía” 123), the

1980s brought increasingly atomized and interiorized models of subjectivity. In a dark prognostic, for Juan Antonio García Borrero, Cuban cinematic culture of the 1980s would begin a movement culminating in the 1990s toward “the spineless accumulation of the isolated poetics of particular Cuban film-makers, who struggle to make their cinema, not the cinema” (“La utopía” 123).^{iv} This chapter assesses the period’s key players, but also alternative teleologies and points of dissonance at the center of the Cuban revolutionary cinematic canon, mapping out the meaningful ways that canon might be revised and nuanced.

Cuba and New Latin American Cinema: An Intertwined History

In many senses the dominant narratives surrounding Cuban cinema produced between 1959 and 1989 are familiar even for those outside Cuban Studies. Cuban film of this period, together with Argentina and, at times, Brazil, is at the center of many, if not most, canonical histories of NLAC, a political cinema movement that dominated Latin American film criticism for many decades. Chon Noriega called Cuba “the institutionalized location for a cinema of social change in the Americas” (xx). This trend continued into the twenty-first century even in volumes that trouble the limits of NLAC: Ana López, Marvin D’Lugo and Laura Podalsky’s excellent *Routledge Companion to Latin American Cinema* (2018) features the iconic Cine Capri cinema on its cover, visually rooting their history in Havana. Cuban cinema histories, for their part, find themselves in the position of addressing both a local or national phenomenon, but also a Latin American one through the lens of NLAC, insofar as NLAC maintained a mutually reinforcing relationship with Cuban cinematic and intellectual centers.

NLAC, and by extension Cuban cinema, were canonized both through autochthonous manifestos and festivals, but also through a growing interest in festival, academic, and political circles in Europe and later the United States. As such, the writing of the Cuban cinematic canon came from multiple fronts and was written both from outside and from

within Cuba. In Cuba, it would be framed through key journals, such as *Cine Cubano* and the ICAIC publishing branch. British filmmaker and critic, Michael Chanan was at the center of the Anglophone canonization of Cuban cinema through his book *The Cuban Image* (1984) and his wonderful series on NLAC on Britain's Channel 4 in the 1980s. In France, Brazilian film historian Paulo Antonio Paranaguá's *Le cinéma cubain* (1990) would also be a crucial text. The multivolume Cuban *Coordenadas* (2013; 2014) published in conjunction with the Cinemateca de Cuba, has contributed meaningful documents and essays to the extant history.

The Early Years and the Auteur Model

The early years of the ICAIC were characterized by expanding publics in the spirit of works such as Octavio Cortázar's charming short *Por primera vez* (1967) [For the First Time], which portrays the first film viewing experience for rural Cuban spectators. It was also a period marked by formal experimentation, influenced by Neorealism and European arthouse aesthetics, which had profound effects in relation to the visual and narrative explorations of Cuban revolutionary cinematic cultures. Similarly, in relation to sound, Leo Brouwer's Grupo de Experimentación Sonora (1969-1978) [Experimental Sound Group] at ICAIC joined Avant-Garde and popular aesthetics (Thomas 57) even in the aesthetically prohibitive 1970s. Known for its innovative storytelling practices, Cuban animation was also decisive to national construction, but also to broader Caribbean identity formation, long beyond its heyday in the 1960s (Stock 106-122).

Yet, despite the dynamism of its initial period, like the still centralized and paternalistic structure underlying films such as *Por primera vez*—Havana transporting culture to the mountains—ICAIC creative authority was concentrated in the hands of few, especially in the realm of feature-length production. The Institute's first years were dominated by four founding figures: Julio García Espinosa (1926-2016), Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (1928-1996), Humberto Solás (1941-2008), and Santiago Álvarez (1919-1998). Alongside other notable

Cuban intellectuals, García Espinosa and Alea had found their voices in the 1950s in the Havana-based film society *El Nuevo Tiempo*. This group of intellectuals coalesced through their aesthetic sensibilities and dissident position in relation to the Batista regime (1952-59). García Espinosa and Alea were the intellectual compasses of this generation in relation to film, writing what in effect would be its cinematic treatises: in García Espinosa's case, "Por un cine imperfecto" (1969) [For an Imperfect Cinema], and, in Alea's, *Dialéctica del espectador* (1982) [The Viewer's Dialectic]. Alea's formulation of the viewer, like Argentine Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas' similarly influential *Hacia un tercer cine* (1969) [Toward a Third Cinema], advocated for a newly active spectatorship, which engaged an aesthetic rejecting the values of capitalist Hollywood, or, in their view, Second Cinema's precious detachment. García Espinosa's famous essay similarly extolled the broader value systems of NLAC and Third Cinema, calling for an "imperfect aesthetic" both as a material necessity and a moral imperative.

The intellectual scaffolding of the NLAC Movement in these essays found its aesthetic praxis in the films of ICAIC's first decade. It was not without its flaws. García Espinosa and Alea were highly influenced by Neorealism's sensibilities, but also by its concentration of creative power in the male-dominated auteur model.^v B. Ruby Rich has described NLAC as a "virtually all-male pantheon" ("An/Other" 278). As such, the auteur model, primordially male and white, propelled by the ICAIC in this period, due to its unitary vision of authorship, sidelined and invisibilized many creative agents within cinematic production even as viewership was democratized and expanded. One need only consider the overshadowing by directorial authority of the editor Nelson Rodríguez in his role in the creation of Alea's classic *Memorias del Subdesarrollo* (1968) [Memories of Underdevelopment] or of Solás's *Lucía* (1968); Pepín Rodríguez's animation in many of Álvarez's most important short documentary works, including *Now* (1965) (Ramos, "Nicolás

Guillén” 156); Miriam Talavera’s editing work with Alea and Álvarez; or the sound design of Germinal Hernández, which influenced ICAIC productions for decades.^{vi} The creative roles of female performing artists were, likewise, many times bedimmed by that of their male creative partners.^{vii} One might consider in particular the actresses Daisy Granados and Mirtha Ibarra, whose creative agency was historically clouded by their romantic partnerships with Pastor Vega and Alea, respectively.^{viii} We see a parallel dynamic played out within the story worlds of many classic narrative films of the period. In *Memorias del Subdesarrollo*, Granados, playing a young ingénue, in many senses is a mere foil to the existential reflections and turmoil of the film’s male protagonist, Sergio (played by Sergio Corrieri), as he confronts the vast changes associated with the early years of the revolution. Released a year before *Memorias*, in *Las aventuras de Juan Quin Quin* (1967) [The Adventures of Juan Quin Quin] García Espinosa famously played with and parodied Hollywood genre conventions, yet this pathbreaking film still appropriates the classically male space of the Western, alongside a fetishized female heroine. Furthermore, Espinosa’s directorial authority is clearly felt in the film, and is doubled by the film’s male characters who propel and disrupt the narrative arc.

Even within Cuban documentary, where alternative creative identities have flourished both within Cuba (in subsequent decades) and elsewhere due to its lower production costs, male directorship was still the norm. Álvarez, for instance, led the Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano [ICAIC Latin-American Newsreels], directing all of its newsreels for fifteen years (Rist 1). In his distinctive coupling of music and animated still images, in the 1960s Álvarez initiated spectacular innovation; yet he also concentrated creative power in a hierarchical vertical structure, centered on his own figure and vision. Álvarez’s approach to race, moreover, had its limitations. We see this in particular in his classic *Now*. This beautifully executed and poignant short is animated from still photographs (many from *Life Magazine*), and edited to the rhythm of the song “Now,” sung by African-American Lena

Horne. Álvarez points an accusatory finger north toward the US and its brutal racial oppression. However, by focusing in on the US Civil Rights Movement, Álvarez simultaneously evades a racial critique internal to the revolutionary project. As Joshua Malitsky has cogently argued: “Álvarez was a voice of the Revolution—white, male, and empowered to speak for and to the collective.” Other filmmakers, such as Sara Gómez—and I would add Nicolás Guillén Landrián in this regard (both of whom we will return to)—felt a need to highlight “the role of the articulating self” (Malitsky 276), as manifested through techniques such as voiceovers or other uses of sound, which were subtly and sometimes quite explicitly gendered and racialized.

In response to these contradictions and omissions, it is increasingly vital to re-read the Cuban cinematic canon, whether feature length or documentary, along the lines of gender, race, or different ways of being in the world that “reconfigure dominant modes of worlding” (Schoonover and Galt 5) and their temporalities. Alongside Gómez, Talavera’s short documentary work, for instance, operates as a tacit critique of Álvarez’s dominance, and as a destabilizing force in Rich’s patriarchal “pantheon.” I would also argue that Solás’s queer melodramatic aesthetics plays a similar role in the realm of narrative film, complementing nascent feminist or otherwise liberatory countercurrents at the heart of the ICAIC. Solás’s *Lucía* portrays the lives of three women living through key moments of Cuban history, namely the Cuban War of Independence, the Gerardo Machado regime, and the early years of the 1959 Revolution. Reframing the feminine subject, *Lucía* (like other films directed by Solás) pushes up against the patriarchal new man as articulated by the revolution. Challenging the totalizing futurity of revolutionary discourses, Solás’s complex cinematic synthesis of Cuban history troubles any immaculate rupture from the past. Yet, Solás (and other directors, namely Sergio Giral, and Alea to a certain extent) make clear that the past is

still charged with the pathos of its “irreversibility;” there is no possible return to “innocent time” (Gaines 111).

In the case of Solás, queer nostalgia (Pavda 1-12) overlays the straight time of the Revolution, entwining it with utopian teleologies that co-existed at the center of the initial decades of the Cuban revolutionary project. Ever bubbling just below the surface, alternative genealogies make themselves felt even within the films of the core auteurs of the ICAIC.^{ix} As Paul Julian Smith has argued regarding Alea’s *Memorias*: “With hindsight, *Memories* looks queerer by far than [Alea’s] *Strawberry and Chocolate*: the famous scene in which anti-hero Sergio tries on his absent wife’s furs and jewels before pulling her stocking over his face says more about the politics of sexual ambiguity than all Diego and David’s self-conscious debates” (32). Analogous moments of queer potentiality—if only partially adumbrated, and quickly disciplined and silenced—are found in the work of Espinosa, in particular *Las aventuras de Juan Quin Quin*. In tandem with this more emancipatory reading of Solás’s and others’ figures, however, it should be noted that Solás’s own creative project obscured that of his partner, the aforementioned editor Nelson Rodríguez, who likewise edited the latter scene in *Memorias*. The Solás-Rodríguez partnership was, of course, closeted, albeit an open secret, due to institutionalized homophobia in revolutionary Cuba, adding complex and racialized layers to any binary assessment of the auteur structure of the ICAIC’s initial decades; or to any alternative utopian vision or temporality contained therein.^x

Generational Crossings and Revisions

It was not Solás, but Alea, however, who, until the twenty-first century, would be the Cuban filmmaker of the period with the greatest international resonance, extending into the 1990s and across generations. Alea directed a total of twelve feature films over three and a half decades. As Paul Schroeder Rodríguez notes in his monograph on the filmmaker, Alea was unusual in the way his career followed the evolution of the ICAIC itself; he was a critical

participant, but was never side-lined in the way that others were, for instance, Guillén Landrián or Gómez. Alea's films are characterized by diverse influences and traditions; they are many times typified by hybrid fictional and documentary modes, in the sense of *Memorias, Una pelea cubana contra los demonios* (1973) [*A Cuban Fight against Demons*], or *Hasta cierto punto* (1983) [*Up to a Certain Point*]. However, for the purposes of this chapter, Alea's cinematic trajectory is most interesting in the way in which it shifts thematically in the 1970s and 1980s, connecting him to other filmmakers of the period, who would be revived by future generations.

La última cena (1976) [*The Last Supper*], treating slavery, in particular, marks this turning point in the preoccupations of Alea's production and NLAC more broadly. The script of *La última cena* was authored by Gómez and Manuel Moreno Fraginals. Here, Alea privileges the politics of race, gender and ethnicity, moving away from the manifest class-based concerns of his earlier work (Schroeder 8). This tendency is sustained in Alea's *Hasta cierto punto* (1983), created a decade later, a film which pivoted upon the politics of gender, still contentious within the revolutionary project even into the 1980s. Vega's *Retrato de Teresa* (1979) [*Portrait of Teresa*] or Solás's *Cecilia* (1981), both roughly contemporaneous to *Hasta cierto punto*, also represented transitions in dominant modes of representation of the "feminine" within Cuban cinema. However, in many ways it was *Hasta cierto punto* that "set the tone" for the new generation of filmmakers of the 1980s, such as Juan Carlos Tabío, by way of "its freedom of form and of pitch" (Paranaguá, "News from Havana" 91).

In the first two decades of the 2000s, reappraisals of this earlier generation formed in the cauldron of the revolution's early years occurred. Two key figures in this reassessment were Gómez and Guillén Landrián. Both Afro-Cuban, and the creators of some of the most compelling cinematic works of the first decade and a half of the ICAIC, Guillén Landrián was in effect effaced from the Cuban cinematic canon until retrospective screenings in the

2000s. Contained within the work of these two makers may be detected a “revisionist history” or “an/other view” of NLAC (Rich, “An/Other” 278) that connects Gómez and Guillén Landrián’s cinematic proposals with that of subsequent generations of Latin American filmmakers.^{xi} Both directors acted as conduits between their contemporaries during the first decade of the revolution, and more dissident voices that began to come into view in the 1980s and 1990s.

We see this beginning to occur critically in an essay by Juan Antonio Évora on the work of Santiago Álvarez for a 1989 retrospective on Cuban film at the Pompidou Center in Paris. There Guillén Landrián’s short “scientific” documentary *Coffea Arábica* (1968) is named as the most significant Cuban documentary produced at the ICAIC, thus destabilizing Álvarez’s heretofore undisputed dominance in Cuban revolutionary documentary historiography (Ramos and Robbins, Prologue 9). Yet, as Dylon Robbins and Julio Ramos note in their edited volume on the filmmaker, Évora’s mention is striking considering how little Guillén Landrián’s documentary had circulated since its release in 1968. For many years, Guillén Landrián was a “ghost” and a “rumor” (García Borrero, “Nicolás” 38). In his essay in the same publication, García Borrero writes quoting Lezama Lima: <<el rumor es como la mancha de lo que no se ve>> [rumor is the stain that goes unseen] (“Nicolás” 38). In the Caribbean, rumor is the whisper of unofficial and unsanctioned history, revealing the afterlives of the plantation and its racialized and gendered violence that permeates the contemporary institutional archive—as always, a disputed site of knowledge and power (Derby 125).

Like Guillén Landrián, Gómez was also inconsistently remembered within Cuban cinematic historiography. Her figure was shrouded by mystery and mystique. She worked as an assistant on French feminist filmmaker Agnès Varda’s legendary documentary, *Salut les cubains* (1963). There Gómez has an iconic cameo, dancing the cha-cha-cha in fatigues and

boots, captured with stop-motion photography, in one of the most beautiful scenes in Varda's extensive cinematic oeuvre. From 1964 to the production of her feature-length, *De cierta manera* [One Way or Another] (1974; 1977), during the politically dark *quinquenio gris*, or grey quinquennium (1971-1976), Gómez directed ten documentaries for the ICAIC on topics ranging from tobacco production to childcare and music. Rich calls Gómez's 1974 feature length "the first 'post-Revolutionary' film" ("An/Other" 280). She writes, "In this sense [*De cierta manera*] demonstrates an early awareness of a potential disjunction between the portrayal of the individual and that of society, with an influential demonstration that new aesthetic alternatives would have to be investigated for this trajectory to continue" ("An/Other" 280).

The distinctive directorial voice that is evinced in this film (produced shortly before Gómez's premature death from asthma) can be observed developing even in Varda's 1963 documentary. Like *De cierta manera*, *Salut les cubains* plays with the gender constructions underlying the new revolutionary system. To give only one example: an image of a beard, the highly masculine visual signature of the revolutionary guerrillas, in Varda's stop motion photo essay fancifully dissolve into images of cotton candy. But it is in Gómez's aforementioned cameo where the mirthful contrast achieved between Gómez's combat boots and the animated quick step of the cha-cha-cha most clearly evinces "the emergence of a new subjectivity" (Lord 17). In the words of Alan West-Durán, "Gómez's smile [in *Salut les cubains*] is more than an expression of joy—it is a burst of sheer energy, a visual foregrounding of the boundless creativity she would exhibit in her short but prolific career as a filmmaker" (328).

Yet, as an intellectual and artistic figure, Gómez, even so, is most interesting in her continuities and discontinuities with international women's or feminist cinema. In an interview with Marguerite Duras, carried out while Duras was in Cuba in 1967 for the *Salón*

de Mayo, we see these tensions acutely. Gómez critiques what she interprets as an underlying nihilism in Duras' work, which by all appearances translates into a broader discussion of European feminist aesthetics of the period: "I feel a real generational pride. I'm confident in our historical significance. ... You talked earlier of the absurd, or useless, quality of life And if you believe it, you are justifying my uncertainty of your work, your cinema" (Duras 400). Even so, scholars including Sandra del Valle Casals—one of the Cuban scholars pivotal in Gómez's reappraisal, along with Sandra Abd'Allah and Norma Rita Guillard Limonta—have increasingly located Gómez within a feminist frame, finding productive re-readings of her oeuvre and figure within its perspective and methodologies (Del Valle 16). Despite feminism's difficult application and assignments in Latin America (Fajardo-Hill and Giunta 18), Gómez is among several historical figures who allow international feminism to reassess its horizons, amidst her evident contradictions.

In the process of locating Gómez's *De cierta manera* as an alternative strand within NLAC, Rich critically links Gómez's feature-length with an alternative tradition that she traces back to a central figure in NLAC, Argentine Fernando Birri, and his understudied comedy *Los inundados* (1961) [Flooded Out].^{xii} Rich cites, in particular, Birri's movement between documentary and fiction, but also the amalgamation of "humor" and "exposé" in this largely neglected film ("An/Other" 280). Yet, Rich's observations prove especially interesting when we consider the insertion in Gómez's *De cierta manera*, only minutes into the film, of footage from Birri's *Tire Dié* (1960) [Toss Me A Dime]. Arguably the foundational work of NLAC, apart from Gutiérrez Alea and García Espinosa's important precursor *El Mégano* (1954), *Tire Dié's* premier in 1960, two years after its completion in 1958, is virtually contemporaneous with the Cuban Revolution. The footage represents children running alongside a train in Santa Fe, Argentina imploring its passengers for coins with desperate outstretched hands. The fragment included in *De cierta manera* lasts mere

seconds; it accentuates Birri's iconic high angle shot, ending with a yearning close-up of a small boy's face, seemingly rendering him powerless, as seen from the moving train above.

The *Tire dié* footage in *De cierta manera* is significantly overlaid by a masculine voiceover.^{xiii} The fragment places *De cierta manera* in a tradition that makes its debt to NLAC explicit. It also locates Gómez's film within a political and conceptual platform—the anti-imperialist, anticolonial project of the 1960s, filtered through varying strands of realism—still dominant at the time in Latin America. This gesture further distances Gómez from the visual experimentation of feminist filmmakers in Europe, such as Duras, among others. However, the editing of *De cierta manera* establishes the anti-imperialist project encapsulated in *Tire dié* as unfinished, and, by extension, likewise highlights the incomplete nature of the Cuban Revolution's own reforms.

Be that as it may, the editing of Gómez's *De cierta manera* has been highly disputed due to Gómez's premature death and Alea and Espinosa's completion of the film's post-production (Martínez-Echazábal 194-5). Through editorial agency are Alea and García Espinosa re-absorbing Gómez's work within a patriarchal tradition, secreting the “father” of NLAC almost surreptitiously into the film's visual narrative? Or, is this Gómez positioning herself within this same tradition, yet inflecting Rich's “pantheon” with her difference as an Afro-Cuban woman and filmmaker?^{xiv} Against the backdrop of the patriarchal order of the first decades of the ICAIC, it perhaps coheres that Gómez would open her film with a display of masculine cinematic authority and tradition—whether interpreted as a privileged site of critique or, alternatively, as an authorizing discourse—rather than with a reference feminine authorship. In a sense, *De cierta manera*'s narrative makes a similar conceptual move in the centrality of the film's male protagonist, Mario, in relation to the film's critical position regarding gender, even as Gómez's work calls attention to the constructed nature of social codes in a way that is unusual for the period.

Figure 1. Archivo: Cinemateca de Cuba

In a bedroom scene, the social game of gender and the performativity of masculinity is revealed. Yolanda, the schoolteacher protagonist, imitates Mario's swagger and gestural language; the scene reduces Mario's social presentation of masculinity to parody. The medium long shot that captures Yolanda breaks with the intimacy of the medium close-up, which opens the scene, giving way to a burlesque theatricality (Figure 1). But it is the subsequent zoom-in that takes us to a close-up of Mario's face (performed by Mario Balmaseda), where his outstated masculinity gives way to a profound vulnerability; it is at this moment that Mario confesses, "Tengo un miedo del carajo" [I'm scared shitless]. Yolanda slowly disappears from the frame, leaving Mario's solitary image in close-up (Figure 2). Rich, and others, have cautioned against reading too much into this scene (Rich, "One Way" 99), which Rich interprets in relation to its comedic dimension, signalling toward the discrete spaces of power and play in the agency of filmmakers occluded by the male, hetero-figures of NLAC. However, in my view, it is here—in the solitude and melancholy of Mario's close-up, his eyes downcast—that one feels Gómez's camera, gaze, and lens with the greatest intensity.

Figure 2. Archivo: Cinemateca de Cuba

Cuban critic Mayté Madruga Hernández, sees this emblematic scene running through Balmaseda's figure as the title character in García Espinosa's *La inútil muerte de mi socio Manolo* (1989) [The Useless Death of My Pal, Manolo] at the close of the 1980s, but also through later films, in which Balmaseda figures. Gesturing toward the charged notion of Guevara's new man, Madruga Hernández argues that "heterosexual masculinity" presupposes the "banishment" of fear [np]. She writes, "The 'fear' that the Balmaseda character feels is not only that he is not up to the task of a social process [...], but also that this [inadequacy] could lead to the dismantling of his masculinity" [np]. Continuing with Rich and Gómez's

feature film, for Mario, masculinity is two-pronged, “there are only two kinds of men: macho or maricon. Only gradually does he begin to admit the possibility of a new middle ground” (Rich “One Way” 99). By way of the figure of *De cierta manera*’s Mario, these binary proposals begin their undoing, clearing the way for less binary visions of the gendered self, something that unfolds in the cinematic representations of future decades.

Gómez and Guillén Landrián, in addition to Alea, in many ways form the most compelling aesthetic bridge from the foundational period of the ICAIC in 1960 to the period’s close in 1989, later carrying us into the third decade of the twenty-first century. This transition is characterized by new visions surrounding collective and national identity, which destabilize the dominant masculine and white subject position at the center of the first years of the cinematic culture of the revolution. Gómez and Guillén Landrián open up new, if equally conflicted, horizons of utopian potential in the following decades; but also reveal entrenched and painful historical continuities that are embedded within the revolution: the lived inheritances of colonial Cuba, slavery, and the plantation. As such, not only do these two filmmakers challenge the revolutionary canon, but their oeuvre also places in question the immaculate break so often figured in 1959. Gómez’ and Guillén Landrián’s films instead stress often uncomfortable continuities, reaching back (and forward) into painful historical legacies and futures. However, the potentiality of these films—alongside others of their generation, such as those of Alea, or even Solás—does not rest simply in their contribution to a new cinematic vision in their attention to melancholy and loss; but rather is contained in the way in which their films gesture toward new modes of being in the world.

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ⁱ I would like to thank Mosa Mpetha for her invitation to participate in a roundtable on Sara Gómez’s *De cierta manera*, newly restored by Arsenal Berlin, at Leeds International Film Festival 2021, which provided an ideal space to develop the ideas contained in this chapter; I am also grateful to Charlotte Gleghorn for her insightful reading of a draft of this chapter.

ⁱⁱ For a problematization and discussion of this period and on the historiographic category of “rupture,” see Mariano Mestman or Laura Podalsky.

ⁱⁱⁱ Problematizing the notion of a revolutionary “beginning” includes work, in particular, by Castillo and Agramonte.

^{iv} Unless otherwise documented, translations are my own. In the case of the above chapter from Borrero’s *La edad de la herejía* (2002), I am employing Podalsky’s oft-cited translation of the essay.

^v In relationship to the male-dominated auteur model, consider the work of Roberto Rossellini or Luchino Visconti. Even so, a straightforward comparison with the emphasis on “individual style” and the “distinct” voice of the European auteur is troubled by broader collective investments in the work of Alea and García Espinosa (Schroeder Rodríguez 2).

^{vi} There are racialized facets to these exclusions: Rodríguez identified as bi-racial, while Hernández, the second husband of Sara Gómez, was Afro-Cuban. Afro-Cuban Talavera was one of the few women working creatively at the ICAIC. Similar phenomena can be identified within Hollywood: the tendency is not exclusively Cuban. Thanks to Eirene Houston for our illuminating conversation on this topic.

^{vii} I am using the term “creative partnership” as defined by Chadwick and de Courtivron.

^{viii} See Castillo's extraordinary interview with Granados. Granados it should be noted was the first Cuban actress (and one of the first Latin American actresses) to be interviewed for the Academy's Visual History Program Collection; here I am making reference to and challenging in some respects Benamou's argument surrounding the "hyper valuation of women as performing artists" in Latin America (259).

^{ix} Thanks to Ruth Goldberg for our conversation on queer revolutionary genealogies.

^x Thanks to Lázaro González González for our email correspondence surrounding the "open secret" of Solás's relationship with Rodríguez. In this regard, it is worth reviewing Rich's discussion of "off-the-record" sexual discourses in Cuba ("Revolution" 159). The ICAIC refused to credit Rodríguez with co-directorship in Solás's *La amada* [Beloved] (1984) (*El cine y la vida*).

^{xi} On this reappraisal of Nicolás Guillén Landrián, see Ramos and Robbins or Gordon-Burroughs. There is a parallel phenomenon, which occurs with the legacy of Sara Gómez, as evidenced Lord, Cumaná, and Fowler Calzada's excellent edited volume.

^{xii} In her pivotal essay cited here, Rich constructs this alternative genealogy within Matilda Landeta's *La negra Angustias* (1949), Birri's *Los inundados*, and Gómez's *De cierta manera* ("An/Other" 280). Guillén Landrián remains unmentioned in Rich's essay, only emphasizing the explosiveness of his reintegration within the Cuban and NLAC canon, adding another layer to a well-worn, and seemingly exhaustively told story.

^{xiii} Rich connects the work of Birri and Gómez through *Los inundados*, but interestingly does not address this insert, which complements, yet, on some level, also complicates her reading that I have cited here when considering the centrality of *Tire dié* within the NLAC canon ("An/Other" 273-297).

^{xiv} I am very grateful to Víctor Fowler Calzada and Sandra del Valle Casals, both experts on Gómez's oeuvre, for their invaluable thoughts on the above point. Fowler, who discovered Gómez's original screenplay, *Residencial Miraflores*, in the ICAIC Archives, is not aware of documentation in relation to the decision-making process surrounding the *Tire Dié* footage (Personal Message).