Carried by the wind. *Llévame en tus brazos* and the Longing for Lost Love

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Julio Bracho started his film director career in a booming period now called the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema (1936-1956). Local industries in Europe and the United States were suffering from scarce resources and a diminishing interest in issues unrelated to the ongoing war. The amount and variety of foreign films available for the Mexican public dwindled. The national industry had been consolidating itself for at least two decades and it was ready to fill the gap. Big studios were founded. People flooded cinemas. A national star system was born. And, in the long run, several directors proved talented and industrious enough to establish an enduring legacy for Mexican culture. Julio Bracho stands out among them.

He belonged to a wealthy family from Durango, a state in northern Mexico. His father owned land and textile companies. They lost their possessions as a result of the Mexican Revolution, which started in 1910, and forced the Bracho family to move to Mexico City, where young Julio first became interested in the theater. Cinema came up naturally. His sister Guadalupe—better known by her stage name, Andrea Palma—had dreamed of being a screen actress and succeeded in starring in an important film in 1934, *La mujer del puerto*. His cousin, Dolores del Río, was already established in Hollywood and had worked with directors like Raoul Walsh and King Vidor before coming back to Mexico in the forties to turn into one of the biggest stars in Mexican cinema. Julio Bracho transitioned from the theatre to cinema with ease. His first film, *¡Ay, qué tiempos, señor don Simón!*, was released in 1941 to roaring success. This early hit allowed him to keep working prolifically through the forties and fifties.

Though several of his films are nowadays considered classics of Mexican cinema, the reception of his work has been uneven or limited among critics. Most of his films have not yet been restored; they aren't commonly exhibited in cinemas for the contemporary Mexican audiences, either. One of the theaters in Mexico's National Cinematheque bears his name, but it would not be an exaggeration to affirm that his legacy is growing increasingly dim. There are several practical and institutional

reasons for this, but now I want to concentrate just on the intellectual ones. Film criticism in Mexico has not been able to offer a positive and complete interpretation of his work.

Jorge Ayala Blanco, the most important Mexican film critic, has been working for more than fifty years in his *Abecedario del cine mexicano*, an ambitious œuvre spanning several volumes that offers a critical history of national cinema since the thirties and up to the present day. The first and most influential volume, *La aventura del cine mexicano*, published back in 1968, deals with the main figures of the Golden Age. There Bracho is presented at best as a second rate director. Ayala Blanco's take on his work is harsh and unenthusiastic. He argues that Bracho made over-intellectualized dainty films that teem with long, lagging character musings and entirely miss the point going awry towards dull sentimentality, excessive pitifulness and a hokey treatment of serious issues. Ayala calls Bracho a "spineless aesthete" (p. 54) and associates him with "infantilism", "a misguided notion of film narration", "metaphysical cloudiness", "pretentious offbeats" and "a sum of mistakes" (pp. 330-331).

There have been more positive opinions on Bracho's films, but none of them actually accounts for his whole body of work. In the last ten years, for example, a burgeoning interest in the noir genre of the Golden Age brought some attention for one of his better known films, *Distinto Amanecer* (1942), which allows that pegging. The other film that recently raised some commentaries is *La sombra del caudillo* (1960). These reappraisals overestimate the value of sociological references in Bracho's work that seem to offer a critical view of Mexican historical circumstances. It is true that at a time when Mexican literature, cinema and art was moored to rural settings[1], Bracho's disenchanted portrait in *Distinto Amanecer* of the city and its cynical, melancholic, middle class characters who languish among murder, betrayal and romance was definitely the harbinger of an upcoming watershed in national sensitivity. It was time to leave behind the naive representations of idyllic rural life and the charming national identity associated to it so we could finally come to terms with

the rough reality of the revolutionary hangover. In *La sombra del caudillo* politicians are crooks, political parties act as petty gangs and military power affirms itself over the rights of law and the ideals of justice. It might be impossible to deny the verisimilitude of those depictions, but to emphasize the descriptive historical value of his settings doesn't explain why Bracho filmed the way he did nor why he decided that some of his most ambitious works would be staged in rural settings, nor why the majority of his films would actually be classified more accurately as romantic melodramas than as noir pieces or historical epics.

Julio Bracho is not an isolated case in this respect. The personal and particular artistic interests present in the work of several Mexican directors of the Golden Age have been commonly overlooked. They tend to be considered as representatives of social and historical trends or forces that express themselves through their work. Ismael Rodríguez, for example, is another staggering case of a filmmaker whose talent for physical comedy, gestural expressionism, witty characterizations, and also for arousing unbridled gusto from the purest forms of melodrama has been preempted by considerations around the supposedly popular and nationalistic concerns shown through his use of stereotypes. One of his most famous films, *Los tres García* (1947), has been thought of as an example of how chauvinism and folklore grant him a playful humor, but nothing more. It is evident that in his films we definitely find an idea—fabricated and unreal, if you wish—of Mexico, which might be representative of what some people wanted Mexico to be. It might be the case that his films somehow captured what national imagination had concocted in order to give itself some sense of identity, but that is secondary to the concrete elements that make up his films.

In *Los tres García*, three cousins who lived in a picturesque small town compete for the love of Lupita—who is also her cousin, although from an estranged branch of the family. Each of them has a chance to get close to her, but she doesn't settle for any one of them right away. The men grow anxious and in the

denouement of the film they independently arrive unannounced to her garden to sing her mariachi songs and convince her to choose one of them. Of course she doesn't see the courtship as a fierce competition of manliness and charm at the end of which one of the cousins will necessarily be the triumphant winner of her love, but somehow they deduce it had to be this way. They are ridiculous men, prone to engage in bravado attitudes and cocksure bursts of pride. They expect Lupita to appear, after the songs, to say the name of the chosen one, but instead their saucy granny, played by the marvelous Sara García, sticks out of the balcony to spurn them and tell them that Lupita has left town, as she was fed up with their stupidity—although in a melancholic and sympathetic kind of way. The three cousins are brimming with the constant rivalry and bitterness that have grown between them, so they decide that it is impossible to postpone the definitive match. They draw their guns. The granny is also sick of her grandsons' contentiousness and ironically—or not —tells them to shoot each other and give her a rest. They are incapable of doing so, and they toss the guns to the ground. What follows is a fist fight of the first order. As they throw punches at each other, their granny is exultant. She thanks god that the boys didn't kill each other and looks at them with fondness, since the clumsy skirmish reminds her of their innocent childhood brawls. Things escalate when the cousins start throwing flower pots at each other. Seeing her plants destroyed, their granny grows angry and comes down from the balcony. She hits them with her stick and calls them "savages", "feral dogs" and "vultures", and demands them to learn to fight as "decent human beings". She manages to stop the flower-pot-throwing and nods approvingly when the men continue the struggle with their bare hands. She gets pushed by accident and ragingly stands back and sits on a nearby chair to, as she says, "See the bullfight from behind the fence". As she lights a cigar, two of the cousins throw themselves into the fountain. The third one laughs hysterically. He gets knocked out. Granny wakes him up and reinserts him in the fight. They wear themselves out and end up mingling in a sloppy

clinch. Granny pleads eagerly for that to be the last fight among the cousins, but they don't stop. One begins to wonder if these grown up men will ever finish venting out when some guy runs into the scene to communicate that bandits have set fire to a friend's house. They trudge there to help.

If we were convinced by the claim that the most notorious attribute of Ismael Rodríguez's cinema is its nationalistic popular magnetism, we would have to affirm that a scene like the one described before is appealing because it is very Mexican. And of course its shamelessly black humor mixed with chaotic vim and unabashed paroxysm might be the perfect expression of some local, untranslatable ardor—i. e., *relajo*, as we call it—but the physical comedy of Rodríguez is not appealing because it aims at the kernel of Mexican national identity, but rather because it is grounded in an artful and seamless concatenation of bearings, quips and gestures that coalesce into a situation whose intensity is as slick and brisk as a gag, yet it develops for the whole duration of a scene. He didn't pursue any kind of dramatic sophistication—the characters' psychology is too simple to be of remark. What pulls together a scene like the one described before is Rodríguez's ability to define precisely what each situation demands from the characters. He doesn't build up a scene starting from the individual character interests, thoughts or passions and then deriving consequences that bring forth a meaningful change that affects the whole progress of the film. The opposite takes place. Rodríguez always introduces the general view of a situation and then details it. This allows him to subject his characters completely to the tone and nature of each situation. If it is a sad one, they will weep and wail and express the saddest condition imaginable. If it is a festive one, they will enjoy it boundlessly. If it is absurd and farcical, they will start throwing flower pots at each other. Rodríguez's ability to produce first impressions that fully convey the nature of a situation is a pure manifestation of his intuitive talent for the coup d'œil, the iconic and the emblematic. If his films often feel as a threaded set of vignettes, it is because the greater picture in each scene is not

abandoned until another one takes its place. There aren't any ambiguities nor vagueness at the interior of his films. This means that we will hardly find any kind of lyrical or subjective point of view in his œuvre. His style allows for inventiveness in emphasis and overstatement, but closes its doors to the contradictions of the mind's interiority. If we could find in his work any form of predisposition to what is popular or collective, that would be it. How could this be stereotypically Mexican? Rodríguez undoubtedly makes the most of figures and rhetoric that populate Mexican folklore, but his work is not a mere repetition of national stereotypes. The clarity and delight with which these shine through in his films are not the result of just pointing out to them. They are shaped through the artist's talent and style.

We could find in the greatest directors of the Golden Age more cases similar to Rodríguez's. Alejandro Galindo, Roberto Gavaldón or Emilio "El Indio" Fernández, just to mention the better known ones, were filmmakers whose artistic merits go well beyond the natural fact of belonging to a historical time and place, but in criticism the discourse that assigns them the function of illustrating social trends of their epoch has prevailed. Also, most commentaries on the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema run the gamut of important films and filmmakers, but rarely concentrate on just one element in the work of a director. This has contributed to disregard the details that constitute the precise content of cinematic style.

Julio Bracho is a perfect example of this. The plot and themes of his films adjust perfectly to what was common ground among screenwriters, directors, novelists and intellectuals of his era—the distrust of military and political leaders, for example, had already been expressed with crudity in a film from 1936, *Vámonos con Pancho Villa*, directed by Fernando de Fuentes—and recalls the literary work of José Revueltas, Martín Luis Guzmán, Mariano Azuela, Agustín Yañez or Rafael F. Muñoz. What distinguishes Bracho is a particular way of showing the range of intense emotions that populated the hyperbolic plots of classical Mexican melodramas. He had

a flair for transforming over the top characterizations into a deep sense of the ambiguities that roil the hearts of people who expect great things from life and get instead shadowy, meager results. His aim, though socially informed, was not to represent the moral, political or class conflicts of post-revolutionary Mexico. His means, though aspiring and refined, were not the gabble of a mannerist. He was concerned with showing a carefully and concisely wrought form of longing, the longing that usually captivates his protagonists' internal vitality. By doing so, he illuminated what lies behind the fierce, passionate expressions of feeling, ordinary to Mexican melodramas—the sharp awareness of individual helplessness, the confusion and the gnawing anguish that strike at those who dare to imagine something more perfect than the quotidian miseries of life.

In Bracho's work, longing is the characters' main driving force. And in exchange for displaying that daring intensity of desire, he demands from the audience more than just sympathetic catharsis or an affectionate impression. Julio Bracho filmed longing in a way that dissolved the exterior and most palpable aspects of drama—the gestures, the hustle, the fidgets and the shouting—into the feeling of subjective experience. He articulated cinematic time to fit the internal bustling of the soul. His interest was not, though, merely psychological, because that subjective experience is not relegated to some sort of abstract interiority, but felt throughout the development of a scene in the rhythm of its duration and in the conspicuous associations of montage. By doing so, we get not an explanation of the character's internal motives nor a portrait of its psychological type, but the pleasure of admitting that we are powerless creatures at the mercy of destiny.

Characters in his films live in a present condition that only brings them distress and the lack of what they most desire—a loved one or the realization of an ideal, usually. The distance between what they have and what they want is not closed by means of action, since it is the case that there are bigger forces at work which simply would not allow it. Characters are impotent, but they do not resign themselves to passivity or laying

down their passions, either. Instead, they consume that desire in bouts of waiting and anticipation in which they fully experience the intense uncertainty of love and dreams. No matter what they do or say, the object of desire doesn't materialize itself as the result of one's will. It may come up suddenly or it may be absent forever. It is up to destiny. Or maybe it is just luck. Who knows? The only real fact is one's unfulfilled desire that outpours and twists the objective limits of reality—physical, but also social and political. In its most radical sense, that subversive energy is not an affirmation of the self but its exact opposite—it acknowledges the fundamental contingency of one's craving for love, beauty and justice. Being in danger of derailment, great passions of the soul become not only more valuable, as they uplift those cravings against the omnipresent squalor of society, but also more pleasurable—only through them can we enjoy what currently is not at hand. The excess towards which Mexican melodramas tended is filtered through Bracho's understanding of desire's becoming more vital than a mere motive for action or an intense expression of feeling. Desire is almost an existential condition that transcends any present limitation and merges fantasy with reality.

The best example to showcase all this is the film *Llévame en tus brazos* (1954), since there we can observe how Bracho's formal handling of basic elements of cinema go past genre conventions and achieve something far more dazzling than what most of his contemporaries were capable of. By doing so, some of the characteristic traits of Bracho's style disclose themselves as being more meaningful than what critics have said about his interest in psychological drifting, nuanced emotions and sour morals.

Llévame en tus brazos deals with Rita, a young, poor and beautiful fisherman's daughter who lives in a small coastal town of Veracruz, an eastern Mexican state. She is played by Ninón Sevilla, mostly known for her parts as a showgirl in a genre that thrived in the forties and fifties: the *rumbera* film. These were sordid melodramas that took place around the decadent cabarets where female stars worked dancing, shaking and leaping throughout sumptuous musical numbers. In *Llévame*

en tus brazos, Rita iterates the formula of the inexperienced but earnest young girl who exchanges her respectability for fame, money and powerful lovers, forced to it by the trying circumstances of her life—a common pattern in *rumbera* films, where it is generally true that women are presented as exemplary wives, self-sacrificing mothers and obedient daughters or as mesmerizing showgirls wagging their hips in front of the horny urban rabble, there is no midpoint. Nevertheless, this film has notable peculiarities. Ninón Sevilla certainly dances with grace here too, but the eroticism associated with that spectacle doesn't embody the energy of drooling fascination that piques the genre in so many other cases. There are only two dance sequences, and in both a character's situation softly imposes itself over the immediate display of bewitching moves. In many other *rumbera* films, the musical numbers seem to be glued over the natural development of the drama. Here it is not the case. In the first musical number, Rita debuts at the stage of a small establishment. She offers an outstanding show, but the framing of the scene feels rather restrained. Bracho uses only four kinds of shots at three different distances—a wide shot from the back of the hall, a full shot of her dancing, a close-up and an insert of her legs. The only movements of the camera are a brief dolly that goes towards her when she enters the stage and some quick pans that follow her steps. The frontal point of view of these shots keeps some distance from her evident enthusiasm. The insert of her legs is particularly strange, because it doesn't feel organic to the rest of the scene, which follows her body movements as a whole. It feels rather as the gaze of a peeping tom—an extraneous, lusty observer. And that is the case. The previous scene has shown us an important politician, don Gregorio, becoming attracted to Rita after seeing her on the dance floor of another nightclub. We infer that he followed her to work after that encounter, because at the end of her show he is waiting for her behind the stage curtains. He offers Rita fame and fortune as an actress in exchange for—implicitly—corresponding to his affections. The musical number was indeed the materialization of Gregorio's desire.

That becomes quite clear when we compare the first musical number with the second one. Rita has accepted Gregorio's offer and is shooting a scene in the iconic Estudios Churubusco of Mexico City. The movie is a musical comedy set in some picturesque port. The scenery looks very similar to Rita's native town. This musical number is lusher than the first one. There are many dancers around Rita who perform a counterpoint to her moves. The development of the piece adds notable variations of rhythm and tone. The exuberance, typical of tropical rhythms, brings forth high spirits, but a recurrent ritornello in the melody adds a downbeat side to the whole piece. Most of it is presented in full shots that follow Rita through the stage. And just as in the first musical number, there are some eye-catching inserts that channel the subjective point of view of some character. In this case, it is Rita whose emotions are projected onto the screen. She has just accepted Gregorio's proposition in the previous scene. Of course she doesn't love him and feels no attraction towards him either. She is not overambitious—money and power do not seduce her. Accepting his proposal seemed the easiest thing to do. He is not cruel nor inconsiderate and is willing to spend a lot of money on her. Rita believes she has forever lost the man she truly loves, so it doesn't matter if she spends time with somebody else. But even if her new position as a promising young actress and as the mistress of a powerful politician is not bad, it is unsatisfactory. She is away from her family and what she most desires: the love of a handsome, honest man who now despises her, seems unreachable. Her present success is intertwined with a profound sense of loss, and that ambivalence is expressed through the whole musical number and, more specifically, through the inserts of sails being moved by the wind at the back of the scenery. These are just decorative elements that would be easily ignored if Bracho had not put it right at the center of our attention. As if its centrality was not strange enough, they wave without the help of any noticeable artificial source of wind, which would be necessary in an indoors film studio. The waving sails convey a ghostly mood to the scene. It doesn't look like Rita is working. Nobody misses

the mark and forces the crew to start filming the scene all over again. It doesn't matter what is actually happening in the plot; the scene fleshes out Rita's emotions at that moment of her life. The waving sails are not just a prop that adds realism to the film studio, but a reminder of what she yearns for the most and is now absent. *Llévame en tus brazos* begins at the Veracruz shoreline. Rita runs towards the sea to help some fishermen who have caught a shark. Then she meets José, her boyfriend. They talk about the future. José is disheartened because he recently lost his job at the local sugar cane mill and now he doesn't earn enough money to marry her. Rita insists that money is not a problem because she is in love with him and that is plenty enough. At that moment, they are interrupted by a man passing by on his horse, singing: "Yo me enamoré del viento, del viento me enamoré. / Como mi amor era el viento, en el viento me quedé. / Mal no es esto lo que siento, sino que mi amor se fue" ("I fell in love with the wind, with the wind I fell in love. / Wind was my love, so I was carried away. / What I feel is not wrong, but wrong is that my love is now gone"). The sails at the movie studio take us back to that precise moment. Enjoying stardom in Mexico City and being provided by a powerful man should be the highest point in Rita's life, but it rather strikes us as the nadir of her fortune. She has never been farther away from home, that idyllic place where love inspired her enough confidence to believe she would be with José forever, regardless of the problems that the lack of money could bring. By the use of simple insert shots and music, Bracho creates a time-fold that erodes the present lived by Rita and infuses it with the melancholic memories that mingle in her heart.

Rita's longing doesn't just look back to the past. It nurtures anticipation. Immediately after the second musical number, Gregorio and Rita host a dinner party in their apartment. Gregorio is lobbying his candidacy as the next governor of Veracruz. He is holding a meeting with some union leaders of the state. He wants them to support him in the upcoming congress of worker's unions. One of them happens to be José, who is now a political representative of the fishing sector. The unplanned

encounter opens a door that Rita had thought forever sealed. After vowing eternal love on the beach that day so long ago, the forces of life separated them. Pedro, Rita's father, owed a lot of money to Antonio, a wealthy businessman, who decided to reclaim the money knowing that Pedro could not pay it. His plan was to convince Pedro of allowing one of his daughters to live and work in Antonio's country estate until the debt was paid off. By means of that unsupervised proximity, Antonio devised that he could take advantage of the girl. After hearing how Antonio threatens Pedro with seizing his boat—without which it was impossible for him to earn money for his family—Rita decides to willingly accompany him back to his estate, without knowing his true intentions. She departs without telling her father or José. The day she arrives there, Antonio is throwing a party for Gregorio, who is touring the state to gather support from local businessmen for his campaign. José, who is involved with the union that represents the employees of Antonio, is also there. He accidentally listens to Antonio talking to Gregorio about Rita as if she was his mistress already. That convinces him that Rita left him for a wealthier man. When they find each other in the middle of the celebration, Rita only sees spite in his eyes. He walks away and she tries to stop him. José calls her a liar and says with contempt that it is better he found out sooner than later the kind of woman she really is. Rita tries to hold him between her arms but José throws her to the floor in anger.

Rita leaves the country estate some time after, because Antonio dies from a heart attack. She returns to her family house and looks for José at the beach. She finds him and tries to explain what really happened but his wounded pride has built up an impenetrable wall between the two. He doesn't even bother to say a word to her. Rita begs him to listen but José just ignores her and prepares his boat to sail off. Desperate, Rita bemoans that if he is not capable of granting her an opportunity to make things clear, she will just go away and they will never see each other again. Before she has finished talking, José already rows into the ocean. When they are introduced by Gregorio in the apartment—

he is unaware of their past relationship—it is evident that their situation has not essentially changed. She is still in love with him. He broods.

Gregorio has to travel to Veracruz to participate in an important political meeting. He is working in alliance with José and other union leaders to get the full support of the state's workers. His opponents are preparing a move that will expose him as a fraud in an important assembly. He has to act quickly to counteract the ploy. He travels to Veracruz to find out as soon as possible some vital information and then has to secretly communicate by phone to José in Mexico City, so he can take proper action. Gregorio phones Rita and orders her to contact José and to instruct him to stay that same night in her apartment to wait for his call, so that nobody will know that José was contacted by Gregorio. He is not sure at what time he will phone, but it will be at some point before one o'clock in the morning. Rita summons José four hours before that limit. Her plan is to get him back in the time they have to spend together in the apartment waiting for the call.

Rita puts a black dress on and plays some music in the phonograph before his arrival. The first thing José does after crossing the door is to turn off the music. She asks him if he doesn't like music and José answers that he just turned it off by impulse, without thinking, and offers to turn it on again. They sit down and drink some cocktails. The tension is palpable. They have dinner in complete silence. They go back to the living room. She lights him a cigarette. While José smokes, Rita stares at him with tenderness, laid down on the sofa. She asks what he will do after speaking with Gregorio through the phone. José hurls a cocky reply stating the he will just leave because there is nothing else keeping him there. As the time runs out, Rita grows fretful. She fears that the call is not coming, so José might think she just blatantly lied to seduce him. At some point she breaks down and cries, but José refuses to comfort her.

It's almost one o'clock. Rita is not crying anymore. She stands next to a window looking at something that seems

to be far away. José is still smoking. He looks at the clock and then at Rita. She doesn't pay attention to him anymore. She has resigned herself to loose him again and is entirely absorbed by her inner thoughts. Her countenance is serene and dreadful at the same time. The wind passes through the window. The curtains wave around Rita as the terrible hour comes to meet her. The clock rings one o'clock in the morning. José stands up and says goodbye to her. He is not angry. Before leaving, he gently says that he doesn't think badly of her.

Rita lays down on the sofa, defeated, crying beside the silent phone, which rings eventually. The next morning, she leaves Gregorio and goes back home. In a little house near the sea, her father and sister are awaiting her. She walks along the shore. Ahead is José talking with some fishermen. They notice each other. After a brief look, she keeps walking as he starts doing the same. They embrace and kiss.

The last sequence of the film puzzles on sight because it is not clear at all why José changes his mind about Rita. It is also surprising that Rita decides to leave Gregorio. She doesn't have any sign from José that indicates he wants to be with her. Something has changed inside both of them but we never get any definite expression of it. The wait in the apartment is the exact opposite of any form of development. Instead of confronting each other or talking out their resentments, they just let the hours go by. What slowly emerges from that protracted encounter is the vague sense of loss and melancholy that haunts Rita throughout the film since its beginning at the beach, in the song the horseman sang, which reappears at several moments, most noticeably in the second musical number. Against this song, Rita is powerless. The best she can do is to surrender completely to it when everything else falls apart, as she does when she remains staring out the window, consuming herself in speechless emotion. In that instant, her desire is all she has left, it is the only thing that cannot be taken away from her. Rita has lost her family, her dignity, her freedom, her loved one, but the vague, formless desire remains. For what does she long while

staring out the window, surrounded by the waving curtains? She is just being carried by the wind, which is also love or hope or a phantasmagoric dream that could evaporate unexpectedly and disappear forever.

Llévame en tus brazos is about the fragility of love—the tragic possibility of its ending, which announces itself right from the start and which is a necessary risk to undertake if we want to fully feel and comprehend what longing means. Unless what we want is indeed outside our ability to fulfill expectations safely, we will never grasp what yearning actually implies—the pain, the grief, the hazard, the delight, the solitude, the sadness and the satisfaction. Up to the last moment of the film, Rita might never find what she is looking for. Her existence is a trembling leaf whirling away in restless tempest. At last, by some miraculous force which we might never get hold of entirely, she is released into José's arms as if nothing had happened. Exactly as in the beginning, they hold each other tight, but now they have experienced the unwieldiness of love and the dangers of longing for perfect passion in the midst of an imperfect world.

Among the most talented film directors that Mexico has fostered, only Julio Bracho has created such a deep and moving portrait of the uncertainties of desire. His films endure up to the present day as thin silver threads stretched through the dusky labyrinth of the heart.

[1] Albeit, for good reasons—in the first half of the past century, most of the population lived in the countryside and the national imagination was still captivated by the Mexican Revolution, which was upheld by peasants against rural elites.