

Resources on Mexican Silent Cinema

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WORKS

Drew, William M., and Esperanza Vázquez Bernal. "El Puño de Hierro: A Mexican Silent Film Classic." *Journal of Film Preservation* 10, no. 66 (2003): 10–22.

The essay examines two rare examples of surviving Mexican feature films from the 1920s—*El puño de hierro* (The Iron Fist) and *El tren fantasma* (The Ghost Train), produced in the city of Orizaba in the state of Veracruz—and the life of their director, Gabriel García Moreno, who also worked in the film business in Mexico City and in Hollywood. The authors stress how the films combine the appeal of nonfiction views rooted in the local context with narrative conventions that circulated internationally (particularly those of US adventure serials).

Fullerton, John. *Picturing Mexico: From the Camera Lucida to Film*. New Barnet, UK: John Libbey, 2014.

This large-format, abundantly illustrated book examines pre- and protocinematic forms of visual culture in Mexico between 1830 and 1910. Much of *Picturing Mexico* focuses on the painted panoramas and illustrated travel narratives produced by explorers Frederick Catherwood and John Lloyd Stephens before and after visits to Mayan archaeological sites in Mexico and Central America, while a final chapter traces a broader history of picturesque imagery in Mexican lithographs, photography, early film, and the illustrated press.

García Blizzard, Mónica. "Whiteness and the Ideal of Modern Mexican Citizenship in *Tepeyac* (1917)." *Vivomatografías* 1, no. 1 (2015).

This essay examines how *Tepeyac*, a rare surviving Mexican fiction film of the 1910s, presents the ideal modern Mexican citizen as white and upper class, even as it narrates a foundational national myth of racial and religious mixture. The film recounts the apparition of Mexico's patron saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe, to a young indigenous man during the colonial period, incorporating a modern frame story in which prayers to the Virgin help a young, upper-class

couple weather their separation when one of them takes a dangerous voyage to war-torn Europe. García Blizzard highlights moments in the film that signal its ideological contradictions, such as the couple's visit to the basilica of the Virgin, where the light-skinned leads mingle with an ethnically diverse crowd of nonactors.

García Rodríguez, Irene. "Mimí Derba and Azteca Films: The Rise of Nationalism and the First Mexican Woman Filmmaker." In *Women, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Latin America*, edited by Natividad Gutiérrez Chong, 170–94. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007.

Grounded in an examination of newspaper accounts, this essay examines stage actress Mimí Derba's work both behind and in front of the cameras in the Azteca Films Company, which produced several of Mexico City's earliest feature films. The piece includes detailed discussion of the films' critical reception.

Gunckel, Colin. *Mexico on Main Street: Transnational Film Culture in Los Angeles before World War II*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015.

In this monograph, Gunckel presents a thoroughly researched account of Mexican moviegoing in Los Angeles before World War II. Using a range of primary sources, including newspaper accounts and advertising, Gunckel explores the tension between mass culture and emerging postrevolutionary Mexican nationalism that characterized the migrant Mexican community in Los Angeles during this period. Gunckel shows how migrants actively engaged filmic texts and the extratextual spaces of the film industry, which included local movie theaters, the Spanish-language press, and Hollywood's back lots. The book includes a chapter that focuses specifically on the *comedia ranchera* as an intermedial, transnational genre.

López, Ana M. "Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America." *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 1 (2000): 48–78.

This foundational essay surveys the introduction and development of cinema in Latin America. The essay's comparative approach identifies shared forms and thematic preoccupations including local views, representations of national identity, and early documentary appeals to cinematic objectivity. Based on careful research in secondary sources from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile, López posits that early Latin American cinema reflected global trends and regional iterations of an incipient modernity.

Navitski, Rielle. "Spectacles of Violence and Politics: *El automóvil gris* (1919) and Revolutionary Mexico's Sensational Visual Culture." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 23, no. 2 (2014): 133–52.

Using close readings of the surviving version of the film alongside research in print sources, this essay contextualizes the 1919 serial film *El automóvil gris* in Mexican visual culture of the period. The author proposes that the film uses sensational depictions of urban crime, both fictional and nonfictional, to address the crisis of political legitimacy engendered by the revolution. In the case of *El automóvil*, this sensationalism is used to "reassert" the distinction between legitimate state violence and crime. The author notes that the film draws on European and American crime serials, but also on visual depictions of urban space and crime.

Orellana, Margarita de. *Filming Pancho: How Hollywood Shaped the Mexican Revolution*. Translated by John King. New York: Verso, 2009.

In a compact volume, Orellana comprehensively surveys American film coverage, both documentary and fictional, of the Mexican Revolution. Orellana argues that these films reflected aspects of American society, most notably racism against Mexicans, rather than Mexican reality. The author focuses on depictions of specific historical events, revolutionary general Francisco "Pancho" Villa, depictions of US military preparedness on the border, General Pershing's punitive expedition, and stereotypical characters including the greaser, bandido, and beautiful señorita. The volume features a filmography of both fiction and nonfiction films about the revolution produced by American film companies between 1911 and 1917.

Pick, Zuzana M. *Constructing the Image of the Mexican Revolution*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.

Pick's award-winning monograph analyzes cinema's role in producing a "collective memory" of the revolution. Though much of the book deals with films produced after the introduction of sound, the first two chapters deal in depth with material from the silent period. The first takes up the nonfiction films produced during the revolution, composed of footage assembled to support specific political points of view. Using textual analysis of sequences that have been preserved in the form of compilation films produced well after the revolution, she argues that these films produced the revolution as a "visual event" and that their multiple meanings were later directed and shaped by official discourse. The second chapter takes up cinematic representations of Pancho Villa through two contemporary films, one fictional and one nonfictional, that use archival material to craft distinct modes of historiography. This chapter also offers a

reading of the compilation film *La venganza de Pancho Villa* (The Revenge of Pancho Villa, ca. 1930).

Ramírez Berg, Charles. “El automóvil gris and the Advent of Mexican Classicism.” In *Visible Nations: Latin American Film and Video*, edited by Chon Noriega, 3–32. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

This essay examines the 1919 serial film *El automóvil gris* (The Grey Automobile), which survives in a shortened version with an added soundtrack. Identifying a range of cinematic points of reference for the film—including Italian historical epics and French crime serials—Ramírez Berg takes the narrative and visual logic of classical Hollywood cinema as the norm, arguing that *El automóvil gris* achieves a Mexican classicism while setting aside the question of how local conditions might have given rise to configurations of narrative and style that exceed or challenge the classical.

Reyes, Aurelio de los. “Gabriel Veyre and Fernand Bon Bernard, Representatives of the Lumière Brothers in Mexico.” Translated by Diana Norton. In *Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America, 1896–1960*, edited by Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017.

The essay provides an account of the earliest exhibitions of the Lumière Cinématographe in Mexico City—including an initial screening for President Porfirio Díaz—as well as the filming of the earliest local views. Reyes draws on press records, catalogs of Lumière films, and Veyre’s letters to his mother (translated into Spanish and published by Reyes as *Gabriel Veyre, representante de Lumière: Cartas a su madre*; see section on anthologies of primary sources).

———. “The Silent Cinema.” In *Mexican Cinema*, edited by Paulo Antonio Paranaguá, 63–78. London: British Film Institute, 1995.

Presenting key points from Reyes’s three-volume *Cine y sociedad en México, 1896–1930* in condensed form, this piece charts the emergence and growth of film exhibition, distribution, and production in Mexico during the silent era. It provides detailed information about itinerant exhibitors, camera operators, film venues, and censorship, contextualizing these developments in the light of profound social and political transformations in the period.

Rocha, Gregorio. “La venganza de Pancho Villa (The Vengeance of Pancho Villa): A Lost and Found Border Film.” *Journal of Film Preservation* 65 (2003): 24–29.

Filmmaker Gregorio Rocha recounts how his search for a unique cross-border coproduction shot during the revolution—Mutual’s *The Life of General Villa*,

which combined actuality footage of Villa with staged scenes in which Raoul Walsh played the general—led to the discovery and preservation of *La venganza de Pancho Villa*, a compilation film produced by Edmundo and Félix Padilla, itinerant exhibitors active in the El Paso-Ciudad Juárez region of the US-Mexico borderlands.

Schroeder-Rodríguez, Paul A. “Latin American Silent Cinema: Triangulation and the Politics of Criollo Aesthetics.” *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 3 (2008): 33–57.

This essay argues for an explicitly comparative approach to Latin American silent film. The author offers the concept of triangulation, which he defines as the position of Latin American cultural production in relationship to that of Europe and the United States, as a concept that can illuminate Latin American film production more broadly, but especially that of the silent period. The term “criollo aesthetic” is mobilized within this framework to characterize films that the author argues are “metropolitan” in their visual and narrative structure but local, regional, or national in their thematic preoccupations, characters, and “atmosphere.” The essay is divided into sections developing these two concepts, a broad overview of silent film in Latin America during this period and close readings of select films, including *El automóvil gris* (1919) and *Tepeyac* (1917). Central to the essay’s argument, and ripe for more nuanced treatment, is the assertion of Latin American marginality vis-à-vis Europe and the United States.

Serna, Laura Isabel. “‘As a Mexican I Feel It’s My Duty’: Citizenship, Censorship, and the Campaign against Derogatory Films in Mexico, 1922–1930.” *Americas* 63, no. 2 (2006): 225–44.

Drawing on the correspondence files of the Mexican diplomatic corps, this article provides fresh insights on the range of Mexican spectators’ and film industry workers’ positions regarding a high-profile incident in the often tumultuous history of Hollywood studios’ relationship with Mexican audiences: a 1922 boycott declared by the Mexican government, which blocked the entire output of production companies that made films viewed as derogatory to Mexico.

———. “*La venganza de Pancho Villa: Resistance and Repetition.*” *Aztlán* 37, no. 2 (2012): 11–42.

Serna examines the multiple versions of Edmundo and Félix Padilla’s compilation film *La venganza de Pancho Villa* as embodying a borderlands film culture that exceeds the cinematic traditions of both Mexico and the United States. Repurposing sequences from films with strong anti-Mexican bias, such as the 1916 serial *Liberty, A Daughter of the USA*, *La venganza* contests both Hollywood’s

racialized system of representation and dominant narratives of the revolution, while reinscribing masculinist ideologies.

———. *Making Cinelandia: American Films and Mexican Film Culture before the Golden Age*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

Building on scholarship that reevaluates the notion of national cinema, this study of Mexican film culture in the postrevolutionary period shifts its attention away from domestic film production (whose impact was often limited), toward the dynamics of distribution, exhibition, and public discourse on cinema. Serna argues that the market dominance of US cinema in the 1920s cannot be considered solely an agent of cultural imperialism, but rather functioned as a point of departure for novel experiences of—and debates regarding—what it meant to be both Mexican and modern. Drawing on exhaustive research in US and Mexican archives, the book traces the history of Hollywood’s presence in Mexico, from a calculated expansion after the revolution to the diplomatic crisis provoked by so-called denigrating films, as well as experiences of moviegoing and fan culture that spanned the US-Mexico border (whether in imagination or in reality, as in the case of Mexican migrant audiences and would-be stars who flocked to Los Angeles).

———. “Translations and Transportation: Toward a Transnational History of the Intertitle.” In *Silent Cinema and the Politics of Space*, edited by Jennifer M. Bean, Anupama Kapse, and Laura Horak, 121–46. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Taking the circulation of silent films between the United States and Mexico as a case study and drawing on press discourses and Hollywood studio policies, this essay discusses how the translation of intertitles, far from attesting to film’s ability to function as a universal language of images, exemplifies how meaning is created—or obscured—within processes of cultural exchange rooted in locally specific contexts.

REFERENCE WORKS

Amador, María Luisa, and Jorge Ayala Blanco. *Cartelera cinematográfica, 1912–1919*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2009.

———, and ———. *Cartelera cinematográfica, 1920–1929*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999.

Based on painstaking research in press sources, these volumes are part of a series of reference works documenting the advertised premieres of feature films in Mexico City from the 1910s through the 1980s. Listed chronologically by screening date, the films are also indexed by title and categorized by nationality.

Statistics on exhibition and a list of film venues and admission prices are also included.

Dávalos Orozco, Federico, and Esperanza Vázquez Bernal. *Filmografía general del cine mexicano, 1906–1931*. Puebla, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1985.

This filmography focuses on feature-length (60 minutes) and medium-length films (defined as over 40 minutes but shorter than an hour), providing technical information, synopses, and notes relaying supplemental information about, for example, production details, published reviews, or details of marketing and publicity. A brief historical survey of film exhibition and production in Mexico during this period precedes the entries, which constitute the bulk of the text. A sprinkling of images of advertisements, film stills, and photographs supplement the text. While the book features indices arranged by film and director as well as a useful bibliography of secondary sources on Mexican silent film published between 1927 and 1982, the entries themselves lack specific source information.

Jablonska, Aleksandra, and Juan Felipe Leal. *La Revolución mexicana en el cine nacional: Filmografía, 1911–1917*. Mexico City: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 1991.

This filmography gathers together documentation of the revolutionary-compilation films created by camera operators who shot, acquired, reedited, and exhibited footage documenting current events. Organized in chronological order, the entries provide lists of tableaux and excerpts from advertisements and press accounts discussing the films; an index of titles and list of press sources is also provided.

Leal, Juan Felipe. *El documental nacional de la Revolución mexicana: Filmografía, 1910–1914*. Mexico City: Juan Pablos/Voyeur, 2012.

———. ***El documental nacional de la Revolución mexicana: Filmografía, 1915–1921*. Mexico City: Juan Pablos/Voyeur, 2012.**

These two volumes expand on the research presented in Leal and Jablonska's *La Revolución mexicana en el cine nacional*, incorporating images of handbills and advertisements as well as stills corresponding to the content of the original films. (The precise provenance of these images cannot be verified; due in part to the continual reworking and reuse of revolutionary-era actuality footage during and after the conflict, the compilation films do not survive in their original form.) Films are indexed by title, camera operator, shooting location, and place of exhibition, among other categories.

———, **Eduardo Barraza, and Carlos Flores. *Anales del cine en México, 1895–1908*. 20 vols. Mexico City: Ediciones y Gráficas Eón/Voyeur, 2003–16.**

With seventeen volumes completed and three more scheduled to appear, this series is the most comprehensive examination of cinema during the latter part of the regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911). Each volume covers a significant development in the history of cinema during the period, while the series as a whole focuses on the relationship between cinema and society. Topics range from precinematic technologies, the emergence of dedicated viewing spaces in the capital, the spread of cinema to the provinces, the activities of the earliest cameramen, and the development of cinema entrepreneurship out of itinerant and sporadic practices. Some volumes treat cycles of films—for example, the films made of the Spanish-American War—and their exhibition and reception in Mexico. Richly illustrated with high-quality images, though the precise provenance of the images is hard to discern, each volume includes a list of titles screened that year, complementing the work of Amador and Ayala Blanco (see above).

Ramírez, Gabriel. *Crónica del cine mudo mexicano*. Mexico City: Cineteca Nacional, 1989.¹

This broad, impressionistic survey of the history of silent cinema in Mexico—the author calls it a *recopilación* or summary—draws on the work of Luis Reyes de la Maza, Emilio García Riera, Aurelio de los Reyes, and others to craft an account of Mexican film production during the silent period. Full of colorful anecdotes about the protagonists of national cinema, the book traces the emergence and decline of domestically made feature films, touching on topics such as the documentary films made during the revolution, the popularity of the Italian divas, regional cinematic production, and even failed filmmaking efforts. A brief section reproduces photographs, some of them unique, without attribution. An alphabetical filmography of feature films includes some never completed or screened to the public.

Reyes, Aurelio de los. *Filmografía del cine mudo en México, 1896–1920*. Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986.

———. ***Filmografía del cine mudo mexicano, 1920–1924*. Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1994.**

———. ***Filmografía del cine mudo mexicano, 1925–1931*. Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000.**

These three filmographies provide a chronological guide to fiction and non-fiction films of varying lengths and formats produced in Mexico during the silent era. Opening with brief overviews of the period covered in the volume,

the filmographies are enriched with images of handbills, advertisements, film stills, and photographs. In many cases, plot summaries and/or lists of tableaux are included, although individual press sources are not cited for the information provided, nor is an index of film titles.

Reyes de la Maza, Luis. *Salón Rojo: Programas y crónicas del cine mudo en México*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1968.

This compilation represents one of the earliest interventions in the history of silent cinema in Mexico. Reyes de la Maza presents select accounts of cinema programs and writings on cinema in the Mexican press. Some of these accounts are presented as synopses written by the compiler, others appear with commentary, and still others are direct transcriptions. The material is presented chronologically. However, not every entry is accompanied by source information.

ANTHOLOGIES OF PRIMARY SOURCES

Almoina, Helena. *Notas para la historia del cine en México, 1896–1925*. Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1980.

This two-volume set is the result of extensive research in print sources from the period. The author admits in the introduction that the results are partial, but has endeavored to be comprehensive in seeking out mentions of cinema in general and Mexican cinematic production in particular. Some entries are merely notes registering the appearance of an advertisement, article, or review in the press, while others reproduce the text in full. Helpfully, every entry has the title of the publication the information was drawn from and the date.

González Casanova, Manuel, ed. *El cine que vio Fósforo: Alfonso Reyes y Martín Luis Guzmán*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003.

El cine que vio Fósforo brings together film criticism published under the pseudonym Fósforo (Match) by Martín Luis Guzmán and Alfonso Reyes, two giants of Mexican letters and political life who took up residence in Spain during the revolution. In addition to a critical introduction and a filmography of works cited, the edition includes a detailed comparison of these texts as originally published and as reprinted in later collections of their writings.

———, ed. *Por la pantalla: Génesis de la crítica cinematográfica en México, 1917–1919*. Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000.

This volume reprints the full run of the first regular column dedicated to film in the Mexico City press: the *Por la pantalla* (Onscreen) section published in the

newspaper *El Universal*, along with a critical introduction. Featuring the writings of Rafael Pérez Taylor and Carlos Noriega Hope, two pioneering film critics and public intellectuals of the postrevolutionary period, Por la pantalla address varied aspects of Mexico City film culture in the late 1910s, from efforts at production to the popularity of Italian divas and Hollywood serials, to musical accompaniment for films and the behavior of moviegoers.

Mahieux, Viviane, ed. *Cube Bonifant: Una pequeña marquesa de Sade—Crónicas selectas (1921–1948)*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2009.

This collection brings together selected writings by Cube Bonifant, a rare example of a female journalist active in early twentieth-century Mexico City. Part of the group of intellectuals gathered around the magazine *El Universal Ilustrado*, Bonifant was known for her biting wit. Although the volume does not focus specifically on her extensive work as a film critic, it does incorporate her sardonic reflections on domestic film production, including a brief turn as an actress. The selection of film reviews in the volume privileges key works of early Mexican sound film.

Mario Schneider, Luis, ed. *Jaime Torres Bodet—La cinta de plata*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986.

This slim volume contains roughly fifty texts on cinema published by Jaime Torres Bodet, a member of the Contemporáneos group of writers and intellectuals, in the Mexico City magazine *Revista de Revistas* between 1925 and 1926. Principally focused on stars and recent releases, Torres Bodet's column incorporates reflections on film genres (particularly comedy), the relationship between film and theater, and the need to create an archive to preserve films from past decades.

Miquel, Ángel, ed. *Los exaltados: Antología de escritos sobre cine en periódicos y revistas de la ciudad de México, 1898–1929*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992.

Gathered in this volume are texts on films and film culture that appeared in newspapers and magazines in Mexico City between 1898 and 1929. A brief general introduction precedes sections arranged by author, including authors whose only identifier is a pseudonym. Each of those sections features a biographical note, followed by selected texts reproduced in their entirety with publication information. An appendix presents a list of the anthologized texts and a filmography of films featured in compiled reviews.

Reyes, Aurelio de los, ed. *Correspondencia de Salvador Toscano, 1900–1911*. Mexico City: IMCINE/Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Cineteca Nacional, 1996.

This slim volume brings together the correspondence of pioneering film exhibitor and camera operator Salvador Toscano, held by the Fundación Carmen Toscano. These letters between Toscano, his mother, and his business partners provide insights into the obstacles and opportunities of film exhibition (itinerant and permanent) in Mexico at the turn of the twentieth century, and offer a glimpse of the tumultuous early years of the Revolution.

———, ed. *Gabriel Veyre, representante de Lumière: Cartas a su madre*. Mexico City: IMCINE/Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Cineteca Nacional, 1996.

This selection of Veyre's letters (as well as a diary of his transatlantic crossing from France to North America) recounts his time screening and filming views for the Lumières in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and later Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, Japan, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Serrano, Federico, and Fernando G. del Moral, ed. *Cuadernos de la cineteca nacional: El automóvil gris*. Mexico City: Cineteca Nacional, 1981.

This book reprints the script for the 1919 serial film *El automóvil gris* (which is in fact closer to a treatment or plot summary) housed in Mexico's Archivo General de la Nación. The volume also includes a shot-by-shot breakdown of the film in the form in which it exists today, considerably altered from its original release in twelve episodes.

EARLY CINEMA

Reyes, Aurelio de los. *Cine y sociedad en México, 1896–1930, vol. 1, Vivir de sueños, 1896–1920*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1981.

Part one of a three-volume history of silent cinema in Mexico, this text incorporates some material published in the author's book on early cinema in Mexico City. Chapters analyze the history of both domestic and foreign film in Mexico in the context of the tumultuous political history of the period. Specific attention is given to the social aspects of the cinema, including its effects on gender roles, and early national production, which emerged in the context of the dominance of European and (toward the end of this period) American films. Central to Reyes's understanding of cinema is its ability to communicate or contest national identity; he argues that the nonfiction compilation films of the revolution established the basic parameters of the first wave of national production.

This volume, like the others, is richly illustrated and contains numerous (though perhaps not comprehensive) citations.

———. “Gabriel Veyre and Fernand Bon Bernard, representantes de los Hermanos Lumière en México.” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 17, no. 67 (1995): 119–37.

See entry in English-language sources section for Reyes, Aurelio de los, “Gabriel Veyre and Fernand Bon Bernard, Representatives of the Lumière Brothers in Mexico.”

———. *Los orígenes del cine en México (1896–1900)*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984.

Covering a brief five years, this small volume presents a detailed picture of the introduction of cinema in Mexico. The text opens with a brief yet thorough essay on the historiography of the field as it stood in 1972 and the sources consulted in writing the book. In addition to print sources, Reyes draws on material from the Archivo del Ex-Ayuntamiento (Archive of the Former Municipality, now the Historical Archive of Mexico City). Themes addressed in the book include censorship, the social effects of cinema, the composition of film programs, and the emergence of national production, which during this period took the form of actualities or topical films. Back matter includes a list of print sources for the period and the reproduction of selected texts from the press.

FILM AND THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION (1910–1920)

Fabio Sánchez, Fernando. “Vistas de modernidad y guerra: El documental antes y después de la Revolución, 1896–1917.” In Fernando Fabio Sánchez and Gerardo García Muñoz, *La luz y la guerra: El cine de la Revolución mexicana*, 101–67. Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2010.

Beginning with commentary on the precarious preservation history of revolutionary-era compilation films, this essay traces the role of film in staging spectacles of political power before and during the Mexican Revolution. Working chronologically and examining filmmaking centered on specific military factions, the piece charts the close links between charismatic *caudillos* (leaders) and the production of nonfiction film in the period.

Luna, Andrés de. *La batalla y su sombra: La Revolución en el cine mexicano. Xochimilco, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1984.*

Grounded in critical theory, including Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Roland Barthes, the essays in this volume argue that films of the revolution,

despite their documentary aesthetic, functioned to legitimate the revolution and its leaders. Luna contends that as a form of discourse, these films and the fiction films that followed shored up a mythic version of the revolution and its ideology.

Miquel, Ángel. “Cine silente de la Revolución.” In Roberto Garza Iturbide and Hugo Lara Chávez, *Cine y Revolución: La Revolución mexicana vista a través del cine*, 33–42. Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2010.

This short catalogue essay presents an overview of Mexican films produced during the revolution, compilation films made from footage shot by various cameraman during the period, and fiction film, with the most attention given to *El automóvil gris* (1919). The text is accompanied by lush images in color or sepia.

———. ***En tiempos de Revolución: El cine en la Ciudad de México, 1910–1916*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2012.**

The Mexican Revolution constituted an important thematic for early domestic filmmaking, but as Miquel argues, it was also the catalyst for significant shifts in the distribution, exhibition, and reception of cinema. In this book he limits his study to Mexico City, which allows him to track the emergence of a public for motion pictures, the reception of documentary practices, and a consolidation of the business of cinema. The book makes use of print sources in addition to archival material. Extraordinarily well documented, the volume reproduces film programs, photographs, and stills from extant revolutionary-era nonfiction films. The appendix lists documentary films exhibited in the Federal District by title and alternative titles, indicating if footage survives, and where and when the film was exhibited.

———. ***Salvador Toscano*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1997.**

Miquel’s account of the life of engineer, film exhibitor, and cameraman Salvador Toscano is based on primary sources from the privately held Toscano Archive and the compilation film *Memorias de un mexicano* (1950). This slim volume situates Toscano’s activities as a cameraman in the context of his work as an engineer and cinema operator, his familial relationships, and the broader panorama of the revolution’s effects on Mexican economic and social life.

Orellana, Margarita de. *La mirada circular: El cine norteamericano de la Revolución mexicana, 1911–1917*. Mexico City: Editorial J. Ortiz, 1991.

See entry in English-language sources section for *Filming Pancho: How Hollywood Shaped the Mexican Revolution*.

Ortiz Monasterio, Pablo, ed. *Fragmentos: Narración cinematográfica compilada y arreglada por Salvador Toscano, 1900–1930*. Mexico City: Conaculta, 2010.

Fragmentos takes as its source material a script for an unfinished compilation film created by pioneering cameraman Salvador Toscano. Composed primarily of full-color reproductions of film frames and intertitles that accompanied the script, many tinted and even hand-colored, the book also contains critical essays on Toscano's biography and the history of the revolutionary-era compilation film.

Pick, Zuzana M. "Jesús H. Abitía: Cinefotógrafo de la revolución." In *Fotografía, cine y literatura de la Revolución mexicana*, edited by Ángel Miquel, Zuzana M. Pick, and Eduardo de la Vega Alfaro, 31–48. Cuernavaca: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, 2004.

Jesús H. Abitía was a photographer and cameraman active during the Mexican Revolution. Pick analyzes his footage that survives as part of a later compilation film, *Epopeyas de la Revolución* (Epics of the Revolution, 1963), alongside surviving postcard images Abitía created and sold during the revolution. Pick argues based on formal analysis that nonfiction films of the revolution not only serve as historical evidence of the key players and historical events but also offer viewers a window into the perspective of other groups who witnessed the revolution, including the cameraman, participants in the scenes registered by the camera, and the broad social groups that participated in the revolutionary project.

Reyes, Aurelio de los. *Con Villa en México: Testimonios sobre camarógrafos norteamericanos en la Revolución*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1985.

A preliminary essay on General Francisco "Pancho" Villa's relationship to the cinema—as the subject of newsreels and feature-length documentaries, a collaborator with the Mutual Film Company, and then star of the part-fiction, part-documentary film *The Life of General Villa* (1914)—establishes the context for three sets of original documents from the period. Those documents, selected by the author to appeal to a broad readership, include news items, memoirs, and complementary sources composed primarily of texts by American journalist John Reed about historical events during the Mexican Revolution. The author argues that moving images made by US cameramen created Villa's public persona, converting him effectively into a star whose luminescence dimmed as his relationship with the US government deteriorated. This large volume features unusual and useful biographical sketches of the US cameramen who documented the revolution, as well as a comprehensive filmography.

THE 1920S

Miquel, Ángel. *Mimí Derba*. Harlingen, TX: Archivo Fílmico Agrasánchez; Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000.

This biography of performer, director, and silent and sound film actress Mimí Derba focuses on her professional life. Based on print sources, interviews with collaborators and family members, and her own published texts, it documents her career on stage, collaboration with director Enrique Rosas in forming Azteca Films (a production company active during the late 1910s), and finally, after a return to the stage, her appearance in Mexican sound films. The volume reprints synopses of her silent films as published in the press, as well as excerpts from her writings.

———. ***Por las pantallas de la Ciudad de México: Periodistas del cine mudo*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995.**

This companion to *Los exaltados* (see entry in section on anthologies of primary sources) is a history of the cinema-related press in Mexico City during the silent period. Arranged chronologically the volume covers the emergence of press related to films and filmgoing, the careers of specific critics, *cronistas* (chroniclers), critics based in the United States who wrote about film for a Mexican audience, and the debate engendered by the introduction of sound technology. Rich in biographical details, this text is indispensable for understanding the landscape of film-related writing during this period.

Reyes, Aurelio de los. *Cine y sociedad en México, 1896–1930, vol. 2, Bajo el cielo de México, 1920–1924*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Cineteca Nacional, 1993.

Drawing on extensive research in press records as well as archival documents, Reyes traces cinema's intersections with broader trends in politics and culture in the years following the armed phase of the revolutionary conflict. While Reyes notes that the fiction films produced during a brief boom in production in the early twenties generally avoided direct depictions of the revolution, he observes a public fascination with criminal and political violence. Other subjects treated include cinema's intersections with postrevolutionary cultural nationalism (marked by a valorization of Mexico's indigenous heritage, a fascination with regional folklore, and a turn to archaeological and anthropological study) and the troubled relationship between Hollywood and Mexican authorities due to the stereotypical representations proffered by US cinema.

———. *Cine y sociedad en México 1896–1930, vol. 3, Sucedió en Jalisco o los Cristeros, 1924–1928*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2013.

Like the previous two installments, the third volume of Reyes's wide-ranging social history of cinema focuses on distribution, exhibition, public discourses on cinema, and traces of lost films, given that only a handful of those produced in Mexico during the period have been preserved. Taking as its backdrop the Cristeros War—a conflict sparked by devout Catholics' violent reactions to the government's aggressive push to secularize Mexican society—the book examines a wide range of topics. These include the intersections between nonfiction film and national politics (from the impact of newsreels to the use of educational films in the government's modernizing initiatives); the transnational dimensions of Mexican film culture, including Hollywood-oriented fan culture and exchanges with Germany and the Soviet Union; and the medium's links with literary and artistic avant-gardes.

———. “El gobierno mexicano y las películas denigrantes a México, 1920–1931.” In *México/Estados Unidos: Encuentros y desencuentros en el cine*, edited by Ignacio Durán, Iván Trujillo, and Mónica Vereá, 23–35. Mexico City: Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía, 1996.

This brief essay examines the state's response to motion pictures that represented Mexico and Mexicans in stereotypical ways. Early efforts to counter these representations included government-sponsored film production, diplomatic pressure, and the institution of censorship prior to a film's release (*censura previa*). After a ban and diplomatic negotiations, US film companies established collaborative relationships with Mexican diplomats to address issues at the point of production. Reyes argues that American film producers' actions were guided by their financial interests in the Mexican market.

Wood, David M. J. “Recuperar lo efímero: Restauración del cine mudo en México.” In *El patrimonio de los siglos XX y XXI*, edited by Louise Noelle, 125–57. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2011.

Using as case studies the restorations of Gabriel García Moreno's *El tren fantasma* (The Ghost Train) and *El puño de hierro* (The Iron Fist) from surviving, unordered footage, this essay reflects on the instability of the filmic original as such, considering evidence in press accounts that multiple versions of the films circulated in the 1920s, as well as the unique circumstances of each individual screening and the potentially conflicting priorities of contemporary film preservationists.

REGIONAL AND BORDERLANDS HISTORIES

Delgadillo, Willivaldo, Maribel Limongi, and Miguel Ángel Berumen Campos. *La mirada desenterrada: Juárez y El Paso vistos por el cine (1896–1916).* Ciudad Juárez: Cuadro X Cuadro, 2000.

Acknowledging that the US-Mexico border was an important site for both American and Mexican film history, Delgadillo, Limongi, and Berumen Campos mine archival and print sources from both countries to reconstruct the history of cinema in the region, with a focus on Ciudad Juárez. The volume offers a brief social history of the region before focusing on key moments, including the first moving-picture exhibition held at the Myar Opera House in El Paso and attended by residents of both cities; early films made in the region; the importance of itinerant exhibition, which was pegged to the liturgical calendar and its festivals; the construction of multipurpose venues and film exhibition in Ciudad Juárez; the filming of the historical events that took place in El Paso/Ciudad Juárez during the revolution; and, finally, a long section devoted to Pancho Villa's relationship to the cinema. Villa's contract with Mutual Films (unsigned) is reprinted in its entirety. The volume is written in a readable style and features many images, not necessarily related to cinema, which provide context for the period.

Ramírez, Gabriel. *El cine yucateco.* Mexico City: Filmoteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1980.

This short book by amateur film historian Gabriel Ramírez offers a chronology of cinema in Yucatán, an eastern state relatively isolated from both Mexico City and the interior of Mexico, but wealthy due to the exportation of henequen, from its introduction to 1930. Drawing on printed sources published later in the twentieth century, he explores early film exhibition; the efforts of the production company CIRMAR and the two feature-length films and serial they produced; the social debates that surrounded the practice of moviegoing; and a short chapter on the screening of films produced in Mexico in Mérida. A filmography lists films produced in the state during this period and the book is indexed by personal name and film title. There is a limited section of small images without information about their sources. Throughout, Ramírez peppers his account with unattributed quotes, perhaps from print sources such as advertisements.

Reyes Díaz, Evelia. *Ciudad, lugares, gente, cine: Apropiación del espectáculo cinematográfico en la ciudad de Aguascaliente, 1897–1933.* Aguascalientes: Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, 2012.

Beginning by establishing the significance of the state capital of Aguascalientes as a key transit hub, Reyes Díaz explores multiple dimensions of cinema's

presence in the city in the silent era. Her study shows how the emergence of venues for film exhibition (often combined with live entertainments) was shaped by the contours of urban space and its preexisting residential, commercial, and industrial uses; how attendance at particular movie theaters helped establish and maintain class distinctions; and how political connections and personal prestige affected the commercial fortunes of individual film exhibitors. The study draws on extensive consultation of both press and municipal records and incorporates lists of the films exhibited in Aguascalientes from the midtwenties to the early thirties, although the manner in which this information is organized is slightly confusing.

San Martín, Patricia. *Crónicas tapatías del cine mexicano*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1993.

This slim volume, based on extensive research in regional print sources, traces the reaction of the press in Guadalajara to the Mexican films exhibited in that city between 1917 and 1940. Arranged in chronological order, short sections focus on topics ranging from movie theaters to reviews of national films exhibited in the city. Longer sections provide an overview of press coverage of Mexican feature-length fiction films and sound films. An appendix reprints select synopses of films printed in the press and statistics regarding the premiere of films, box-office figures, and repertory screenings of films deemed significant. The text is rich with reproductions of advertisements and photographs, though these are not of the best quality. The bibliography is a particularly helpful starting point for regionally specific research.

Vaidovits, Guillermo. *El cine mudo en Guadalajara*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1989.

With concision this volume provides a chronological account of silent cinema in Guadalajara. The sections, some quite brief, focus on exhibition venues and their owners, local production, figures hailing from the city who had a relationship to the silent cinema, and two films set in the region, *La gran noticia* (The Big News, 1921–23) and *El último sueño* (The Last Dream, 1923), a film made by and starring the Bell family, well-known circus performers in Mexico. A time line offers an overview of the history of cinema in the region.

Vega Alfaro, Eduardo de la, ed. *Microhistorias del cine en México*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2000.

This edited collection brings together twenty-three essays based on work presented at the first Colloquium on Regional Cinema History held in Guadalajara in 1999. Twelve of the essays focus specifically on film production or exhibition

during the silent period and eleven treat the time period in some fashion. These primarily descriptive essays are rich in information that could only be gleaned through research in local archives and the local press. Each essay includes a bibliography, but the citation of sources is inconsistent. Locations covered include the states of Durango, Baja California, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Querétaro, and Puebla.

Note

1. Used in the title of books in this way, the word *crónica* [literally, chronicle] conveys the sense of a popular, synthetic history that is journalistic in its sensibilities rather than academic. It is related to the urban chronicles that characterize the genre as defined in Latin American literary studies that offer topical accounts of contemporary political and social life.

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