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MIXING MOURNING AND DESIRE: ALFONSO CUARÓN'S *Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN*

Andrew Slade

Alfonso Cuarón's *Y Tu Mamá También* was one of a series of hit movies from Mexico in the early years of the millennium. From the beginning, the movie generated shock and scandal for its representations of graphic sex, but more than that, for its representation of queer desire between the emerging young stars Diego Luna and Gael García Bernal. As the two established their careers, they continued to answer questions about Julio and Tenoch, the two adolescent, urban cowboys they played in *Y Tu Mamá También*. The road movie as coming-of-age story on its own would not produce any disconcerting effects on any audience, but this film proves a scandal because of its representation of the love that binds Julio and Tenoch. From the beginning of the film their love is colored by eroticism and, by the end of the film, that eroticism becomes explicit. Cuarón reports in interviews that the final love scenes received mixed responses. For some spectators, the sight of the two boys kissing is to be celebrated, a response confirmed in a review in *The Advocate*. For yet others, the kiss activates homophobic revulsion.

In "Unconsummated Fictions and Virile Voiceovers: Desire and the Nation in *Y Tu Mamá También*," Elena Lahr-Vivaz links the construction of homosocial desire to the shifting notion of Mexican nationhood under globalization. Her position situates the articulations of the film in the context of the political transformations of modern Mexico and the cultural history that

informs the construction of masculine Mexican identity. Of course, the film insists on a kind of political interpretation through its clear references to historical events, for example, the WTO demonstrations in Seattle in 1999, images of Che Guevarra, or the fictional president and secretary of state who figures as Tenoch's father who is thereby a son of the modern Mexican state.

Lahr-Viaz's approach to the film is instructive because of the way in which she situates the filmic construction of desire and masculinity, as virility, in the broad historical context of globalization and the debates about nation and national identity that have followed upon them. Taking this position as backdrop, my purpose in this essay is to address the ways in which the film presents homosocial and homoerotic desire as part of a story of the passage from adolescence to adulthood.

Y Tu Mamá También is a millennial film obsessed with adolescent, masculine forms of desire. The film is replete with irreverent sex, drugs, drinking, and the banter of adolescent boys whose goals are to get drunk, get stoned, and get laid. The film shows two boys, just graduated from secondary school and spending their summer before university doing very little. They are bored and afraid that their boredom won't come to an end. Tenoch is the son of the secretary of state, and Julio the son of a secretary in a transnational corporation. Why shouldn't these boys do nothing the summer before their lives are set to begin in earnest? Perhaps they ought to engage the last of their youth before university doing decidedly adolescent things. We might acquiesce in this and enjoy that certain nostalgia about our own lost youth and the time that we may have spent before being forced into the realities of adulthood—if we are at an age where that nostalgia can appear. Yet, if we identify with Julio and Tenoch or Julio or Tenoch, then we might find ourselves anxious at the onset of new forms of life and desire that the end of one experience tends to inaugurate. The masculine spectator can figure himself in the place of Tenoch or Julio as once again on the cusp of something new, unforeseen, and unforeseeable. A feminine identified spectator has Luisa, the exotic older woman who brings the boys into their adult masculinity, as a figure for identification. That is, if cross or transgender identification does not happen. Regardless, the film insists on stable-enough gender rules for the heteronormative gender system to function. In this, the film leans on a spectator's expectation that Mexican men ought to be macho (and unqualifiedly straight) and women submissive.

The film traces the painful passage from the joys of adolescence to the toils of age. Julio and Tenoch move from youth to age through an encounter with death. In this they participate in an heroic lineage. Traditionally, a hero comes fully into his identity by passing through an encounter with death and living to *reflect on the meaning of his survival. In this film, the encounter with death is figured erotically as an encounter with the feminine.* As I will discuss below, the boys encounter femininity in three sites: with their girlfriends, with Luisa, and with each other. From each of these encounters, the boys become more fully the men that the film imagines them to be by the end. Curiously, the film is more suggestive than definitive regarding the future of their masculinities. The film says very little about the men that they become, even though it represents them as older, even wiser, by the end. Like any future, their future is left indeterminate at film's end. By understanding these three encounters we can understand how the film figures desire as coterminous with the work of mourning. In this film, erotic desire is jubilant, ravishing, and exhausting; it is also linked to loss. Eroticism is a desire that proceeds from loss and absence. In psychoanalytic thought, desire aims at an object that is structurally absent—we want what we don't have or what we lack; this pushes our desire toward objects that we think will end it. *Y Tu Mamá También* shows the fulfillment of desire in the hallucinations that present the object in its full, visual splendor. The film shows Julio and Tenoch struggling with the loss of their childhood, even if they do not realize that this is what they are losing. The structure of desire mirrors the structure of mourning in this film and brings them from childhood into adulthood. Being an adult means the progressive mourning of childhood—even when we don't know what we are doing when we are doing it.

THE ROAD-TRIP

Y Tu Mamá También is a buddy movie and a road movie. The plot is relatively simple: two school friends meet a beautiful, foreign woman at a wedding. Drunk, they play a game of seduction with her, inviting her to the most beautiful beach in Mexico—the *Boca Del Cielo*, Heaven's Mouth. The beach is pure invention. A few days after the wedding, Luisa calls Tenoch on the phone to make good on their invitation. In the interim, she has seen a doctor and learned that she will die. That information, however, is only revealed at the end of the movie. On the trip, the trio share sto-

ries of their exploits and their loves, and, at their destination, in a drunken orgy, the two boys end up in bed together with Luisa. Luisa, however, disappears from the frame, whereupon, the boys kiss. The homoerotics of the scene are heightened and diminished by the presumption that Luisa kneels in front of them in fellatio. The homoerotics are diminished because a beautiful woman is in the scene and they are heightened because a beautiful woman leaves the scene. The sequence cuts to the next morning with just the boys in bed together. They return to Mexico City while Luisa stays with a family that they met on the beach. A year later, the boys meet again for the first time since their trip and have coffee. The voiceover tells us that neither wanted to have coffee with the other, but that "saying yes was easier than finding a reason to say no." Over coffee, they both become aware that Luisa had died.

The boys are bound together by friendship. They share a special bond that is formalized by their identity as *charolastras*, space cowboys. The *charolastras* share what Vek Lewis describes as "a ten-point code of honor" (181). Lewis continues, "These codes relate to how they perform their masculinity and their relations with other men. Women figure to the extent that they are sexual objects that cannot be shared between two *charolastras*" (181). The code sets clear limits to their relationships. It governs how they ought to interact and binds them as part of a closed community.

As a buddy film, the movie is necessarily charged with a queer eroticism that, as in the standard Hollywood version, is both tempered and heightened by the presence of the spectacular woman. The homoerotic relation between the male characters is defused by the presence of a heterosexually available woman—a beautiful woman that the two men can fight over. In the homoerotics of the movie, Luisa functions as a safeguard against their homosociality. In one sequence, after she has slept with both boys and they are in a jealous fight, each one trying to hurt the other, Luisa issues some rules of her own against the code of the *charolastras*. She yells at them, "why don't you fuck each other." In this accusation, she draws out the ambivalence of their desire—that they have become, for each other, simultaneously objects of love and hatred, precious and coveted and filthy and repulsive. The boys' rage (on the road coming to Heaven's Mouth) is finally resolved in the drinking sequence when, at the table in the beach-side bar, they link arms and drink tequila, toasting to their identity as "milk brothers." This proclamation prepares us for the consummation of their union in the next minutes. In this sequence, Luisa disap-

pears from the frame and the boys are shown enacting a queer desire and not a strictly homosocial one. We see their desire for each other, for each other's body. Out of the frame, Luisa disappears from the scene of desire as well. Cinematically, she lures the spectator's desire to see the representation of desire and pleasure and then her disappearance from the scene displays the truth of desire and pleasure.

KNOWING AND THE STRUCTURE OF DESIRE

Formally, the film shows a road trip and the road trip mirrors the structure of desire. Going without knowing where you are going and ending up where you are as the destination—so goes the structure of desire in this film. Unexpected and in abandonment, they end the trip where they sought to be without knowing it. The structure of desire is one of non-knowing, of unknowing, even of the disavowal of knowing. Desire has its own truth that is not fully known in advance of its disclosure. The boys desire and only after that desire is actualized do they come to know what it is that they had wanted. The knowledge of our desire is retroactive; we desire and then come to understand the truth of our desire. They drive to an impossible destination, an imaginary beach that they invent in the game of seduction of the older and beautiful Luisa. When she accepts their invitation, they drive, though they do not know where, exactly, they are driving to.

The boys' friendship ends when they learn the truth of their love. Their love is the close friendship of two young men, to be sure, but their love also has an erotic aim and origin. The film is emphatic that their relationship is erotic: they masturbate together, they are "milk brothers" for having had sex with each other's girlfriends, they drink the marriage toast, arms interlocked, with tequila, and afterward, they go with Luisa to their room where they make love and wake up together. Their friendship had been sustained from the beginning by an erotic bond. Neither of them knew fully its presence or finality in much the same way that their road-trip is without a reliable map and has an imaginary destination. The imaginary end does not mean that the trip was somehow deficient. To the contrary, the invented beach stands in the place of the unknown and then, after having arrived, the name acquires its epistemic value as the truth of their desire and their love.

Julio and Tenoch experience their eroticism as a crisis: waking the next morning in the same bed, they look at each other and

find their clothes. Tenoch goes outside and vomits; Julio asks their hosts for a beer, while Luisa salutes with a bottle of her own, declaring more beer as the best remedy for the pangs of the morning after a night of too much beer and tequila. Julio says that they must return the car to his sister in Mexico City and they leave while Luisa stays on at the beach. From the moment of waking until the departure from the scene of their desire, they embody the work of denial. Having encountered one possibility of their desire and their love that they did not expect to find, the boys enter a crisis zone. Where they had just the night before taken their nuptials by interlocking their arms in a toast, having declared themselves “cum brothers,” they wake to find the anxious reality of that discovery.

MASCULINITY, DESIRE, AND QUEER ANXIETIES

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, Freud conceives masculinity as fear of castration. The fear of castration takes several forms in *Y Tu Mamá También*. Castration appears as the rivalry opened by the seduction of each boy's girlfriend by the other and Tenoch's fear that Ana will sleep with another guy on her trip to Italy. The most damaging blow that the one boy can give to the other is to sleep with the other's girlfriend—as their manifesto declares. In this way, the film screens desire as a masculine and phallic one whose value derives from the importance of the penis and its sexual and cultural functions. The film frames their desire as heterosexual in aim, but anxious about that aim. The traces of this anxiety appear throughout the film as jokes, teasings, and insults. Julio and Tenoch talk about each other's penises, they tell Luisa about them and how they behave with their girlfriends. All of the bravado and banter masks castration anxiety. The invention of sexual power masks their anxieties about castration, which is to say their anxieties about masculinity and the heteronormative requirements of masculine sexuality. Masculine sexuality is marked as heterosexual in and through its history of heteronormativity as Judith Butler has described it in *Gender Trouble*, among other texts. At one point in the car, Luisa asks the boys how they have sex with their girlfriends. The boys talk about “giving it to them real good.” Their narratives compensate them for the banal reality of their experience. When the film shows them having sex with their girlfriends, there is nothing interesting about it. Sex talk is for them an opportunity to display their phallic power. Later, that power will be further diminished as each of the boys is

shown as unable to pleasure Luisa, each ending the act in what can be called nothing short of adolescent premature ejaculation. The conclusion we are to draw from each sequence is that the boys are still only boys, that they are not yet men who would know better how to engage and cultivate the pleasure of their partner. In these moments, the narrative point of view shifts to Luisa who understands their bravado as bravado, where the boys are portrayed as playing men. The film shows the boys in a process of transition that is mimed formally by the road-trip. They begin the film as boys and become men through a series of encounters with death. They are shown as men for the first time when, at the end of the film, they have coffee. Julio insists on paying the check, whereas before he followed Tenoch because of his wealth. The simple gesture of paying the bill, however fraught with class anxieties, signifies Julio taking his position as Tenoch's peer. The film shows the boys in transition from being boys to being men. What kind of men are they are to become is an open question in this film. To answer the question is beyond the scope of my purpose here. Perhaps, the way to answer the question would be to follow the trajectory that I've suggested here in the recent *Rudo y Cursi*, directed by Carlos Cuarón, who wrote *Y Tu Mamá También* and which likewise stars Diego Luna and Gabriel García Bernal again playing competitive, rival brothers.

THE FEMININE AND DEATH

On their trip, the boys encounter the enigmatic feminine in three ways. First, they enjoy the feminine in and through sex with their girlfriends, as the opening sex sequences show. The film opens with Tenoch on top of Ana; this sequence of last sex with Ana cuts to Julio's last sex with Ceci. Above all, the opening is banal. Adolescent couples in love, when they are on the eve of their departures, will seek out time and space for their last sex. Second, they are frightened by their encounter with queer desire. Third, they are surprised and comforted by their knowledge of Luisa, whose death marks her as the embodiment of death itself among them. They are not shown to experience Luisa's death as a traumatic rupture of their experience, but as an already integrated event of their lives. These three experiences of the feminine inflect the same basic point in different ways. In the first instance, the male encounter with the body of the feminine other is one of narcissistic enjoyment. In the opening sex sequence, Tenoch and Ana swear an oath of fidelity to each other. Tenoch

insists that she not have sex with any Italians. While Tenoch's penis is still in her vagina, they swear the oath with voices in unison so that the unification of bodies produces the unity of the voice. This is a unity that is created around the penis and is thus a masculine and narcissistic unity. In the second instance, queer desire is another encounter with the feminine.

Even when the boys are shown having sex with their girlfriends the camera emphasizes their availability for penetration as Vek Lewis has argued in his essay, "When 'Macho' Bodies Fail: Spectacles of Corporeality and the Limits of the Homosocial/sexual in the Mexican Cinema." To risk queer desire means to be at risk for (anal) penetration. After their romp with Luisa and their return to Mexico City, they do not see each other for over a year and after that cup of coffee at the end, they never see each other again. The absence of the other to the other guarantees the viability of denial that is further guaranteed by the voiceover that confirms what we already can guess—their friendship ends. The denial is structurally necessary for the rigid, straight identity of each man and his sexuality. The repudiation of queer desire reestablishes their sexual identities as straight and bolsters the straight spectator's pleasure in identification with them as straight. The invisibility of the other sustains their sexuality as straight men and shields them from an encounter with their own queer desire. While the point is beyond the scope of this essay, the policing of the sexual border can be mapped onto discourses of globalization where precisely the openness of borders is at issue.

The boys encounter death as the feminine and there are three feminine figures in the film that suffer kinds of death. Ceci and Ana, Julio and Tenoch's girlfriends, leave the boys on a summer trip to Europe. The departure becomes a death equivalent for each boy as they confess that they have broken the bonds of the *charolastra* manifesto—never sleep with another *charolastra*'s girlfriend. When that transgression is revealed, first by Julio and then later by Tenoch, each boy suffers the blow as if it were a death. After we see Tenoch having sex with Luisa in a hotel room bed, the voiceover tells us that Julio only felt this feeling once before, when he saw his mother in his godfather's arms. Waiting by the hotel pool, Tenoch comes out of the room and finds Julio, the pair race the length of the pool and Tenoch lets Julio win. Julio then announces that he had sex with Ana, Tenoch's girlfriend. The voiceover tells us that Tenoch felt this only once before, when he was 11 and saw his father's picture in a newspaper report

linking him to a scandal involving the sale of contaminated food to the poor. The sex with Luisa disrupts the boys' relationship with one another, and that disruption fuels the acts of revenge that they unleash on each other. They experience a loss at two levels. First, they lose the objects of their love and suffer for it as we all suffer those losses. Second, the loss of their objects reinscribes their own castration anxieties. What they thought that they had possessed, they come to know that they never possessed. In this way, the girls prop up the boys' investment in their own narcissistic desire and return to them an image of power and presence. When those props are taken away, they lose a source and sense of their hallucinatory phallic power. In their own right, the girls are not important. The film's narrative structure forces them to signal the boys' straight sexuality. The girls are props that signify, for the boys and for the spectators, that they are straight. I am using the term prop in a dual sense. First, in the sense of the theatre, props signify. Second, Jean Laplanche develops an interpretation of the notion of propping up or leaning on as Freud's notion of *anaclysis*. *Anaclysis* means to prop-up or to lean-on and it refers to the way in which the sexual drive emerges with and out of the instinct for self-preservation. According to the theory of *anaclysis*, some objects that are required by self-preservation can begin to acquire an erotic or sexual function. The breast can become erotically charged, for example. The value of the breast as erotically interesting leans-on or is propped-up by its function in self-preservation until eventually the original connection to self-preservation seems to disappear and be replaced by a strictly erotic one. Laplanche conceives the truth of leaning-on as primal seduction (129). For Laplanche, primal seduction bears on the ways in which messages from the adult are transmitted to the child and are characterized by a fundamental confusion of tongues between child and adult. In the film, the girls prop up the boys' straight sexuality and offer spectators some clear signs to lean on that guarantee straight sexuality and hence a strategy to avoid the pleasures and dangers of enjoying the visual spectacle of queer desire.

The second feminine figure in the film is Luisa. Older and exotic, Luisa offers the boys another hallucination of their own power. She focalizes their desire and tutors it. On the road trip, she becomes their link to a future that they cannot yet understand and which they think they already own in the present. Like many boys their age, they believe they know much more than they do. Yet, Luisa will show them the extent to which they mis-

recognize their power. All along their trip the boys see Luisa crying. They believe, as do the spectators, that her tears are for the loss of her husband. After she visits the medical clinic, the film shows her on her bed as she receives a call from her husband, Tenoch's cousin Jano. He is drunk and crying and confesses to her the affairs he has had. The film encourages us to believe that these affairs are the reason that Luisa calls Tenoch the next day to take him up on his invitation to the beach. At the end of the film we see that she leaves Jano to die, rather than to end their relationship. She runs toward her death as toward a freedom that she has never yet known. These boys that she happens to meet become the guides toward her death and her freedom.

The third feminine figure in the film is the queered man. This figure appears in two ways. First, it is mentioned only in passing in association with the boys' friend Daniel whom they describe as a "total queen." But, they are happy for their friend, as he appears to be secure in that identity. Hence, the queer male is not imagined as a threat, but as the embodiment of a friend. Yet, the boys invoke the "fag" in relation to their own gazes as they fall on each other's body. The term "fag" is invoked as a means of policing the border between the homosocial and the homosexual, as C.J. Pascoe, among others, has explained. In the shower sequence at the country club, for example, the boys compare penises. In another sequence, also at the country club, they masturbate together on the diving boards of the pool. But, their homosocial behaviors do not become homosexual ones until the end of the film. The distinction is a fine one that the invocation of the marker "fag" is designed to secure, as I noted above. *The homosocial can be integrated into heterosexual identity so long as a clear sign of demarcation between the straight and the queer can be established and sustained.* The film manages to sustain this distinction by the presence of the girlfriends and Luisa. The film ends in a crisis of the boundary between the straight and the queer. In this encounter the boys come to occupy the feminine position of queer sexuality. As borderline queer, they are also borderline feminine.

MOURNING AS DESIRE

There are at least three narrative strands of *Y Tu Mamá También* that construe mourning as desire. The first is the road-trip, buddy narrative that takes place between Julio and Tenoch. This is the narrative that opens the film and which the narrative point of view favors until very near the end of the film. In this narrative,

the boys exist as a couple whose desire for exploits and adventure unites them. They are at the very beginning of a new phase of life when they will come into their adulthood. Visually, the film marks this passage by emphasizing, through costume and manner, their youth. In the final café sequence, the boys have lost that sheen—their hair and skin look older, their costume that of older university students. They have gained in sophistication and recognize that the banter of the *charolastras* belongs to an earlier time that is now lost to them. The narrative is one of loss and redemption. What they lose along the way is offset by the knowledge they will have gained by the end. The second is the narrative of globalization that is given by a disembodied voiceover. This narrative supplies the broader political, cultural, and incidental knowledge that allows the spectator to have a fuller appreciation of the boys and their road-trip. I have not emphasized this narrative as much criticism of the film has taken up this point. The third narrative is the story of Luisa and Jano. This narrative appears as the story of a break-up, but, at the end of the film, we come to realize that it is the story of a woman mourning her own death in advance of its arrival. Early in the film, Luisa receives the results of medical tests that tell her she will die of cancer. We do not know this until the end, when the boys learn the same news and their two narratives are finally united. Spectators are now able to understand the logic of Luisa's flight and reject the red herring that she left due to Jano's cheating. She does not run from anything, but runs *to* her death, a death that is linked in her imagination to freedom and the sea. It's not for nothing, then, that the beach she wants to go to is called Heaven's Mouth. Luisa mourns the loss of her life in advance and in anticipation by her desire for the sea. Her desire for the boys, such as it is, is merely incidental and not essential to the trajectory of her narrative.

While waiting to see the doctor who will give her the results of the tests, Luisa takes a quiz in a magazine. By answering the questions in the quiz, she will learn what kind of woman she is. At the end of the quiz, she scores a 16. The voiceover narration tells us that she is a woman who is afraid of her freedom. Luisa, the voice tells us, did not agree. This moment situates Luisa in a social and symbolic space that cuts her off from the community of others. This space is what Jacques Lacan called "between two deaths" in his seventh seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. In this work, Lacan describes this space as an unbearable one occupied by Antigone after Creon has pronounced her sentence and before her actual death. The space of the between two deaths is a miser-

able space in which the living being becomes symbolically separate from the rest of the living. Biologically they are alive, yet they represent the already dead among the living. In the space between two deaths, death can appear in a different frame as a threshold that one has already crossed. Having already crossed this limit, the good as object of ethics can appear denuded of narcissistic investments. The good is no longer limited to what is good for me, but what is good as such or for the other. Death loses its character as an ultimate limit to action. Because death is nothing to them, they are able actually to live and to act according to their own desire. Neither Antigone nor Luisa seeks a narrowly self-concerned sense of the good, but they aim to do the good for an other. In these examples, the between two deaths is a miserable space that allows the one who occupies it do the good without reservation. Like Antigone, Luisa is living, but because her immediate future is certain, she lives with a different horizon of possibility. For most of us, death is a distant abstraction. For those living with a death sentence, it is a foreseeable event and imposes a definite limit. In the space between two deaths, Luisa does not share the same world as Julio and Tenoch whose special bond she has seen and which the voiceover underscores for us.

Lacan's position regarding Antigone is not without controversy. In *Neither Victim nor Survivor*, for example, Marilyn Nissim-Sabat argues that Lacan has made Antigone into an inhuman figure, and has thereby made ethics an inhuman endeavor. Any ethical hero ought to be able to issue a challenge to all of us to improve our conduct, our relationships, and our communities. By making ethics supererogatory, we are let off of the hook for doing the good. If ethics takes us to our death, or is situated in a realm where fruitful action is a lost cause, then there is little to justify the pursuit of the ethical relationships and conditions for life. If we can't do it, then why should we try? Such criticism misses Lacan's point. Lacan does not claim that ethics is impossible as an actualization. Rather, ethics proceeds from a condition or situation in which the normal rules of convention and morality cease to function. Ethics belongs to a different field of experience than do convention and morality, which, in fairness, serve us more or less well. My concern is to understand the character of Luisa as neither a victim (of a disease, of a cheating husband) nor a survivor, but as a woman who inhabits, at this juncture in her life, a space beyond the ultimate horizon of her death.

Luisa's narrative challenges gendered norms about desire; the association with the feminine and death is nearly cliché. But, if

we associate feminine desire in this film with what Freud calls, in *The Ego and the Id*, desexualized or sublimated eros, then we might say that even though she is dying, even though she is sleeping with these guys, her desire is not sexual in its aim; it is, rather, oriented to a higher goal, namely, her freedom which is represented visually at the end of the film as the sea. In this, we can see that the film separates sexuality from its sexual aim. Sexuality can have a non-sexual aim even though sex is the practice. Luisa's sex with the boys does not aim at sexual pleasure, but at another, higher aim. She aims, namely, to bind the boys again in love and friendship. Sex is the means through which she attempts to actualize that loftier aim. This perspective is given in the film through a male voice, in the voiceover. From this voice, we learn that she will sleep with Julio in order to renew the balance in their relationship, a balance that had been disrupted when she slept with Tenoch. In this reading of the film, Luisa appears as a character who is unmoved by the usual circuits of desire. Pathetic images of death and suffering no longer move her to tears nor do they provoke her to terror. Because she knows that death is on the very near horizon, she no longer lives for herself, but for others. When her death is no longer an issue for her because she knows it is coming, she becomes a woman who is for others. As Sophocles describes Antigone as one who is made for love, so is Luisa. In this way, Luisa does not aim to divide the boys and their love, but to bring them together in union. Luisa then convenes the appearance of queer desire and does not, as is the typical role of the woman in the buddy film, deny its presence. She becomes a guide for the boys as they move from their childhood into another future. Dying, she brings them to another life.

Y Tu Mamá También begins in the throes of adolescent love and ends in a coffee shop where two old friends reluctantly meet for the first time in a year, and for the very last time. Julio and Tenoch are no longer the boys that we saw at the beginning of the film. It is a cliché to say that they have become older, wiser. Nonetheless, the form that the film takes demands that we see them becoming urban and urbane, cosmopolitan, even, men. The last sequence reframes for us what has come before by passing over in silence the boys that they were. There is no more scatological humor, they drink coffee, they talk quietly. The encounter with Luisa and with their own sex and sexuality is cordoned off, placed in a past that can be forgotten in the name of another future. As Adam Phillips remarks in his essay "Plotting for Kisses," the adolescent passing into adulthood puts away childish things. The

question remains whether these men have put away the right ones or not. This is perhaps one of the abiding appeals of the film—that it is a film about possibilities rather than finalities.

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