LITERATURES of the AMERICAS

REVISITING THE MEXICAN STUDENT MOVEMENT OF 1968

Shifting Perspectives in Literature and Culture since Tlatelolco

JUAN J. ROJO

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palgrave
macmillan

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Literatures of the Americas
ISBN 978-1-137-55987-6 ISBN 978-1-137-55611-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016936407

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Nature America Inc. New York

For Alexa and Joaquín for whom I would … yo no sé.

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Acknowledgments

This book would have been much more difficult to write if not for the efforts of many who helped in a variety of ways. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family: my wife Nickie and my children Alexa and Joaquín, who provide me with riches and tearful joy on a daily basis. Gracias a mi madre, Josefina, quien sacrificó tanto para proveerme la oportunidad de estudiar. Thanks to my brother and sisters: Laura, for being with me through the good and the bad; René and Brenda, for always welcoming me home. Un agradecimiento a mis tías Lourdes, Lilia, y Lupe y a mi tío Martín por la comida, la bebida, las risas, y el apoyo incondicional que siempre me han brindado incluso después de largas ausencias; a mis hermanos, primos y primas en México con quien he convivido durante mis viajes de investigación; y a Gemima por el sacrificio y el refugio.

Throughout the process of writing this manuscript, many have read this text either in parts or as a whole and have provided me with invaluable commentary. For this, I thank Debra Castillo, Ryan Long, Denise Galarza-Sepúlveda, Michael Jordan, Rebekah Pite, Mary Armstrong, Berenice Villagomez, Daniel Quirós, and Li Yang. For the moral support in the form of shelter, meals, conversations, laughs, and drinks, I thank Edna Rodríguez, Néstor Rodríguez, Dick Taylor, Bob Davidson, Colleen Culleton, Fran Fernandez De Alba, Steve and Kika Sloan, Karla O'Donald, Perry Marchbanks, Mileta Roe, Michael Bergman, Bill Ferguson, Evelyn Erbeck, and Linda and Nick Servetas. I would also like to thank my colleagues at Lafayette College, particularly Sidney Donnell and Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci, for their guidance and support. In addition, the work of administrative assistants that made my job easier cannot

be ignored; I would like to thank Joli Mellett, Barbara Turner, and Zinnia Johnston. I am equally indebted to the students who helped me with the research for this project: Liza Blank, Rich Durham, Rachel Spence, Michael Suczewski, and especially Stephanie Valenzuela and Kat Cedillos, who were exceptional assets as I prepared this manuscript.

I would also like to thank the staff at the *Memorial del 68*, the *Archivo Histórico de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, the *Archivo General de la Nación*, the *Hemeroteca Nacional*, and the *Cineteca Nacional*, all of whom were instrumental in allowing me to complete this work. Additionally, I am grateful to Lafayette College, whose financial support facilitated much of the research for this project.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the following: A portion of Chap. 3 dealing with the posters of 1968 was previously published as "The Mexican Revolution in the Discourse of the 1968 Student Movement" in *Imagining the Mexican Revolution: Versions and Visions in Literature and Visual Culture*. It is published with the permission of Cambridge Scholars Publishing. A version of the section dealing with *Rojo amanecer* in Chap. 5 was previously published as "La memoria como 'espectro' en *Rojo amanecer* de Jorge Fons" in the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*. It is published with the journal's permission. A version of the discussion dealing with *El bulto* in Chap. 5 was previously published as "History Comes Out of its Coma: *El Bulto* and the (In)corporation of Tlatelolco" in the *Latin American Literary Review*. It is published with the journal's permission.

Series Editor

Norma E. Cantú currently serves as Professor of US Latin@ Studies at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, USA. She has published widely in the areas of folklore, literary studies, women's studies, and border studies. Her numerous publications include the award-winning novel *Canícula*: *Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera* that chronicles her coming-of-age in Laredo, Texas. The (co)edited volumes include *Chicana Traditions*: *Continuity and Change*, *Dancing Across Borders*: *Danzas y Bailes* Mexicanos, *Paths to Discovery*: *Autobiographies of Chicanas with Careers in Mathematics*, *Science*, *and Engineering*, *Moctezuma's Table*: *Rolando Briseño's Chicano Tablescapes*, and *Ofrenda*: *Liliana Wilson's Art of Dissidence and Dreams*. She is the cofounder of CantoMundo, a space for Latin@ poets, and a member of the Macondo Writers Workshop; her poetry has appeared in *Vandal*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Feminist Studies Journal* among many other publications.

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Introduction: Silencing the Storm—The Never-Ending Search for "Truth" After Tlatelolco

The student movement of 1968 has been regarded as a watershed moment in Mexican literary and cultural history. The name of the site that is now most closely associated with the movement, Tlatelolco, has become shorthand for a number of different signifiers: tragedy, conspiracy, student-heroism, disenchantment, and government cover-ups. While there is a widely accepted version of the events of October 2, 1968, their gravity as well as the manner in which they were covered by the national media and government agencies brought about disillusionment in the Mexican intelligentsia, perhaps best symbolized by Octavio Paz stepping down as Ambassador to India on October 4, 1968. In his letter of resignation, Paz alludes to the state's almost complete control over the press. He writes that

> dialogue has almost completely disappeared from our public life. It is enough to read Mexico's daily and weekly press nowadays to feel ashamed. In no country with democratic institutions can one find that almost unanimous praise for the Government and that equally unanimous condemnation toward its critics. (Domínguez Michael 182)[1]

Paz was not alone in his distrust of the national press and, as a result, the literary and cultural production almost immediately following 1968

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are my own.

J.J. Rojo, *Revisiting the Mexican Student Movement of 1968*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_1

was widespread and persistent in its search for the "truth" that had been covered up by the state. The manifestos released by the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* (National Strike Council or CNH), the poetry in memory of Tlatelolco, the *testimonios* concerning the 1968 experience, all released in the immediate aftermath, formed a discourse that later incorporated other texts such as novels, documentaries, and, much later, feature films, and, ultimately, a museum that brought together many of the primary actors of the events surrounding the Tlatelolco massacre. All of these came to form the discourse of the student movement. The birth of that discourse, however, was the 1968 experience from which evolved a larger apparatus.

The 1960s was the time of *la Onda*, a social and literary counterculture movement that developed in Mexico. The members of *la Onda*'s literary manifestation were a group of young writers who saw their literature as a form of social activism against political as well as literary norms in an exclusively urban setting. They distanced themselves from the approach of writers from previous generations in that their works often included urban slang, drugs, and foreign influences, especially from the United States. *Onda* writers, the most well known being Gustavo Sainz and José Agustín, used American rock music and other youth themes as integral components in their literary production. As Carol D'Lugo points out, the *Onda* writers displayed "an 'importamadrista' attitude, that is to say, a complete disdain for societal norms and values" (163). It is in the middle of this moment in Mexico's literary landscape that the 1968 student movement surges and ultimately explodes at Tlatelolco. And part of the *Onda* aesthetic, this *importamadrista* attitude that defined *Onda* writers, is also key in defining the initial literary production after Tlatelolco.

Following the student massacre on October 2, 1968, it was thought that Mexican literature would be reshaped. Literary production ceased to be centered on the Mexican Revolution and the city, as had been the case for decades. The aesthetics of the *Onda* continued, but now revolved around the student massacre. As one of the key events in modern Mexican history, the literary production after the events of this infamous date was altered to respond to the government's actions. Cynthia Steele writes:

> During the early 1970s Mexican writers and critics tended to see this outpouring of fiction about 1968 as a literary signpost, an indication that the Mexican novel was being renovated by another historic series of events, and

> that the Novel of Tlatelolco would displace the Novel of the Revolution and the Novel of the City as the principal genre of Mexican fiction. (9)[2]

And while certainly the literary production after Tlatelolco was considerable, much of it was not fiction but instead manifested itself as *testimonio*, in some form or other. The most well known of these is Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* (published in English as *Massacre in Mexico* 1971) which, as a result of the official silence and censorship immediately following 1968, became a substitute for an official historical account of the time. This much is true of the literary production as a whole in the years that followed. Poniatowska's text especially has been treated as a referential historical text. This void in the official history meant that those with the ability to tell their story, as were the students imprisoned in Lecumberri and activists within the power structure of the movement, were the only voices able to write this history.

On the other side, Tlatelolco was almost completely unarticulated from Mexico's official historical record in many ways. History books often glossed over the events of Tlatelolco, some acknowledged the events but failed to explore the details, and others ignored them altogether. The lack of histories specific to Tlatelolco was further compounded by the manner in which it was addressed in the few general histories of Mexico that touched on the events in the years that followed 1968. José Fuentes Mares's *Biografía de una nación. De Cortés a López Portillo* (*A Nation's Biography. From Cortés to López Portillo* 1982), for example, barely touches on the student massacre which, incidentally, took place under the presidency of Díaz Ordaz, which is well within the scope of his study. In fact, it briefly addresses Díaz Ordaz's positive qualities in terms of his rise to the presidency following López Mateos's 6-year term or *sexenio*. According to Fuentes Mares:

> President López Mateos thought of don Gustavo Díaz Ordaz as his successor, an astute, intelligent, energetic *poblano* and, having served in the Interior Ministry during the previous *sexenio*, politically experienced. Surely don Gustavo's only defect as a politician would have been his inability to

[2] It is important to note that while the Mexican Revolution and Tlatelolco are highly significant as key moments in twentieth-century Mexico, each has been treated in opposite ways by the Mexican government. The Revolution became the referent for the production of a discourse adopted by the PRI while Tlatelolco became an invisible thorn that went unacknowledged for much of the latter part of the twentieth century.

> control his passion, more than once volcanic and always blinding of reason. A politician can be even dumb, but never passionate outside of his intimate relations, although in this private venue he will run the risk that a woman will come to tell us the details of his performance. (291)

Fuentes Mares foreshadows the Tlatelolco massacre by alluding to Díaz Ordaz's passionate disposition, in essence reducing the tragedy of October 2 to something as insignificant as a lovers' quarrel. He goes on to conclude that Díaz Ordaz performed his duties as President relatively well and that "at the conclusion of his term would have come out well if the night of Tlatelolco had not crossed his path" (291). Fuentes Mares suggests that Díaz Ordaz's involvement in the events of 1968 was akin to that of a bystander who reacted to events that had a life of their own and that intersected with his presidency. It should be noted, however, that Fuentes Mares does present some semblance of criticism of the government's overreactions when he states that Tlatelolco was a "tragedy that [Díaz Ordaz] brought upon himself, in part because of his character, and in part for believing, like all Mexican politicians, that time and not opportune decisions resolve problems" (291). This criticism, however, is somewhat muted by the lack of details concerning any aspect of the student movement or the massacre. More importantly, Fuentes Mares attributes the massacre's impetus, not to a decision (or lack thereof) by Díaz Ordaz, but to an inherent quality common to all Mexican politicians. It was not so much that the president failed to act or acted in any one particular way, but that he acted just like any other Mexican politician would have acted. In the end, it matters not who held the presidency since the events would have inevitably played out in the same manner in any instance. Fuentes Mares spends the remainder of this section explaining the qualities of the Mexican politician that would have resulted in the Tlatelolco massacre. He further ends the student movement and the tragedy that surrounds it on the night of October 2. He does not address the students who were imprisoned following the massacre nor the reasons for their continued incarceration years later. Fuentes Mares concludes his analysis of the Díaz Ordaz *sexenio* with the following words: "Tlatelolco made obvious the system's decrepit nature, filled with inauthenticity, legends, and happy tales. Its great lie of origin devoured it at its core" (292). This is immediately followed in the next chapter by, "On December 1st, 1969, Díaz Ordaz handed the presidency to don Luis Echeverría Alvarez" (293). Fuentes Mares obscures the 14 months following the Tlatelolco massacre with a turn of a page.

Enrique Semo's eight-volume *México, un pueblo en la historia* (*Mexico, a People in History* 1989) manages to include the student movement without a direct mention of the massacre itself. Instead, it includes the "Manifesto for the Nation" released by the CNH in December of 1968. There is no analysis, commentary, or mention of the actual events by the historian himself. The six pages that the Manifesto encompasses are all that is offered as a history of Tlatelolco. These six pages are counterbalanced by the 20 pages of extracts from Díaz Ordaz's "*IV informe de gobierno*" (Fourth State of the Union Address) in which he makes his case against the student movement. Semo treats both parties in the same manner, but, much like Fuentes Mares, offers the reader no data concerning the massacre, nor does he engage it with a critical eye. The reader does not know what happened after the massacre and the reader is left with no knowledge that a massacre even took place. It is not until the end of the book in a "Chronology" section that reads like an afterthought or footnote that we are made aware of some of the events surrounding October 2, 1968.

Still, perhaps one of the most intriguing erasures of Tlatelolco is by Alicia Hernández Chávez in her *México. Breve historia contemporánea* (*Mexico. Brief Contemporary History* 2000). This volume makes absolutely no mention, allusion, hint, or gesture that might lead the reader to the student movement of 1968 and the massacre that followed. And while it could be argued that Hernández Chávez's focus on the economic history of Mexico warrants the exclusion of the Tlatelolco massacre, it is nonetheless a mystery why the 1968 Olympics do not enter into her analysis, given the dramatic economic impact they were supposed to have and what the event was meant to signify in Mexico's entry into the world stage and international markets. What makes this especially perplexing and ironic is her assertion, when speaking of Mexico's most important general histories, that "the synthesis *par excellence* is the one that Octavio Paz's makes in *Labyrinth of Solitude* and *The Other Mexico*, works that I have read and reread on more than one occasion and where I learned that to be Mexican is to be a product not just of one's history, but of a broader history, a universal history" (10). Referencing Paz while at the same time ignoring the Tlatelolco massacre is highly problematic when one considers his stance against the regime under which the massacre occurred.

There are also attempts to minimize the gravity of the events of 1968. The most notable is General Luis Gutierrez Oropeza's *Díaz Ordaz. El Hombre. El Gobernante* (*Díaz Ordaz. The Man. The Leader* 1988). It is important to note that during Díaz Ordaz's presidency, General Gutierrez

Oropeza was the head of the *Estado Mayor Presidencial*, the president's official guard. In this work, Gutierrez Oropeza places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM) students and administrators. He writes:

> There are those who want to make the student disturbances of 1968 appear as a movement in defense of national interests.
>
> This is incorrect: the night of October 2nd 1968 will go down in Mexico's history with two hallmarks. The first, one of disloyalty and treason to the homeland by dishonest politicians and creoles of spirit and of those who live under the protection of foreign ideas and flags, like some of Mexico's National Autonomous University's renowned intellectuals, teachers and students who, ignoring their principal mission, entered the tornado of ambitions and self-interests that formed that whole apparatus, exacerbated by mercenaries of the pen.
>
> The other hallmark: President Díaz Ordaz's nobility, who with his energy and opportune decision salvaged Mexico's fundamental values. (49)

Gutierrez Oropeza frames the 1968 movement as a communist incursion on Mexican soil. Indeed, the book's dedication by Gustavo de Anda proclaims, "One day it will have to be recognized that we owe to Gustavo Díaz Ordaz that Mexico was saved from falling into the Soviets' hands. The 1968 subversion, sponsored from abroad, had that end." This is of course to be expected from a man with loyalties that are not hidden, though it is not clear if Gutierrez Oropeza truly believes these assertions or is attempting to deflect attention from himself. One must consider that Gutierrez Oropeza was also the target of investigations concerning his role in the student massacre. In some respects, his defense of Díaz Ordaz can also be seen as an act of self-defense.

Above all these Mexican Histories are the official documents and histories published by the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI) itself. There are countless historical publications that deal with the electoral processes of any number of presidential hopefuls, who opposed which candidates, political platforms for any of the presidents' 6-year terms, and many other topics. But as one might imagine, there are few, if any, that focus on the Tlatelolco Massacre, the political prisoners in Lecumberri, or even the student movement of 1968. There is, for example, the *Historia documental de partido de la Revolución* (*Documentary History of the Party of the Revolution* 1981) that, between volumes 8 and 9, has an almost 12-month gap. The final entry for volume

8 is dated February 1968 while the first entry in volume 9 is from 1969. What minimal mention there is of the student movement can be found in a collection of essays titled *El partido en el poder. Seis ensayos* (*The Party in Power. Six Essays* 1990). In this collection, there are two essays which, given their focus, ought to have included a mention of Tlatelolco. The first of these, "The Hegemonic Party: 1946–1972" by Jacqueline Peschard, makes a minimal mention of the student movement of 1968. It does, however, deal with the railroad workers and teacher strikes that preceded it. It reads, "In the case of the railroad workers and teachers, the conflict could not be resolved through negotiation; both movements were then stifled and their leadership jailed" (205). The mention of these movements from the late 1950s is brief and somewhat dismissive. There is no serious study of the issues at play in either of them. Instead, there is a mention of a failed negotiation that, *unfortunately*, and perhaps inevitably, concluded with the imprisonment of the movements' leadership. The rhetoric hints at the same view expressed by Gutierrez Oropeza who claims that the violence against the students was necessary to preserve Mexican core values, especially considering the involvement of the communist party in these movements. In regard to 1968, Peschard writes, "The movement that constituted a frontal challenge to the regime was the student movement of 1968. Without being an expression of the middle class, per se, it arose from there, particularly from the more enlightened urban groups, but also the least controllable" (209–210). She succinctly characterizes the essence of the movement as a desire to open new spaces of political participation (210) but fails to deal with the movement in more than this synthesis.

The second essay from this collection, "The Difficulty of Change" by Ignacio Marván Laborde, takes a closer look at the student movement in that he contextualizes it along with other student movements in different parts of the country. They are characterized as a symptom of the lack of political representation afforded by the PRI, and glosses over the details, arriving at the conclusion that

> For the Institutional Revolutionary Party the years immediately following the repression of the 1968 student movement were marked by tension generated by the growing critique of the Party, the awareness of a breaking point and of a different reality, as well as the need to reaffirm the benefits of the political system and the extreme caution in its internal reevaluation, by virtue of both the resistance to change as well as the radicalization tendencies present in Mexican society at that time. (258–259)

What is striking about this particular approach to the student movement is that it tries to coopt it as a slight deviation on the road of the "Party of the Revolution." In other words, the student movement is presented as a catalyst for the self-betterment of the Party. This same approach is employed by Rodrigo Sández Parma in *¡El Partido al poder!* (*The Party on to Power!* 1987) who explains that 1964 saw the emergence of guerrilla groups that came into being as a result of the same lack of political liberties that had hindered the political system (the PRI). This mutual victimization by some power outside the reach of either entity continues, "Until arriving, unfortunately, at the events of 1968 and, later, 1971, which is characterized by the beginning of assaults, kidnappings, and the emergence of urban guerrillas, some of them supported by international groups" (52). The essence of Tlatelolco is reduced to a mention of two different years that encompassed many lifetimes of struggle, and hundreds, if not thousands, of these lives being cut short by a system that is presented here as being as much a victim as the dead of Tlatelolco. The section on Tlatelolco is concluded and Mexico moves on better off than it was:

> After these events came important juridical and electoral reforms, opening major democratic avenues for participation of all ideologies and for the manifest inconformity. The political system advances after these decisive years of intense struggles and sacrifices by the national left. (258)

What remains, according to the PRI, is a movement that, in essence, encapsulated the same ideology of the Party but was not able to properly voice it within a set of schemes that had grown old and outdated. Furthermore, both of these entities are victimized by the same force, which ultimately, one is left to deduce, led to the clash between them. This clash is only hinted at by Sández Parma. The end product is the transformation of a clash of ideologies into a single end: the advancement of the PRI. Jorge Volpi sees the same danger years later when he writes:

> In fact, the power is about to include October 2nd of 1968 in the long list of Mexico's "glorious defeats". Tlatelolco is about to be integrated, in this manner, to the series of sad national episodes that stem from the conquest of Tenochtitlán to the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas: places and names of tragedies that have become *unforgettable*, perfectly ordered and assimilated into Mexico's official history. (429–430)

In this manner, the state would include Tlatelolco as yet another signifier of its commitment to the emblematic revolutionary path that has served the people so well.

This monotone reaction by the state, while expected, nonetheless established a rather simplistic plane in which the debate would take place. In other words, so simplistic was the state's position that the responses hardly had to be complicated or sophisticated at all. While it is not clear if this was the catalyst or not, the student discourse's initial articulation was almost equally monotone. Furthermore, the lack of official documents concerning the events in question led to the creation of a void in Mexican historiography. As I already mentioned, the seminal work dealing with Tlatelolco is Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco*, which is a collected oral history. Poniatowska's work is not exactly a testimonial in that she does not place herself in the events she is describing. She does, however, collect testimonials from a number of sources, some rather anonymous people, as well as well-known activists such as González de Alba, Heberto Castillo, and José Revueltas. Still, as one opens the front cover of *La noche de Tlatelolco*, one cannot help but notice the dedication, which will frame the work in the realm of the *testimonio*. Poniatowska dedicates the work to her brother Jan who was killed in 1968 in an automobile accident. Though his death was unrelated to the student movement, Jan was involved in it and, as such, the bond of loss is one that creates a similar bond with those that lost loved ones in Tlatelolco. Her work as a referential text, then, is "tainted" by a tragic subjectivity that is evident throughout the work. I write this, not to discount the value of *La noche de Tlatelolco*, but to question the historiographical apparatus that dictates that a clearly subjective text be the key document to an event as important as the Tlatelolco massacre. Still, this should come as no surprise, given the complete negation of the events by the state. The resulting simplicity in the manner in which the state articulated the events surrounding the student movement of 1968 was mirrored by the manner in which the student leadership's historical construct, while ideologically opposed to that of the state's, was nonetheless similarly lacking in depth.

Poniatowska's text is not alone in the realm of unofficial histories of Tlatelolco. To it we can add González de Alba's *Los días y los años* (*The days and the years* 1971), Carlos Monsiváis's *Días de guardar* (*Days of Observance* 1970), Juan Miguel de Mora's *Tlatelolco T-68. ¡Por fin toda la verdad!* (*Tlatelolco T-68. Finally the Whole Truth* 2000), as well as other works by José Revueltas, Heberto Castillo, Ramón Ramírez, and Gastón

García Cantú. All of these authors try to tell their version of the history of Tlatelolco. What they each have in common is that they tend to be articulated as testimonials of one form or another, and place the responsibility for the tragedy squarely on the silent shoulders of the state. Most were written within the first 2 or 3 years following the massacre. Some, in fact, were written in cellblocks, immediately following Tlatelolco. They were written by those who not only witnessed the events, but were also very much involved in their development. Furthermore, these texts tend to contribute to a highly homogenous discourse that articulated the student movement as an intellectual movement that began at UNAM with the CNH and continued in Lecumberri with those student leaders who were incarcerated following Tlatelolco. This approach persisted through much of the 1970s.

In the continuing search for "truth," in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Julio Scherer García authored two works concerning Tlatelolco: *Parte de guerra. Tlatelolco 1968. Documentos del general Marcelino García Barragán. Los hechos y la historia* (*Part of War. Tlatelolco 1968. General Marcelino Barragán's Documents. The Facts and History* 1999) with Carlos Monsiváis, and *Los Patriotas: De Tlatelolco a la guerra sucia* (*The Patriots. From Tlatelolco to the Dirty War* 2004). These texts however, still have the task of "uncovering" the truth of Tlatelolco, which makes them fall among a chorus of works that try to do just that. The state's continued silence and active silencing undoubtedly contributed to this continuing search for truth as the ultimate goal. Volpi points out that

> While serving as Secretary of Public Education (1991–1993), Ernesto Zedillo, tried to include a reference to the Tlatelolco massacre in the free school textbooks, which triggered the army's open opposition and generated a bristly controversy regarding the content of official history. (447)

Ultimately, as Volpi illustrates, the dialogue between the state's and the students' discourses would be reduced to a simple equation and articulated with the question "what happened?" Indeed, this approach places a tremendous weight on the potential answer, almost as if it would finally put the world in order. In reality, it simplifies the issue precisely by falling into the trap of responding to a simple position with a simple argument. Volpi writes that

> Following the inevitable temptation of justifying the defeats, people have tried to convert the student movement of 1968 into the center of the

> country's political history. In this version of 1968, doubly whitewashed, the government insists that the massacre was only an excess, a deviation by the legitimate power that will not be repeated, while movement's defenders assure, for their part, that all of Mexican society's democratic accomplishments are derived from the movement (430).

Again, the absolutism of both positions signals an inherent fault in the manner in which Tlatelolco has been approached, both at the micro- and macrolevels. On the one hand, as Louise Walker argues, "It is time to decenter the 1968 student movement in explanations of Mexican history. It is intellectually irresponsible to lionize the student movement; doing so magnifies its significance and distorts our understanding of Mexico's recent past" (12). Walker echoes Volpi's concern about the type of reverence that is paid to an event that, while important, nonetheless needs to be studied within an appropriate context. Still, the decentering she proposes can also be applied within the movement itself in order to better understand its significance and reach.

What will most concern this study, then, is the manner in which the discourse of the student movement of 1968 is articulated at its inception and its evolution after Tlatelolco. Specifically, I study the manner in which the student discourse of 1968 evolves from that homogenous construct set on establishing the "true" history of Tlatelolco against the version of the state, to building a more nuanced and complex series of historical narratives that include previously underrepresented constituencies. It needs to be stressed that the works studied here are not involved in a process of historical revisionism. This approach would signal that simply putting forth an additional perspective would supersede the previous ones. This is not a case of temporal privilege where the latest version of the events must necessarily be the "truer" one. Instead, what I propose is that the manner in which the events of 1968 were represented was inherently limited to a myopic view of the events, precisely due to the proximity from which they were articulated. The works studied here represent an evolving understanding and a series of shifting perspectives concerning the events of 1968. And while it may seem that these approaches are more democratic, it is important to note that these perspectives were already voiced and already contributed to the student movement and are now simply better articulated within a historical discourse that is more complexly represented.

The initial historical representations of the events of 1968 were essentially limited to two: that of the state and that of the CNH. Of these two,

the historical construct produced by the state was most effectively transmitted and institutionalized at a discursive level. History, according to de Certeau,

> symbolizes a society capable of managing the space that it provides for itself, of replacing the obscurity of the lived body with the expression of a "will to know" or a "will to dominate" the body, of changing inherited traditions into a textual product or, in short, of being turned into a blank page that it should itself be able to write. (6)

In other words, historical discourse is not a tool by which we seek to learn or understand our history, but rather it is a tool by which we try to master it, to make it fit into what best serves the continuity of any given entity. These words ring true when we consider Mexico's historical discourse as articulated by the PRI following the Tlatelolco massacre. History is a process by which the ruling party organizes the past in a package that embodies revolutionary progress. Historical discourse, according to de Certeau, is guided by contemporary models of interpretation. He concludes that the historian's discourse "is therefore deployed 'next to' the present time, in a staging of the past which is analogous to that which, drawn also through a relation to the present, the prospectivist produces in terms of the future" (8). Thus, any interpretation of history is guided by a series of variables, many of which are anchored to the present time and have, as an ultimate goal, projection into the future.

According to de Certeau, this is a central fault in historical discourse: it is at the mercy of a colonial ideology through which a regime is able to legitimize power. And indeed, his assertion does ring true in this context. Nonetheless, de Certeau's examination of the problems of historiography still finds itself firmly cemented within and influenced by the limits of that very discourse. That is to say, he examines the problems of historiography through a history of historiography. While he is deeply engaged in the study of historical discourse, he is also using that very discourse to illustrate and validate his conclusions. Thus, regardless of any other ideological leaning, the one ideology that remains inescapable is that of historiography itself, or to be more specific to this discussion, western historiography. Historical discourse as such remains a heavily privileged entity. As a result, there is an assumption being made: that history must be narrated in order to be represented. Historical discourse limits representations of history to historical narration in historical narratives. Hayden White, for

example, writes that history is "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse" (White *ix*). I argue that history need not necessarily be a textual narrative or narrated at all, but that through a narrative or visual narrative, it can be represented. In other words, history can be represented and engaged in narratives such as *testimonios* as well as in films and other visual media. Furthermore, I argue that even within the initial historical construct of the student movement of 1968, which articulated itself as an alternative to the emptiness of the state's, there is still a center of power that dictates an ideological imperative. Foucault writes that

> Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, because one is subject to the law in any case? Or that, history being the ruse of reason, power is the ruse of history, always emerging the winner? This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. (*History of Sexuality* 94)

In other words, as much as discourse speaks against the discourse of the state, it nonetheless is part of a system that establishes its own set of rules that exclude other constituencies from representation. This much becomes evident through the passage of time and the plethora of voices that join a growing chorus that constantly challenges the manner in which this movement has been traditionally articulated.

One of the ways in which many of these works represent a historical perspective is through the use and manipulation of negativity: the creation of a space of representation outside the affective reach of a power center and taking advantage of what, according to Heidegger, is an essential part of the apparatus of the *dasein* (being). To exist toward an end is a condition of existence that dictates that one is constantly dying, being that death is always conceived as the infinite possibility of the finite subject. The anticipation of death is a freedom toward death. In other words, death does not negate life but reformulates it within a negative space. In direct relation to this study, negative spaces will be those that exist outside the discursive realm of the power center, be it the state, the CNH, or any other discursive power. If the dominant discourse, for example, were based on the manipulation of the state-controlled media, then an alternative would

be silence as discourse: a discourse that manipulates negativity as a means of production. In this manner, my conception of negativity differs from Adorno's, who sees negativity as a critique of ideology. In this case, negativity is used as an escape from a specific ideology and a caveat from which to introduce what might be termed as an opposition ideology without the risk of falling into a discursive battle.

It is within this conception of history and historical discourse that I examine the literary and cultural works in this study. The function of these literary texts, however, has not been established. Are they *other* historical discourses or only representations of these? This last question is especially important because it sets the work as either an affective entity or simply an effect of some other force. As a representation of a historical discourse or a historical reality, the texts function as portrait. That is to say that apart from simply representing that reality, there is nothing more they would need to contribute. On the other hand, as *other* historical discourses, these texts have to be more than mere representations. The works studied here do much more than represent history. They (re)present it and retell it. They engage a historical moment and attack it from the confines of their respective spaces. As such, my position is clearly that these works function as *other* historical discourses. But they are other, not just in relation to the state's history. They are also other in relation to the discourse of 1968 as articulated by the student leadership and those unrepresented constituencies that were co-opted by that very discourse. In 1970, Monsiváis writes, "The discussions about Tlatelolco have not stopped, but neither have the optimistic and luminous references in relation to the future diminished" (*Días de guardar* 18). Monsiváis is right to point out the gaze toward the future, though that future will constantly rework the discourse of 1968 in ways that he most likely did not imagine.

My goal in this project is not to assert that literary representations of history are ideologically innocent or uncorrupted. Indeed, there can be no question that each of the works studied here has a clear ideological bias. Nor do I intend to propose that history can be best represented in literary texts. What I suggest is that the political realities following the student massacre in Mexico created an atmosphere in which representation of these events through traditional historical narratives such as newspapers and, later, school texts was not a viable possibility. Given the status of the state-controlled media and the projection of a conciliatory and inclusive discourse following Díaz Ordaz's *sexenio*, the only viable option for representing a position other than the one endorsed by the state was

through literary and cultural texts. History in this study is not meant to be discounted as an unreliable discourse nor is it my intention to present literary or cultural production as nonprivileged entities. Rather, I intend to present literary and cultural production as another form of historical representation that ultimately leads to what Volpi calls a "proliferation of histories of a single history" (431) where any one of these histories can complement, expand, contradict, deny, undermine, or ignore both the state-sponsored versions or those supported by the students, but that ultimately add other voices to Mexican historiography.

This book is organized around two *testimonios* (Chaps. 2 and 4), a documentary film and a series of posters from 1968 (Chap. 3), two films released in the early 1990s (Chap. 5), and a museum that opened in 2007 (Chap. 6). Each of these works—or sets of works—has had a hand in shaping the discourse of 1968 and the manner in which scholars engage it. More importantly, each adds a voice to the existing discourse that further deepens its scope. Inevitably, each also has its own set of blind spots. One cannot argue that these works add to the discussion without conceding that other works have in some form or another excluded certain elements from their representations. As such, one must also concede that all of the works studied here are also exclusive of other elements. That is not to say that such omissions were so because of malice or contempt. Rather, I simply underscore the inherent impossibility of articulating the whole of the student movement of 1968.

In the first chapter, I examine Luis González de Alba's *Los días y los años*. This work was written entirely behind the walls of Lecumberri, following the student massacre in Tlatelolco. In it, González de Alba narrates the story of his life behind bars. He describes in detail the continuation of the student movement in prison. He also is able to give an account of the events leading to the student massacre from an insider's perspective. Furthermore, González de Alba humanizes this history by inserting himself into the events, not always as a political subject, but as a person with a family, friends, hopes, and dreams—all of which have been impacted by his involvement in the student movement. This work acts as a history of a movement that will be discarded by the dominant discourse. As such, it acts as a preserved history, one that fills the void left by the official PRI discourse. It also acts as a metahistory of the PRI's articulation of the nation as it bears witness to the mechanisms that were responsible for the unarticulation of Tlatelolco in the PRI's construction of nation in the decades following 1968. What is particularly interesting about this text is that it

is written from inside Lecumberri. As such, it is written within a negative space. In other words, González de Alba, no longer an active member of the student movement outside, appropriates his new position as a civilly dead subject to produce a work that will act as a history of the movement. The operation is carried out by a man who has nothing left to lose as he is now within the grasp of the state. In response to the state's strategy of incarcerating those who were instrumental to the student movement as a way of silencing it, González de Alba uses the same position that would silence him and turns into an affective space of production. I consider this text to be central in the initial articulation of the discourse of the student movement as conceived by the CNH and as such, the reading of González de Alba's text relies heavily on classic interpretations of *testimonio* in order to better situate it as a referential text.

Chapter 3 focuses on the documentary *El grito* (*The Cry* 1970) and the visual discourse of 1968 as manifested in the posters used in protests and demonstrations. I argue that they both contribute to problematizing the discourse of 1968 as stemming exclusively from the student leadership. *El grito*, for example, manages to disseminate the student leadership's ideology through the narration and sound clips in the film, while it critiques that very construction through the images it presents. Likewise, the posters of 1968 translate and disseminate the ideology of the CNH while still offering a criticism of the lack of credit and representation afforded to those responsible for that medium. I argue, using Deleuze and Guattari, that these works form part of a historical rhizome that opens avenues of interpretation and representation through their connections to other discourses. In so doing, they abandon the hierarchical imperative of trying to establish the "true" history of Tlatelolco in favor of contributing a historical perspective that, in connection to others, can feed the constitution of the whole.

Roberta "La Tita" Avendaño Martinez's *De la libertad y el encierro* (*About Liberty and Prison* 1998) is the focus of Chap. 4. Here, I study the manner in which "La Tita" begins to articulate a female experience and women's contributions in 1968. Since Gonzalez de Alba's text, as well as many others that preceded and followed it, privileged a male-centered perspective as the essence of the student movement, Tita's work exposes the gendering of the discourse of 1968. Tita examines the way in which the prison, the prison experience, the concept of justice, and political agency are all gendered, and privilege a male perspective. Her work gives voice to a woman's perspective of prison life away from the confines of the

well-known Lecumberri prison. Still, rather than exploring her contributions to the movement, Tita illustrates her subaltern position within the movement itself by describing the drastically different living conditions she faced in a prison with only a handful of political prisoners. Additionally, she details the life of other nonpolitical prisoners as a way of illustrating the far-reaching and permeating injustices to which women were victims.

The fifth chapter looks at the way in which the films *Rojo Amancer* (*Red Dawn* 1989) by Jorge Fons and Gabriel Retes's *El Bulto* (*The Lump* 1991) extend the scope of discussion to include censorship as a discourse, and the possible ramifications of uncovering the history of Tlatelolco. *Rojo Amanecer* is the first nondocumentary film shot about the events of Tlatelolco, which in itself is a testament to the way in which this history was omitted from the national discourse for many years. The film mirrors the way in which Mexico learned of the massacre which would be mostly through witness accounts and not through official channels. This is clearly represented in the film when, after the massacre, the family turns on the television and hears the voice of the newscaster, perhaps meant to allude to Jacobo Zabludovsky (a mainstay of PRI-controlled news media), reporting the news which in no way matches the experience of the witnesses in the apartment. The strategies already explored in textual terms, are seen here, or rather unseen, in a visual medium. *El Bulto*, on the other hand, takes a different approach in that it nearly divorces itself from the events of 1968. The film presents a man who was beaten into a coma in 1971 and awakens 20 years later, still a man from the generation of 1968. He symbolizes a history that must be reinserted into the current historical reality that has gone on without him. His historical existence is one that is made possible through the negativity of his coma. He existed untouched, uncontaminated, shielded by negativity from Mexican progress for 20 years.

The sixth and final chapter examines the *Memorial del 68*, a museum that opened in 2007 and houses a series of interviews/*testimonios* by those who actively participated in the events of 1968. The *Memorial* functions as a space of remembrance that embodies the slogan "1968 is not forgotten" while it simultaneously opens the door to a wider set of arguments in relation to Tlatelolco's legacy. While the museum portion of the *Memorial* appears to follow the same discursive line employed by the CNH, the *testimonios* offer a more complex notion of exactly *who* can be considered a participant in the events and provides a space through which others can add to, amend, or expand the discourse of 1968.

These works are able to represent history in ways that diminish the potential for what Lyotard terms as a *differend*. They do so without undermining the discourse of 1968, yet still manage to question its very constitution. They each fall into the marginal, but I would suggest that they do so in an unpredictable manner. When taken as a whole, these works are historical representations that voice a series of different histories, which in turn combine to stretch the boundaries of Mexican literary and cultural traditions to form a more inclusive rhizomatic construct. In such a construct, the power relation that Foucault describes is avoided. While there is a multiplicity of points of resistance within a power network, power ceases to be anchored on any one center. The system in which these discourses are articulated is constantly shifting as each element engages each of the others in different ways depending on any number of variables. The result is that each relation, each connection, each engagement produces a different power dynamic and, in turn, a shifting power center. Consequently, we are left with a student movement discourse that, not only evolved between 1968 and 2008, but that continues and will continue to evolve as more and more perspectives find themselves articulated.

2

Testimonio as Metahistory in González de Alba's *Los días y los años*

Among the students taken into custody on and after October 2, 1968, was Luis González de Alba who, as a key member of the student movement, was able to give a detailed recollection of the events leading to the massacre at the *Plaza de las tres culturas* (Plaza of Three Cultures). While the most well-known work concerning Tlatelolco continues to be Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971), González de Alba's *Los días y los años* (1971) offers a more detailed and nuanced lens through which the reader can begin to piece together the inner workings of the student movement. More importantly, González de Alba's work functions as a metahistory that bears witness to the events of 1968, while also, through an exploitation of various forms of negativity—that is, the creation of alternate narrative and conceptual spaces of production as is the prison itself—the *testimonio* details the mechanisms responsible for the unarticulation of Tlatelolco in the official historical discourse for most of the twentieth century.

Los días y los años brings to light various elements of the 1968 student movement and the agents that opposed it, both from within and outside it. It is narrated largely in the first person and is composed of at least three layers of narration, the first and most striking of which deals with González de Alba's everyday life in prison. Through it he tells of his own activities and those of other prisoners, as well as the organization of the political prisoners and the transformation of the student movement from a political entity heavily reliant on street demonstrations into one which

J.J. Rojo, *Revisiting the Mexican Student Movement of 1968*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_2

had to evolve once so many of its members were imprisoned on and after October 2, 1968. The second details the 1968 student movement before and up to the Tlatelolco massacre. Here, the narrator explains the students' political machinations as well as the countermoves by the various opposing factions. At the same time, he tries to dispel propaganda put forth by the Mexican government. In the third layer, one that is intertwined with the previous two, we see the personal aspects of the author's life, including love and the aspects of existence in which he finds solace and beauty. This part of the narrative is marked with a more literary tone than the other two layers, which signals the rather ambiguous narrative space this work occupies between novel and *testimonio*.

Concerning this last point, the debate has been carried out by many including González de Alba himself who, in his *testimonio* for the *Memorial del 68* in 2006, stated, "Well, I wrote, in prison, my first novel which was well received because it was a narrative about 68, *Los días y los años*." This was in direct contradiction to the position he took in 1971 when he defended the publication as a *testimonio*. He is also not alone in the debate. The distinction is further muddied by the manner in which some of the material from *Los días y los años* forms a part of *La noche de Tlatelolco* which is widely accepted as a *testimonio*. In fact, González de Alba publicly accused Poniatowska of plagiarism in 1997 in his essay "To Sanitize Memory," where he argued that much of the material she used was misattributed. He offers a long list of errors in her manuscript and asks that she correct her work in anticipation of the 30th anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre. He closes his essay with the following indictment:

> If our history is such a nest of lies, *pípilas*, heroic cadets, indigenous paradises, good ones and bad ones, conquests, defeats and a cemetery where we have laid together bitter enemies, it is because even from the very sources we began by telling lies. If we follow Poniatowska's path, perhaps October 2nd is not forgotten, but it becomes something else. (49)

After much legal wrangling and Poniatowska's resignation from *Nexos*'s editorial board, the issue was resolved, at least in terms of the written work itself. While *La noche de Tlatelolco* had been reprinted several times, a reedited second edition was published in 1998. Still, while this apparently settled that particular issue, the controversy nonetheless ignited a public debate about the responsibilities of the testimonial writer (Balderston, Gonzalez, and Lopez 1172). In the end, the approach I take to *Los días*

y los años is based on John Beverley's classic text dealing with *testimonio*. And while there are certainly common points between his definition and González de Alba's text, there are also plenty of divergences. Ultimately, *Los días y los años*, if not a *testimonio* per se, can certainly be described as testimonial in nature, that is, it shares many of the same qualities Beverley uses to define the genre:

> A novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet (that is, printed as opposed to acoustic) form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts, and whose unit of narration is usually a "life" or a significant life experience. Testimonio may include, but is not subsumed under, any of the following textual categories, some of which are conventionally considered literature, others not: autobiography, autobiographical novel, oral history, memoir, confession, diary, interview, eyewitness report, life history, *novella-testimonio*, nonfiction novel, or "factographic literature." (Gugelberger 24–25)

Thus, even if we were to concede that *Los días y los años* were a novel, it would not preclude it from also being a *testimonio*, or at least testimonial. After all, given the fluidity of the genre, and as Elzbieta Sklodowska points out, "Testimonio inevitably positions itself around the shifting borders of a well-known but elusive genre: the novel" (Gugelberger 85). In other words, while indeed *testimonio* may well be difficult to define, so too can its closest referent. Furthermore, *Los días y los años* is not what one could call a "closed text" where, as Beverley points out, "the story and the subject end with the end of the text" (Gugelberger 37). The actors in *Los días y los años* are real people, many of whom remained in jail even after the book was written. Indeed, many of these people remained committed to the student movement for many years and reasserted that commitment in the *testimonios* given to the *Memorial del 68* in 2006 and 2007. But perhaps most importantly, the text's unarguable sociopolitical charge and mission cement it within the *testimonio* genre. In response to Beverley's definition, Barbara Harlow writes that

> More important, however, than these apparently formal criteria, which suggest the testimonio's identification with the autobiography, are the specific historical conditions that inform the testimonial composition and determine its interventionary challenge to the dominant institutions of literature as these are underwritten by ascendant conventions of authorship and disciplinary strictures and definitions. (Gugelberger 72)

And while certainly, *Los días y los años* poses that challenge to the literary establishment, it does so, to a greater degree, to the sociopolitical landscape in twentieth-century Mexico. In other words, whether it is or is not a novel, is or is not a *testimonio*, the fact remains that this work has had a significant impact as a *testimonio*, and to refuse to read it as such ignores that important factor. With this, I do not presume to end the debate. Rather, I propose that the work *can* be read within the framework of both genres.[1]

Beyond simply being a series of notes about the struggles of a man in the middle of a movement, this work shows a tremendous amount of historical foresight. Though González de Alba sets out to relate the history of a process of which he is a part, it is difficult to ignore the metahistorical aspect of the work. It is true that, without *testimonios* like *Los días y los años*, the events of Tlatelolco might have never been recorded. Juan Villoro writes:

> During the student movement there was very little news coverage of the students' demands. The books by Elena Poniatowska (*La noche de Tlatelolco*), Luis González de Alba (*Los días y* [*los años*]), and Carlos Monsiváis (*Días de guardar*) contributed to fixing a memory that was at risk of falling into oblivion. There the true story about the movement appeared. (Corona and Jörgensen 65)

It is worth noting that Villoro mentions stories rather than histories when referring to the content of these works. The separation between them and official histories is not explained, but it is clear that whatever a history is, *Los días y los años* is not. This position is supported by Sklodowska when she warns that

> it would be naive to assume a homologous relation between history and text. The witness's discourse cannot be a reflection of his experience, but rather its refraction due to memory's vicissitudes, his intention, and his ideology. The author-editor's intentionality and ideology superimpose themselves

[1] While the debate will undoubtedly continue, it seems clear that it will never be satisfactorily decided in a manner that appeases all sides. Still, the debate does bring to light the fluidity of the genre itself and the manner in which, not only this particular work, but *testimonios* in general challenge preconceived notions of the division between literature and history, and between fact and fiction. But regardless of the more stylized or literary language found in parts of the work, the narrative remains true to a single goal: to narrate the events leading up to and following the Tlatelolco massacre through a singular yet representative experience.

> onto the original text, creating more ambiguities, silences and lacunae in the process of selection, montage and arranging of the compiled material given the norms of the literary form. (Sklodowska 379)

As such, the value of González de Alba's work is highly significant, but only as an artifact of a key moment in Mexico's history. This much is certainly true, especially when one considers the fervor with which the events were contested through the end of the twentieth century, so much so that Subcomandante Marcos drew a rhetorical line from the Mexican Revolution, through the 1968 student movement, to the Chiapas uprisings. On October 2, 1998, Marcos released a decree addressed "To the Dignified Generation of 1968" where he refers to them as "Brothers and Sisters." Marcos paralleled the political repression of 1968 to the government's actions in Chiapas in 1998. He writes, "To the men and women. To the ones that follow. To the ones that resist. To the ones that continue. To the ones that even dead, survived 68 and today we see on this side, beside us, even though different and distinct. To these men and women. We, the Zapatistas, salute them. 1968. 1998" (Subcomandante Marcos 107–108). Marcos's rhetorical move is a testament to the affective power of the discourse of 1968.

In response to Sklodowska's warning, however, we must note that there is an underlying privilege placed onto history by not taking into account that her warning can also be made about historical texts. History can and is also subject to a refraction of vicissitudes of ideology and intentionality. History, after all, is not written in a historical vacuum. To examine this work, then, as only an artifact would be to greatly diminish its value, since it would dismiss the importance of González de Alba's metahistorical role. In other words, through the narration of the history of the student movement, *Los días y los años* also outlines the many reasons why it was narrated out of the state's historical construction, and thus bears witness to the *writing* of History. González de Alba is at once a historian and a witness, not just to the events of Tlatelolco or 1968, but also to the historical process according to which he is to be written out of the national discourse. This testimonial offers us a unique look at the history of the student movement of 1968 and the way in which Mexican history portrayed it in the twentieth century. It is a history that is in and out of the national historical narrative and carves out discursive, conceptual, and historical spaces that refuse to be incorporated into the dominant paradigms.

Hayden White's initial articulation of metahistory is based on the discursive and rhetorical strategies generally associated with historical discourse. He writes that histories

> contain a deep structural content which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic, in nature, and which serves as the precritically accepted paradigm of what a distinctively "historical" explanation should be. This paradigm functions as the "metahistorical" element in all historical works that are more comprehensive in scope than the monograph or archival report. (*Historical Imagination ix*)

White defines metahistory as an inescapable understructure in historical discourse. This understructure necessarily guides historical discourse within certain confines that he defines as prefigurative or tropological strategies. According to White, each history can be contextualized within one of three strategies for providing meaning: explanation by emplotment, explanation by argument, and explanation by ideological implication. Each of these can in turn be broken down to differing types and must be carried out by one of four analytical tropes: Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, and Irony.[2] White's initial approach to metahistory is limited to an analysis of it within history and historical discourse. White expands on this definition of metahistory as an object by later defining its function as a discipline that "addresses itself to such questions as, what is the structure of a peculiarly *historical* consciousness? What is the epistemological status of historical *explanations*, as compared with other kinds of explanations that might be offered to account for the materials with which historians ordinarily deal?" (*Tropics* 81) *Los días y los años* poses these questions, albeit indirectly. Given that, according to Yúdice, "testimonial writing also emphasizes a rereading of culture as lived history and a profession of faith in the struggles of the oppressed" (Gugelberger 54), the author offers his experience as a way of historicizing the historical process responsible for those very struggles.

González de Alba creates a work in which a strategy based on the manipulation of negativity proves to be a viable form of resistance, both in terms of praxis and discourse. Wolfgang Iser writes that

> in the modern post-Hegelian tradition there is a tendency to reify negativity by conceiving of it as a determined negation or even as a kind of ordained

[2] For a complete explanation of these strategies, see *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973).

> enabling structure. Alternatively, it is defined as an antithesis to the empirical world which, as antithesis, incipiently affirms something that is as yet absent, though heralded. (Budick *xiii*)

Indeed the relation between negativity and negation is one that can easily be reduced to synonymy. However, negation negates. What does negativity do? Negativity takes "nothing" as a noun and transforms it into a verb. "To nothing" is to escape the Hegelian dialectic so heavily anchored to a single plane of existence. In other words, while the Foucauldian model of power relations sees power as part of a polarity formed by a + (assertion) and a – (negation), negativity accesses another conceptual plane. Sedgwick approaches this idea within a slightly different system when she writes: "Invoking a Deleuzian interest in planar relations, the irreducibility spatial positionality of *beside* also seems to offer some useful resistance to the ease with which *beneath* and *beyond* turn from spatial descriptors into implicit narratives of, respectively, origin and telos" (Sedgwick 8). In these constructions, negativity is not the antithesis to the power center, nor is the power center the representation of an inevitable *telos* that looms on the horizon. Rather, negativity is a means through which González de Alba contributes to a nontelic, nonhierarchical—in a sense, a nonhistorical—historical apparatus. In that sense, to nothing is to access another plane in which to exist. To negate is to act in reaction and accordance to *x*. To nothing is to act in a way that escapes the limits imposed by *x* and creates and manipulates an alternate conceptual space.

In this text, the narrator uses a negative space to produce his text. The civilly impotent subject appropriates the object (Lecumberri Prison) that represents the very system responsible for his incarceration and the killings and disappearances of hundreds of student protestors, and turns it into a space of production. While he is imprisoned away from civil society and, more importantly, unable to act as part of the student movement, González de Alba engages in a process of deterritorialization. Deleuze and Guattari conceive of this process within the paradigm of the creation of a minor literature vis-à-vis a major or dominant literary tradition. They argue that

> A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of a minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high degree of deterritorialization. In this sense, Kafka marks the impasse that

> bars access to writing for the Jews of Prague and turns their literature into something impossible—the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise. (*Kafka* 16)

In a similar sense, González de Alba seizes this process by accessing the same type of impossibility: the impossibility of not continuing the movement behind the prison walls through writing. González de Alba's imprisonment could very well have signified the impasse that would have banned his access to participation in the student movement. Through writing, however, he is not able to reinsert himself into the existing student movement. Instead, he is able to deterritorialize the prison's function as a delimiting entity and reterritorializes it as a productive and affective space that ultimately allows him to reimagine the student movement as an entity that continued within the prison walls thus establishing the very impossibility of not being part of the student movement of 1968 despite the state's efforts to accomplish just that. González de Alba is not alone in this operation. José Revueltas, for example, not only penned a series of letters and essays from prison, but also wrote *El apando* (*The Punishment Cell*, 1969). In this regard, not only does he resist the state through the writing later compiled in *México 68: Juventud y revolución* (*Mexico 68: Youth and Revolution*, 1978), but rather than allowing his imprisonment to halt his literary production, he instead uses the prison experience to formulate an aesthetic around which he structures what would become an important and successful short novel.[3]

It should be noted that the process of reterritorialization works in many directions. While González de Alba resignifies the prison, he performs the same function with the student movement now signified—reterritorialized as a movement in Lecumberri. At first glance, the maneuver is praiseworthy since it allows González de Alba and the leadership of the CNH to maintain their presence and influence in the movement. Still, there are problems inherent in such an operation, the most important being that resignifying the movement would seem to inevitably vacate its previous signification. In other words, if the movement that was once defined by its marches and demonstrations is then redefined by the prison experience and solidarity, what happens to those who were not part of that prison community? The operation reduces the number of those that can be involved in the movement to those that were arrested or spent considerable

[3] *El apando* was turned into a film directed by Felipe Cazals in 1975.

time in Lecumberri. Those that remain free or not specifically in *El palacio negro* (*The Black Palace*, 1976) lose *their* ability to continue the movement on the streets. Or rather, their effort to continue the movement on the streets is no longer articulated as part of the student movement of 1968. Furthermore, taking into account that Lecumberri was the men's prison, reterritorializing the movement within its walls genders the discourse, since it limits representation to a male perspective. Women were incarcerated in *Cárcel de mujeres* which was certainly nowhere near as visible as was Lecumberri. Lastly, given that the student leadership was targeted by the regime, it reduces the influence of the movement to that very leadership—eliminating, in practice, the democratic qualities the CNH tried to project. Moreover, while it could certainly be argued that González de Alba does not mean to provide the definitive meaning of the student movement, given the manner in which it has been articulated since 1968, we can see that he nonetheless helped to bolster an image of the student movement that was intimately tied to the leadership in Lecumberri.

On the other hand, the appropriation of the prison as a productive space goes hand in hand with the historical operation of writing from outside the established historical realm. In other words, *Los días y los años* is not, formally speaking, a history. Rather, González de Alba traces the history of the student movement from within the prison walls, giving us information that will provide a background to the events that take place while the author is in jail, but does so using a nonhistorical approach. For example, it is worth noting that the author seems to go out of his way to narrate the events in a fragmented fashion. There is no chronology that can be deciphered. The clash between members of the *vocacionales* two and five that mark the genesis of the events leading to the Tlatelolco massacre does not appear until page 23 of *Los días y los años.* Furthermore, the clash is narrated without much of what Bakhtin calls "surplus of vision." That is to say, the narrator's field of vision, in this particularly important moment, is limited to the experience of the moment being narrated and the narrator's memory of it. While the narrator recalls the incident and is clearly aware of its significance as the point of departure of the series of events that will eventually land him in Lecumberri, there is no benefit of hindsight afforded to the narration of July 22, 1968. It is this moment that sets in motion the intervention by police that will ultimately lead to the bloody climax on October 2. However, the tone of the description lacks the weight that this particular occurrence should be afforded. The author is able to recall what happened when students from the *vocacionales* sought refuge in the

schools themselves and were followed and beaten by the police: "Chased by the *granaderos*, the students sought refuge in the *vocacionales*: but the schools were no obstacle, inside them the *granaderos* went after, not just students, but teachers, both men and women, who were equally beating without knowing the reason for the aggression" (*Los días* 23). Yet, while the author is aware of the focus that this event will draw in the future, he recalls being more concerned with other matters at the time:

> – Well, in all the newspapers they keep blaming the students and vagrants that attack the police.
> – And what did you expect?
> – You pay for parking.
> – Why me? It's your car. Besides, there's space on the street.
> – OK, I'll pay, but you pay for the drinks. (*Los días* 23)

This is particularly interesting because it signals to the reader that the students' aim was not to drive the state into a provocation that would undermine national prestige at the Olympics, as had been suggested. In fact, the carefree attitude and disregard for these events reflect a certain level of naiveté on their part that contrasts the image of the internationally backed political operators that was portrayed by others. This is not to suggest that the students were in fact politically innocent, but this self-portrayal attempts to establish the student movement as something less than a Machiavellian movement.

In addition, the structure of the narrative places it outside traditional histories in that it does not *process* the raw historical material. González de Alba would later write that:

> We began to elaborate our convictions in the long idle evenings that prison provides. Without figures, without research, without interviewing the adversaries, without the investigative or historical work that the events warranted, we came to similar conclusions in and out of prison: for untold reasons the government had mounted a broad provocation beginning on July 26th. (*Las mentiras* 93)

This unprocessed historical material is not the basis for the historical narrative, but *is* the very narrative itself. As such, it falls outside the confines of what White describes as the "historical account":

> I begin by distinguishing among the following levels of conceptualization in the historical work: (1) chronicle; (2) story; (3) mode of emplotment;

> (4) mode of argument; and (5) mode of ideological implication. I take "chronicle" and "story" to refer to "primitive elements" in the *historical account*, but both represent processes of selection and arrangement of data from the *unprocessed historical record* in the interest of rendering that record more comprehensible to an *audience* of a particular kind. (5)

Within White's hierarchical paradigm, *Los días y los años* falls outside the discipline of proper history and remains an object that must be made comprehensible to an audience at large. As such, González de Alba anchors his story, not to a processed narrative, but to the realm of memory. The resulting discourse is then unfiltered and, as such, retains its own agency. In other words, rather than basing the account on raw historical material and structuring his narrative within the confines of a discourse that has a long tradition and is considered the discourse of the victor, González de Alba retains a type of freedom precisely by rejecting said privileged position.

Secondly, then, approaching the events of July 22 as González de Alba does, without resorting to Bakhtin's surplus of vision, dictates that this piece of work will be written without an all-encompassing goal in plain view and with the bias of the author exposed to the reader. González de Alba is not making a claim of supreme knowledge of the events that led to the Tlatelolco massacre, but is instead only putting forth his own interpretation of said events. His interpretation gains credibility through the power of the witness, despite the fact that González de Alba is not a witness to all the events that had taken place. He is not, for example, in the *vocacionales* where students and teachers were being beaten by the *granaderos*.

While it might seem that to use the term *testimonio* while conceding that the author is not an actual witness to the events he describes is a contradiction, it is precisely in this ambivalent rhetorical space that the narrator is able to bear witness to an event without actually being a first-hand witness. John Beverly argues that through a testimonial "the narrator speaks for, or in the name of, a community or group, approximating in this way the symbolic function of the epic hero, without at the same time assuming his hierarchical and patriarchal status" (Gugelberger 27). He is not a witness to everything, but rather, a witness who also functions as an interlocutor for an undefined yet ever-present group. He is at once a witness and a narrator who is able to borrow and appropriate the power of the witness from countless others. Still, Beverley's articulation of the locus

of enunciation of the testimonio would seem to imply a hegemonic narrative construction, which González de Alba tries to avoid. Yúdice, however, shifts the speaker's voice from leaning toward a royal "we" in Beverley's articulation to residing in a performative "I": "The speaker does not speak for or represent a community but rather performs an act of identity-formation that is simultaneously personal and collective" (Gugelberger 41). The narrator assumes the freedom of narrating what was witnessed by others, yet he ultimately anchors the narration to his unique and limited experience. In this manner, writing becomes a process through which González de Alba includes himself in the historical process as both a subject and an observer, one that is involved and self-reflective. He is able to learn through the process of historization and, as such, his reflection is not static. Rather than being a portrait of the student movement, *Los días y los años* becomes a fluid and changing construction. Yúdice points out that "Emphasizing popular, oral discourse, the witness portrays his or her own experience as an agent (rather than a representative) of a collective memory and identity" (Gugelberger 44). This is especially important since the shift from representative to agent relocates the authorial burden from a single voice to a chorus, thus maintaining the apparent polyphonic nature of the movement itself.

González de Alba concludes his description of July 22, 1968, by stating, "On the street people said that the rally had been broken up by the police, but we didn't know which of the two rallies" (*Los días* 23). Once again, the narrator underscores that they were unaware of just how important this event would become. In the end, we are still left with the mystery afforded by the narrator's limited experience of the events. The narrator becomes an imperfect narrator, which paradoxically signals an added trust in him. What is particularly noteworthy, however, is that Beverley suggests that because the *testimonio* often comes from a functionally illiterate subject who needs an interlocutor to facilitate his or her telling of a series of events, there is an assumption and even an acceptance of poor writing ability, which is clearly not the case here. González de Alba is a university student who is educated and articulate. He goes on to say that "the assumed lack of writing ability or skill on the part of the narrator of the *testimonio*, even in those cases where it is written instead of narrated orally, also contributes to the 'truth effect' the form generates" (Gugelberger 26–27). In this sense, González de Alba is not the typical *testimoniante*, in that he is not a working class, indigenous, illiterate subject. His, however, parallels such a position in that he is disenfranchised and is, to an extent,

denied access to a certain type of literacy: the ability to articulate himself within the state's apparatus of signification. González de Alba, then, manages to frame his text and his own voice within a system that takes advantage of the very limits imposed on it. In other words, just like Revueltas's *El apando*, González de Alba's *Los días y los años* does not simply allow the prison experience to define it, but instead defines what will be the prison experience and the manner in which it will contribute to the construction of an alternative historical construct.

In addition to casting himself as a narrator with limitations, the author's approach to the narration of the events of July 22, 1968, also affected how this narrative was originally read. The lack of chronology and the fragmented text force the reader to participate in the deciphering process, thus building a sense of community implied in the very structure of the text. Beverley sees this operation as an implicit loss of authority in the text through which the author is essentially erased. He writes that: "The erasure of authorial presence in the *testimonio*, together with its nonfictional character, make possible a different kind of complicity—might we call it fraternal?—between narrator and reader than is possible in, say, the novel" (Gugelberger 29). The reader is thus transformed into a complicit member of a community in 1968 that was trying to make sense of these things as they happened. This is tied-in with the adoption of a testimonial narrative through which the narrator makes himself part of a larger community while at the same time retaining the ability to narrate from the point of view of a witness. Furthermore, this style/structure also separates this text from other authoritative and authorial discourses that were at the time considered suspect.

As the description of the student movement continues, the first exploitation of negativity as an affective force becomes obvious when, almost immediately, the reader is faced with the narrator's self-doubt that is transformed into an argument. As González de Alba narrates the history of the movement, he manages to recreate a type of philosophical dialogue in order to help himself dispel certain notions about the students. There is a constant self-questioning that results in a tone that is at times schizophrenic, at others defeatist, but rarely dogmatic. In a discussion centered on whether students had hidden rocks in garbage cans along a demonstration route, which would show a premeditated effort to attack the police, he writes:

> – They told me that in the garbage cans … all along Juarez, Madero and 5 de Mayo, there were rocks. One only had to turn them over.

– And who put them there?
– If only I knew. (*Los días* 18)

The possibility seems plausible enough that one of the prisoners says: "—But in the case of the rocks it was different. One thing is that the repression, in the way in which it developed, turns into a spark, and another that just when the rumble starts one finds rocks on Madero" (*Los días* 18). After considering the matter, a type of conclusion is reached:

– It's true, but you also can't exaggerate or we'll come to absurd conclusions. The movement had its own internal and independent causes, even though there were many that were dying to get their hands in it. Undoubtedly there were people like that, and many of them were part of the very government; but we always did what we thought was right. (*Los días* 18)

This type of seemingly open dialogue offers a counterpoint to the discourse of the Mexican regime by establishing a series of different voices that might not have been completely convinced by all the of the CNH's positions, but that ultimately placed their trust in the process by which they were reached. In this manner, the narrator exposes, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, that: "There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community" (*Thousand Plateaus* 7). In a sense, then, while the author is in dialogue with his comrades and himself, through the historical multiplicity, he is also in an implicit nondialectical dialogue with their antagonists, namely, Díaz Ordaz and others associated with the regime. This strategy works in tandem with the lack of chronology since, by the time we read about Díaz Ordaz claiming that the violence is being instigated by members of the student movement, that claim has already been considered, questioned, argued, defeated, and dismissed by González de Alba in a manner that portrays the student movement as a vigilant self-assessing entity. At the same time, he gives a detailed account of the way in which the student movement was organized, thus further portraying it as a legitimate, well-organized movement rather than as the collection of hoodlums portrayed by the state-controlled press:

> but in the CNH the strange positions stunk for miles, like when Ayax let loose saying that we should create a military organization. Any Tom, Dick and Harry of that ilk was immediately suspect. The truth is that with the CNH's system and the daily assemblies in each school, nobody could be

> crooked, and if they were they would end up alone since they would never be able to get the CNH to accept that type of garbage. (*Los días* 18)

The democratic qualities of the student movement are presented in a passing manner but with great effect. The strategy also illustrates the way in which information is disseminated from the CNH to the individual schools without presenting a single person or group of people as ringleaders open to cooption: "We were too many for shady maneuvers: more than 200 delegates in about 80 schools" (*Los días* 18). Equally pervasive in this dialogue are the rifts between the factions that make up the student movement—an operation that directs the historian's critical gaze upon himself—which in turn separates the discourse from the less self-reflective discourse of the state. Andrew Baird writes that

> Histories are also products of a discipline that shapes and constrains the historian's labor in ways that can themselves be situated and historicized, and shown to be the result of contingent choices that have no necessary relationship or grounding in the past reality that is the putative object of the discourse. (130)

Baird argues that historians will ignore this fact as they direct their critical gaze toward the object of study. González de Alba assumes the role of a metahistorian in that he historicizes and contextualizes his own position in the historical process. At the same time, he avoids the appearance of a homogenous discourse while he maintains a united front. This is a particularly effective strategy because this text is very much constructed by a homogenous discourse. It is without question sympathetic to the student movement while it vilifies the Mexican government. Still, González de Alba tries to hide the teloic nature of his text behind an apparent fragmentation in the make-up of the student movement and of the political prisoners in Lecumberri. The approach is conversely related to the one used by regimes that produce what is meant to be a single united discourse. While the Mexican regime, which clearly ruled over a divided country, presented a hegemonic discourse, it is ironic that González de Alba and the student movement worked equally hard to be perceived as divided in order to sidestep possible accusations of false unity.

This staged dialogue by González de Alba serves an additional purpose. Although the student movement of 1968 was a popular movement, there was a breach between the students and an older generation that saw them as misguided hippies enamored with radicalism for its own sake.

One *madre de familia*, for example, says in *La noche de Tlatelolco*: "150 pesos for that skirt! But it's not even 12 inches long!" (23). A second one says, "Why don't you just go out naked?" (24). The friction between aesthetic values was certainly present in 1968 and was also reciprocated by the students, one of whom says, "My folks are pompous asses, my teachers too" (25). Another one says, "The only time I get along with my parents is when we go to the movies, because then nobody talks" (25). Finally another epitomizes this lack of communication when he says, "Communicate with my parents? What bullshit is that?" (26). What we see in *Los días y los años* as well as *La noche de Tlatelolco* is an attempt, not to ignore or romanticize the division, but to set them aside in order to focus on the larger issue.

In addition, the movement was also run by university students who, by and large, were members of the middle class and as such were seen by the largely working class of Mexico City as students wanting to show off their intellectual muscle without real-world experience. It would not be a great leap to assume that many Mexicans were asking the same question that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick asks: "What does knowledge *do*?" (Sedgwick 124). She goes on to write that: "I suppose this ought to seem quite an unremarkable epiphany: that knowledge *does* rather than simply *is* it is by now very routine to discover" (Sedgwick 124). What González de Alba tries to do is illustrate this discovery and show that knowledge is being used for practical purposes. It is precisely this articulation of knowledge—as something that is rather than something that does—that marked much of the clash between generational discourses in 1968 and is perhaps best captured by Gabriela Peña, who is also cited in *La noche de Tlatelolco* as saying, "My old man and old woman think that their principles are immutable" (23). Principles and ideas that had been cemented after a half century of one-party rule were being challenged by a movement composed in its majority by members of a society who were naïve enough to think change was possible. In that vein, González de Alba stages a dialogue in which the purpose of knowledge is displayed, namely the pursuit of justice and a greater good.

Just as González de Alba confronts the accusations of the government through the format and structure of *Los días y los años*, so too does he with content. This can be seen in the description of the silent march of September 13, 1968. In response to the Regime's accusations that student protests were causing damage to Mexico, the students plan a march to the *Zócalo* in complete silence. The logic, writes González de Alba, is that:

"The solution needed to be global and quickly it was laid out: a different type of march, one that would be our undeniable show of discipline and control, that would raise our spirit and would once again gives us the edge. A march in absolute silence" (*Los días* 115). González de Alba articulates the response that the silent march represented. While this demonstration has become one of the most important symbols of the 1968 student movement, the reasons behind it are not as widely known. Not 2 weeks prior to it, in his State of the Union Address, Díaz Ordaz proclaims, "It is evident that in the recent disturbances intervened non-students' hands; but also, either through their own initiative or allowing themselves to be dragged along, a good number of students also took part" (Cazés 119). These agents will later be identified as a number of subversive entities ranging from communists to fascists to the CIA to the FBI.[4] The silent march marks a response to the regime by a systematic negativity. The state's ability to diffuse information through a variety of means, especially through its manipulation of the press, is met by an unstoppable response: active silence. As we will later find out, a vocal response is not always the most effective solution.[5] Another option would be to do nothing at all to dispel the notion of student protestors as hoodlums. The silent march, however, combines passive resistance with affective response. This strategy allows for the students to dictate the terms under which a dialogue is to take place, rather than relying on those put forth by the government.

According to Jean-François Lyotard's theoretical vision, in the interrelation of discourses, each one has its own set of rules. He writes that in any dialogue between heterogeneous discourses, what he calls *differend* occurs: "As distinguished from a litigation, a differend [*différend*] would be a case of conflict between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments" (Lyotard *xi*). According to Lyotard, it is precisely within this inability to communicate with the other's discourse that a *differend* takes place.

> I would like to call a *differend* [différend] the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim.…

[4] Not surprisingly, FBI, CIA, and NSA documents all had different conclusions concerning the possible influence of foreign agencies in the 1968 student movement that Raúl Jardón well documents in *El espionaje contra el movimiento estudiantil.* (*The Espionage Against the Student Movement* 2003)

[5] I am referring here to the interrogations in which only the damning portions of the students' confessions are recorded. These will be dealt with later in this study.

> A case of differend between two parties takes place when the "regulation" of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom.… The differend is signaled by this inability to prove. (Lyotard 9–10)

So while the students are able to voice their objections in an effective manner through the use of slogans, chants, protests, and marches, these are then signified in the state's system of signification as proof of the students' inability to dialogue with the regime. Any response is then resignified and is in a sense transformed into discursive violence, or it is simply not signified in such a system.

In *Los días y los años*, we see a different operation than the one described by Lyotard in his theorization of discursive relations. In staging the silent march, the students avoid falling into a discursive battle because there is no discourse to which the regime can adequately respond. The chants and slogans are set aside and a new form of enunciation is introduced, one that rests outside the reach of the Mexican state. The silent march challenges the regime to respond in a similar manner, which it cannot do. In avoiding the discursive *differend*, negativity becomes an active force. Silence becomes affect. The response to Díaz Ordaz's state of the union speech was symbolically heard yet remained outside the state's reach. Meyer, Sherman, and Deeds point out that: "While some of the speech was conciliatory, most of it was hard line" (Meyer, Sherman, and Deeds 644). Unable to adequately respond to the silent march, the regime replies through other means at its disposal. During the silent march, special police units invaded University City, causing extensive damage that was supposed to look like the result of students rioting:

> During the march, some twenty individuals in white uniforms and carrying machine guns, with discipline, ability and speed, broke windshields and damaged and poured sugar in the gas tanks of 123 cars that were in the Anthropology parking lot. Nine other vehicles disappeared. The damages and losses were valued at some 300 thousand dollars. (Cazés 168)

This was only a preview of the tactics that were later used in Tlatelolco by the *Batallón Olimpia* (Olympia Battalion) and later, on June 10, 1971, by the *Halcones* (Falcons) in San Cosme.[6] Still, the manner by which the

[6] The *Batallón Olimpia* was a secret military unit that infiltrated the Student movement during the Tlatelolco demonstration. According to numerous accounts, when a circling heli-

Mexican authorities responded underlines its very inability to adequately respond to the students' tactics. In this case, negativity is used as an escape from a specific ideology and a caveat from which to introduce what might be termed as an opposition ideology without the risk of falling into a discursive battle. This is particularly important given the manner in which such a battle would have placed the CNH at a distinct disadvantage, when one takes into account the state's control over the press and ownership of a well-developed revolutionary discourse that meant to represent the people. González de Alba, then, establishes a discursive lacuna exploiting negativity as a conceptual sphere. According to Budick and Iser:

> Even if in its very nature negativity eludes conceptualization, a great deal can be said about and around it. The modern coinage *negativity*, or some equivalent means of eschewing indicative terminology, becomes inevitable when we consider the implications, omissions, or cancellations that are necessarily part of any writing or speaking. These lacunae indicate that practically all formulations (written or spoken) contain a tacit dimension, so that each manifest text has a kind of latent double. (Budick and Iser xii)

So while Budick and Iser examine the tacit dimension of speech as an activity, the same concept can be observed in discourse, especially if we conceive it as performance. And though these tacit dimensions of speech can simply parallel the explicit, manipulating and exploiting them can lead to a discursive and performative lacuna that functions as a sheltered and affective mode of articulation. In this manner, a discursive lacuna exists outside the rules of the dominant discourse. It does not so much defy these rules as much as it creates a set of rules that cannot be properly engaged by the ruling paradigm. What is particularly effective about the manner in which these tacit dimensions of discourse can be manipulated is that, as Budick and Iser point out, this doubling of language does not "negate the formulations of the text or saying. Rather, it conditions them through blanks and negations" (Budick and Iser xii). As such, the manipulation of negativity leads, not to a head-on discursive battle, but to a conditioning of the discursive landscape.

Following this argument, the silent march can be seen as a discursive lacuna. Rather than responding to the Diaz Ordaz's challenge, it conditions

copter dropped flares over the demonstrators, men wearing a white glove on one hand attacked from within the demonstration at the same time that government troops opened fire. The *Halcones* were a paramilitary police force that was most visible during a repression of protesters in 1971.

the reception of the state's argument by illustrating the manner in which a student protest could be carried out without directly engaging with the state. As such, the discursive operation signaled by the silent march insulated it from a direct attack. As a result, the state in fact does not respond directly to the silent march. Instead, it employed a performance in its own right: the staging of violence and its attribution to the students who participated in the march. Indeed, this strategy would prove to be a viable, yet still reactive, response that would be employed in other venues as well. It illustrates how certain aspects of the real, as Žižek conceives it, can be used to support a constructed reality. According to Žižek, there is a clear distinction between both of these constructs. He argues that reality always "has the character of a (symbolic) fiction" and the real is inherently unrepresentable in that symbolically structured reality (Žižek 21). As such, the state's use of unidentified troops to vandalize the city in order to give the appearance that the student movement was inherently destructive functions as the real that will help construct this symbolic fiction. In the end, however, these troops (much like the *Batallón Olimpia*) will not and cannot be signified in that construct. Their role is to support the construction of a symbolic reality without being articulated.

Ultimately, the story is drawn to Tlatelolco where, unbeknownst to the students, the last major demonstration is to take place. The details of it, as I have already mentioned, continued to be shrouded in mystery even after the archives were opened in 2002. Suffice it to say for now that there was a clash between the army and the student protesters in which many people were killed. I would instead like to focus on the events following the massacre in which the narrator tells of how precisely he came to be a prisoner in Lecumberri.

The aftermath of the Tlatelolco massacre is marked by chaos, fear, and uncertainty. The tone of confidence with which most of the *testimonio* is written is now lost. Beyond the lack of confidence, for the first time we see the helplessness of the narrator in trying to articulate his position within the official political realm. While he is being processed following his arrest, González de Alba recalls his frustration over the manner in which his interrogation is handled. He is unable to give a statement of his own volition. Instead, the processing takes the form of a confession, albeit through an interlocutor:

> The secretary in charge of recording the minutes didn't directly transcribe my words, but instead transcribed the text that the agent from the Attorney

> General's office who constantly added from his own creation what he thought was convenient, he interpreted me according to his own judgement and removed from what I said what he found the most damning. (*Los días* 198)

He is unable to speak with his own voice, though he is identified in the declaration, ironically enough, as "the one speaking." Beyond having things added to his testimony, he is further censored when his account of the intervention of the *Batallón Olimpia* is left out and he is told that falsehoods would not be recorded. This operation is precisely what Lyotard calls *differend*. His ability to speak within a certain code is highly limited. As he tries to respond within that code he is immediately rebuffed and the final product shows no record of his protestations; thus they never really occurred. The discursive operation is the converse of the act of writing the *testimonio* in that the legal testimony is manipulated in order to not represent the person giving it, while the *testimonio* seeks to represent precisely those unrepresented in the state's discourse. We come to see that the judicial narrative will only reflect a certain plane of existence: the support of the state's account of the events of 1968. The narrator, passionate as he is throughout the work, in this instance is left to recall, "I corrected when the adulteration of my words was absolute" (*Los días* 198). He is fully aware of his limited power over this discourse, and so he resigns himself to near passivity.

Given that judicial record will be key in the construction of the far-reaching official historical apparatus, the power and importance of González de Alba's text is further underscored within the framework of metahistory. According to Baird

> Metahistory is unable to accept the limitations that the discipline of history demands as its condition of residence; metahistory refuses proscription and bounding of historical representation on the basis of standards of realism and responsibility whose grounds are contingent, and are themselves historical and historicizable but are too rarely the object of critical reflection or defense. (141)

Within this conceptual paradigm, the overarching historical framework uses the inherent veracity of its judicial understudy in order to bolster its own construction of history, thus ignoring that judicial discourse itself is also guided by a historicizable ideological undercurrent. The operation enacts the construction of a reality that inherently must conceal aspects of the real.

Beneath the discursive reality is the "real" manifestation of the state that ultimately is able to crumble the narrator's confidence. Confusion and a sense of helplessness beset the narrator as he describes a beating suffered at the hands of the police:

> I clenched my teeth with all my strength, my stomach contracted once again and more intensely, I felt as if it were hitting my back and clenched my teeth again in a desperate effort to not vomit.… I no longer wanted to be set free, the only thing I wished for in that moment was an empty cell and the prison's daily routine. (*Los días* 201)

Faced with the opportunity to speak his piece and set the record straight, González de Alba is so completely unable to penetrate the judicial code and be adequately signified that he ultimately gives up and hopes to simply be. In this encounter we can appreciate how reality and the real collide, thus signaling the inability of coexistence in a single conceptual plane. While the real—that is, the violence against the prisoner—is used to support reality, the real is not itself signifiable in the constructed reality it supports. The real, however, marks an attempt to induce González de Alba to support that state-constructed reality. Ironically, he is imprisoned precisely because he is unable to represent himself within the confines of the legal discourse.

What is particularly striking about this recollection is the manner in which the narrator, faced with a brutal beating, longs for the relative safety of his prison cell. It is unclear if, at this point in the narrative, González de Alba has seen the inside of one, but what is clear is that it offers a safer space for him. Ryan Long argues that González de Alba

> portrays prison as a space within which people can negotiate representations of the community they shared outside and before their incarceration. Nevertheless, the pervasive loneliness and the violence that González de Alba has suffered have destroyed his ability to represent a potential community in any positive terms. (375)

Long's assertion certainly rings true. González de Alba does indeed try to articulate a student movement within the prison walls that has continued after October 2. On the other hand, Long establishes the prison as the locus of power that dictates his response. At the same time, he suggests that a potential community could be articulated in positive terms within the prison walls. As a result, we must ask what that positive representation

would be. Similarly, we must ask if the student movement of 1968 could be positively represented at all after October 2. I would argue that the only way to articulate this potential community in positive terms would be to do so in terms of freedom. Given that these are political prisoners, the notion that they could be reformed to the point that they would be able to rejoin society as productive members would ring hollow. Freedom, then, would appear to be the most obvious construct around which a positive articulation of this community could take place. But what would be waiting for González de Alba outside the prison walls? Perhaps a better way to approach the question is by asking what he left behind: a movement in shambles and swept under the carpet. The community to which González de Alba belonged is no longer the same one to which he wants to belong and the community to which he belongs in prison, on the other hand, can only be represented negatively; it can only be represented metahistorically, that is, as what Baird describes as an Anabasis:

> an open-ended, nondialectical, nonteleological movement. It is the "disjunctive synthesis," in exiled wandering, of departure and return. It is a response to abandonment—an attempt to persevere, survive, and overcome, in the absence of an orientation that would delineate how these goals would be possible. It should be understood as a sort of active "homelessness," a state in which the security and repose represented by "the home" lie behind in an inaccessible past, or ahead, in an uncertain future. (138–139)

The community of students in Lecumberri has no real home to return to, but is nonetheless able to create a space to call home in exile. Baird writes, "Home should not be understood as an 'actually existing' place, although its existence is not an impossibility. Rather, it is an undecidable possibility whose realization has to be characterized with the future anterior" (141). In other words, while freedom could be the ultimate goal of any prisoner, within Baird's paradigm, freedom becomes only a component of the goal of arriving "home." What is missing is the anterior to the future, the "we will be free when *x* has been accomplished." José Revueltas, who was imprisoned at the same time as González de Alba, writes in the "Hunger Strike Manifesto," "Our strike is against the lack of democratic rights and liberties; against the lack of public dignity; against the lack of homeland in which a demoralizing and abject system of oppression wants to keep us, lacking liberty, lacking grandeur and future. We will overcome" (Revueltas 220). There is no demand for freedom in this manifesto, which would seem to suggest a more far-reaching goal for the hunger strike than

simple freedom, such as perhaps a symbolic statement against tyranny and oppression. The assertion that they will be victorious, then, is signified as something other than freedom from prison. Instead, it is articulated as freedom from the system that imprisoned them and freedom *for* the nation as a whole. González de Alba, on the other hand, writes:

> In December of 1969, after one year and a few months of being jailed in the old Lecumberri prison without having our judicial processes started, the majority of us prisoners began a hunger strike. The strike's demand was not clemency nor liberty, but process, because the legal limit of one year, within which everyone who was detained needed to be sentenced, had lapsed without having even the most minimal procedure in the courts concerning our case. ("Terrorismo" 109)

So while the prisoners might well have wanted freedom, the purpose of the hunger strike was to be tried, to be signified in the judicial realm. The teloic goal of freedom is transformed into freedom once the prisoners are charged with a crime.

The hunger strike is precisely where González de Alba begins his text. The narrative begins on January 1, 1970. It is the first of many jumps in chronology that we encounter. This is the least of our confusions. The testimonial begins with the author recalling the repression of the hunger strike in Lecumberri prison. This is part of the second level of narration. The reader is unsure of what is happening, as he is thrust into the world of the narrator without an introduction or any type of explanation. The hunger strike, as we begin the journey, is in its 22nd day, and it will last a total of 42. It begins on December 10, 1969, and ends on January 22, 1970. This is all background information for the beginning of *Los días y los años.* The opening pages of the narrative throw us into the middle of events that we have no way of identifying. As we later find out, this crash into the narrative mirrors González de Alba's experience when he is imprisoned. Just as he is thrown in jail without any idea of what to expect and then slowly becomes more and more adept at managing that space, so too are we thrown into a narrative that makes no sense and are forced to begin to decipher our surroundings. Only after a few pages do we begin to find our bearings and start to make sense of what we are reading. As mentioned before, this tactic allows the reader to play an active role in the construction of the testimonial. We must try to understand what we are reading, and as a result, become active participants in the construction of meaning in the text.

Once inside Lecumberri, we begin to decipher the subculture of prison, or at least part of it. González de Alba makes the reader well aware of the various subdivisions of the population. These divisions are further underlined by Lecumberri's physical attributes. That is to say, each prison block is occupied by similar inmates. It is worth noting here that Lecumberri's architectural attempt at a panopticon meant that the prison was laid out in the form of a wheel with the security tower in the center and each wing extending out like spokes from that center. In the opening pages, as the narrator is reliving the hunger strike, he writes, "Something I can't explain at this moment has happened: the prisoners that came in to rob and beat are from the 'E' and 'D' blocks, where those convicted of robbery and assault and murder are housed; but I haven't seen anyone from 'A' block, the repeat offenders, the ones with the worst reputation of the whole jail" (*Los días* 9–10). The narrator is not only aware of the social distinction within the prison, but also of the mystery that it remains to an outsider. This forces the narrator not only to tell the reader how Lecumberri is divided in terms of offenses, but also how these are perceived by the inmates themselves.

The reader of this text immediately encounters a number of almost paradoxical events. The description of the hunger strike within the prison serves as a tool by which we are made aware of the methods employed by prison guards in their attempt to quell the political prisoners: through the use of other prisoners. As the narrator and his companions are now within the grasp of the state, and further, civilly dead, there should be little that can be done to them in the way of punishment. This is especially true given the means by which they have chosen to protest their incarceration. A hunger strike, rather than being an oppositional form of resistance, is a force that grows stronger through negativity. Much like a hole grows larger the more you take from it, so too does a hunger strike. As the bodies of the prisoners decay from lack of nourishment, the strike grows stronger. The state must then find a way to combat it. The result is the use of other prisoners as tools of the state.

The use of prisoners in this manner underlines the different rules under which they now live. At the same time that they are being attacked by their fellow prisoners, the political prisoners are also being robbed by them. González de Alba recreates a conversation between himself and two other prisoners in which one says: "—Right here many stood looking through the bars as typewriters, televisions and other things they would have wanted to keep, left the cell" (*Los días* 14). Later, when they look over

their empty cells, they wonder why the items that were not stolen were instead broken or thrown about. Seemingly lost in the rubble is the fact that they have been robbed and cannot do anything about it. At first, one can surmise that their lack of options is due to the fact that the attack was brought about by those who would be responsible for protecting them. And while the contempt toward them by the prison guards can certainly be attributed as the reason for their helplessness, this is more a symptom than the cause itself. That is to say, the reason that the guards are able to display such contempt is that, once inside, the prisoners are in fact no longer civil subjects, and thus are no longer afforded the same rights as they had previously enjoyed. According to Auli Ek, this operation is normalized by the public's need "to conceptualize the otherness of the criminal" in order to "fully establish the differences between the real prisoners and the members of the rest of society" (Ek 98). In other words, while indeed their possessions are being stolen, they are being stolen in another world where the rules by which thefts are processed are quite different from the outside. Where or to whom can the prisoners turn? What expectations can be reasonable within prison?

Certainly, to be attacked by other inmates with the endorsement of the institution should not be part of the inner working of a prison. Individuals are incarcerated as a form of punishment, but should being in jail not be punishment enough? According to Levy and Miller the answer is "no." In fact, prison creates the necessity for a new system of punishment and reward in which everything beyond an inmate staying in his cell every instant can be seen as a reward. In such a system, they write, punishments "are simply the absence of rewards for good behavior" (Levy and Miller107). But this is clearly not the case during the events of January 1, 1970. What we see here is the construction of new form of punishment inside of the already present prison machinery of punishment, and it would seem that the prisoners have been doubly victimized by the new apparatus in force within the prison walls. While at first glance it may seem that the hunger strike is a failure, it nonetheless underscores the viability of manipulating negativity as a force in a manner similar to that seen with the silent march. Through this tactic, in which the prisoners themselves direct the punishment toward themselves, the machinery of punishment cannot adequately respond. The response to the political prisoners has to be on more or less the terms they dictated, albeit unknowingly. In other words, in response to their actions, the prison responds through its own manipulation of negativity: the mobilization of other prisoners as tools

of the state. One could argue that the use of prisoners to perform certain duties within the confines of a jail is not uncommon. However, this particular use is much more unorthodox than others are. While there is mention of prisoners performing duties such as selling soft drinks, cleaning, and supervising other prisoners, these functions are more or less service posts and very much necessary within the realm and purpose of the jail. The functions that the prisoners perform are designed to keep the prisoners separate from the outside world. As Levy and Miller observe:

> Operating a prison is a complicated affair. Prisons are "total institutions" in that they comprise self-contained and nearly self sufficient communities unto themselves. For inmates, contact with the outside world is minimal and for that reason … many of their needs must be satisfied by the institution. (Levy and Miller 199)

The institution here, of course, refers to the inmates themselves. The only contact that the prisoners have with the outside world comes from visitors. Adding merchants to the jail would be a violation of the purpose of the prison. The outside world would be interjecting itself into prison life. As such, the use of prisoners to perform certain service functions serves two purposes: It seals the prisoners from the outside world and it maintains and supports the institution.

The use of prisoners to crush the hunger strike, however, is a function of a different nature. In this case, the prisoners act as proxies of the state in a negative space. This is highly significant because the state is forced to use methods that are outside its discursive and performative limits. Or, to put it in other terms, we see how the prison is forced to manipulate the real while it tries to maintain the constructed reality. And while in this case the state is successful, the fact that the political prisoners are able to find an enclave from which to resist, opens the door to the creation and manipulation of negative spaces as a strategy of resistance. It is important to stress that while the hunger strike did not result in prisoners being freed, that was not its intent. We can see, for example, the letters written by José Revueltas to other members of the student movement as well as to other literary figures. He writes in a letter addressed to Arthur Miller, then president of the International Pen Club, dated December 22, 1969, "I write this letter to you on the day that we reach 13 days of hunger strike. We will continue like this until the last moment: we will obtain or not obtain freedom, with the consequences that come" (Revueltas 221).

This operation appropriates and inverts the goal of prison in general and this one in particular. Lecumberri was constructed based on Jeremy Bentham's notion of a panopticon. According to Foucault, the panopticon's main function is "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (*Discipline* 201). González de Alba facilitates this operation to the outside world. So while they may well be observed by the "inspector," they also make themselves and the inspector visible to the outside world. Ironically, neither they nor the inspector can have any idea who is actually reading these texts and becoming aware of events transpiring within the prison walls thus carrying out Bentham's principle "that power should be visible and unverifiable" (*Discipline* 201). In this sense, negativity works in both directions in that the negative function of Foucault's inspector—one that cannot be seen yet is not exactly absent in his function—is reversed upon the prison itself. The use of negativity is again adapted, this time in a discursive operation.

This strategy is in fact employed, though irregularly and incoherently, throughout the student movement of 1968. The pages of *Los días y los años* bear witness to the events of the student movement while at the same time they present the strategies employed during the movement. As a participant in the events and narrator of the testimonio, González de Alba is often not aware of the very strategy that is being put to work. Nonetheless, a close examination of the text reveals how the manipulation of negativity served the student movement well, as in the case of the silent march and the hunger strike in Lecumberri.

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the way negativity is manipulated is the work itself. Published in 1971, *Los días y los años* is written while González de Alba is a prisoner in Lecumberri. The jail itself, then, becomes a space of production from which he can write his account of the events leading up to and following the night of October 2, 1968. Thus, this text is a product of negativity that counterpoints the accepted and legitimate modes of communication afforded to the prisoners. As an example, we can recall the confessions in which the students are only allowed to "say" what best serves the regime. The writings of González de Alba turn out to be a series of illegitimate writings of a prisoner who is further discredited by a regime that refuses to recognize him as a political prisoner within its reality.[7] Once again, we can see how the construction

[7] This is not surprising since there are never political prisoners, as far as ruling regimes are concerned. Mexico has never admitted to having had political prisoners during or after the 1968 student movement.

of reality functions in regards to the real and how the text's function as a metahistorical space carves out that alternate space of representation outside of the dominant paradigm. Through this lens, *Los días y los años* can be seen as an effort to refuse to allow October 2, 1968, to become the headstone of the movement. Instead, González de Alba attempts to draw a rhetorical line that connects the student movement of 1968 as it was defined before Tlatelolco (a movement based on marches and manifestations) to the student movement defined by the prison experience after Tlatelolco. In this sense, González de Alba is writing from what would have been the movement's grave had the actions of the state been successful in silencing the CNH. González de Alba's words are produced from a negative locus of enunciation.

Lastly, the author's point of reference is one that does not exist in the eyes of the regime, nor will it be completely articulated for years to come. In fact, this notion permeates González de Alba's text as it does many others and persisted even after the archives in the *Archivo General de la Nación* (General Archive of the Nation or AGN) were opened in 2002. Among the documents were those of the *Dirección Federal de Seguridad* (Federal Security Directorate or DFS), the *Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (Social and Political Investigative Directorate or IPS), and from the *Secretaría de Defensa* (Department of Defense or Sedena). The declassification of these documents was certainly not without complications. Kate Doyle writes that

> The reality of trying to obtain those files, however, and use them in an investigation is a tremendously difficult task. The collections include no index. The archivists rely on internal, unpublished rules—that seem to change frequently and without warning—to decide what to release and what to deny. The process can frustrate even the most persistent researcher to the point of defeat.

This is of course nothing new to anyone who has conducted research at Mexican institutions and it is not in itself evidence of a systematic attempt to limit access to sensitive materials. Still, Doyle does argue that the archive is incomplete, as she states that: "It is clear from a review of the documents in that gallery that Sedena withheld a vast amount of documentation from the collection it turned over to the AGN." The archives nonetheless do reveal a pattern of human rights abuses that ultimately led to the arrest of Luis Echeverría, who was the only person

prosecuted as a result of the information revealed in 2002. Echeverría was charged with genocide in 2006 and held under house arrest. He was later cleared of all charges in 2009. In addition, 12 others were implicated but never charged, given that the court decided that, for those individuals, the statute of limitations had expired in 1998. The resulting vacuum of responsibility regarding the 1968 massacre fueled the conviction that the real history of Tlatelolco was still hidden and further underscored a complete distrust in the regime that will probably never be reconciled.

Within this historical construct, González de Alba's work is especially poignant, for it dares to write a metahistory from a nonexistent plane. Baird writes that metahistory is "a critical counter-discourse that pursues a 'second-order' reflection on history" (129). He characterizes the metahistorical operation as "an *anabasis*, a deliberate or self-imposed exile from the discipline of history" (141). Paradoxically, it is that position of nonexistence that allows for the articulation of the affective forces responsible for the nonarticulation of Tlatelolco. *Los días y los años* is a work that ties the author's memory to a buried history. González de Alba's realization of his status within the state's historical construction comes to him when he hears the melody of "Amapola" in the prison courtyard, which leads him to a moment of reflection:

> The guard keeps watching me. Suddenly I feel stung by the presence of that empty courtyard, the rose, the dull sky, so tall that it gives a strange feeling of absence. As I look up, I could be floating outside of this courtyard, away from "Amapola", from this dying light. And the gardener, and the cement benches, the rose, the lightbulb that swings faster behind me in the cell with the clean plates and cold food in neatly lined covered cans, they would no longer exist except as a difficult to reach far away point: a rose in a courtyard that is now only a memory. (*Los días* 104–105)

The description is reminiscent of the process of turning the real of the movement—the everyday aspects of existence within prison, the fact that they are in prison, the movement itself, and the struggle it represents—into a constructed reality through the historical process. Within that construction, the testimonio acts as a scar in time. It is proof of an unacknowledged wound. The author, in a poetic moment, writes, "These are the days that are later remembered like a scar" (*Los días* 145). In the final paragraph-long sentence of the *testimonio*, González de Alba lists a

number of incoherent memories, which he concludes by saying "are now that very scar" (*Los días* 207). The scars are the evidence of an unrepresented and unacknowledged historical wound, a metahistorical specter that remains fixed in memories outside the state's historical construction. The *testimonio*, as such, is that scar that signifies just how real and violent the mental and physical wounds really were.

3

At the Center of the Periphery: Arretche's *El grito* and the Rhizomatic Visual Discourse of the 1968 Student Movement

Almost simultaneously to the writing and publication of *Los días y los años*, the documentary film *El grito* (1970), directed by Leobardo López Arretche, was being shot. *El grito* is a film that captures several of the peripheries of the student movement and leaves them for us to process. At the same time, one also grasps a homogenous construct that is transmitted by the narration of the film and the speeches included in it. The documentary incorporates the dichotomy of a student movement whose constitution was both homogenous and fragmented. While the student discourse after 1968 was constructed largely on the basis of *testimonios* written by the student leadership for more than 40 years, there were other voices within the periphery of that construct. Within the homogenous construct of the discourse of the student movement, the voices and agency of other constituencies (women, brigades, farmers, medical students, etc.) were unarticulated much in the same manner that the student discourse was unrepresented in the state's official narrative. Each one of these similarly articulated a vision of what was the student movement; though even the manner in which we refer to it, the student movement of 1968 is, in fact, exclusionary of other constituencies that were not students. Still, a key component of that construct can be found in the visual discourse of 1968, which included and includes posters, placards, pamphlets, graffiti, as well as films such as *Rojo amanecer* (1989), *El bulto* (1991), and *El grito*. These works all give voice to elements within the student movement that were either unrepresented or underrepresented within the discourse of 1968.

J.J. Rojo, *Revisiting the Mexican Student Movement of 1968*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_3

Similarly, other elements of 1968s visual narrative—specifically, posters—were an unrepresented, yet important tool in disseminating the ideology of the CNH, yet were equally guilty of under representing other constituencies of the movement. Both contributed to the overall impact of the student movement of 1968 in ways that have not been properly examined.

El grito was filmed between July 1968 and until some days after October 2 of the same year. During that time, about twenty students from the *Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos* (University Center for Film Studies or CUEC), using two cameras from the university as well as others borrowed from various sources, filmed speeches, marches, and rallies throughout the city. To say that these students set out to film a documentary film would be to greatly overstate the manner in which this film came to be. According to Carlos Mendoza,

> During those intense days, first and second year students enrolled in the Film School were enveloped in the swell and decided to follow it with the quite precarious instruments they had on hand and with their quite deficient training as film makers, as they were youths in their the first years. (Cruz 55–56)

Indeed, the student's lack of experience and skill as filmmakers was just the first of many obstacles that in some form or another stood in the way of the film's production. In addition, the atmosphere in which the students operated was equally prohibitive. Marcela Fernández Violante, for example, recalls that

> 1968 became more complicated, I loaned my car, a white Valiant 65. I was married to Roberto [Jaime Sánchez Martínez]. The car had round tail lights. They knocked them out and fit the lens of the Reflex camera. Leobardo got in the trunk while Roberto drove like a lost tourist in University City and the soldiers did not notice that they were being filmed from inside the car. (Cruz 55–56)

The fear of being discovered was constant, and students filmed in fear of being spotted and detained by government troops. In addition, not only did these students have to deal with the general oppression surrounding the student movement, but these students were seen with a degree of suspicion by some of their fellow activists. While attempts were made to film CNH meetings, many of these attempts were ultimately denied since there was a fear of being exposed by government spies and infiltrators. In other words, the pressures students faced as they filmed what

would eventually become *El grito* were complex and came from several sources. What makes this film even more interesting is that, while the film has become an important visual referent, it was not planned. The initial impulse to film the events of 1968 was very much just that: an impulse. The idea of the film comes after the filming began, as opposed to what one would expect of a cinematic production. In fact, *El grito* is ultimately a product of a film brigade. Once again, a key component of the 1968 discourse is born, not out of the CNH, but out of an unrepresented constituency, as were several of the film students in the CUEC. And while it could be argued that the CNH ultimately called for the production of the film, *El grito* begins to take form well before it is conceived as a film. According to Federico Weingartshofer, who was interviewed for the *Memorial del 68*,

> the idea to make a film with these materials came about shortly after and it was also in an assembly and Leobardo was awarded by the assembly the title of Director of the film. He effectively took the initiative but it was through an assembly and he was put in charge of it, the assembly charged him with the responsibility of making it.

In this regard, the CNH's involvement in the film's production is a posteriori. What's more, this conception did not involve a single point of view since the filming was carried out by so many; with so many participants involved in filming, recording, and photographing the events of 1968, the resulting raw material was a disparate collection of between 8 and 10 hours of film and over 40 hours of audio recordings that then had to be synched to the visual material, as well as countless still images, many of which were eventually used in the resulting 102-minute documentary. In almost every facet of production, the film was both hindered and ultimately benefitted from a multitude of inputs and sources that shaped it into a plural composition right down to the editing process which was done primarily by López Arretche though also involved were Alfredo Joskiwicz, Ramón Aupart, Federico Weingartshofer, Roberto Sánchez, and many others. It is worth noting, however, that the film was not edited until almost 2 years after filming was completed. The raw material constantly changed hands and locations as a way of safeguarding it against the state, which, it was believed, wanted to confiscate it.

The documentary, which Carlos Mendoza characterizes as "quite imperfect" due to its rather rudimentary production, lacks action-filled

takes, interviews, or a typical voice-over narration of the events. Instead, it uses static images, audio from speeches made by the CNH, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, and Oriana Fallaci reading from her own work to form a collage of memories that represent the apparent entirety of the student movement. It does so by showing student marches, rallies, and capturing the atrocities committed by government forces and frames them within the heroism of the students, teachers, and bystanders victimized by those very forces. Much in the same manner that *La noche de Tlatelolco* became a historical referent is *El grito*, seen by many as a historical record. Elsa Muñiz García, for example, sees the film as an objective and undebatable repository of memory and suffering for both those who lived 1968 and for those who did not. She writes, "The filming of *El grito*, was an objective register and personal testimony, transcription or true copy of an effective moment of reality and an interpretation of that reality" (422). According to Muñiz García, then, the film acts as a reliable copy of the events of 1968 that can be replayed once and again in order to capture their very essence. For Muñiz García the film works as a portrait of the times, in that it preserves its horror lest it be forgotten:

> What is *El grito*'s significance to collective memory? The slogan [October 2nd is not forgotten] so often repeated gains meaning after seeing the film, especially for those whose generation finds itself distanced from those events, or for those who were never near the events even though they lived during that time, and for those who have never lived something similar. (425)

El grito, according to Muñiz García, seeks to preserve what was at risk of being lost forever through either design or happenstance. While it is true that the rallying cry "October 2nd is not forgotten" celebrates the acts of a generation whose sacrifices were not included in the national discourse, that celebration nonetheless comes from contemporaries of that same generation. Their cry parallels the official history with a collective memory of the events that refuses to be erased. As Andreas Huyssen has pointed out, "The past is not simply there in memory, it must be articulated to become memory" (3). Memory, according to Huyssen, then, is an element that must be activated and, without this move from the static to the active, it is simply not. As such, *El grito* is that articulation of the past that defies the unarticulation in the official discourse. But what is particularly interesting about this vision is that Muñiz García also sees the film as a tool with which to attach a memory to a generation that did not

live the events. In other words, beyond simply activating the memory of 1968, *El grito* becomes a vehicle with which to ensure that October 2, 1968, is never forgotten even by those that never had a memory of it. It acts as an intergenerational construction of memory that would allow for one to never forget something they never experienced. The operation would bypass what Andreas Huyssen has called the twilight of memory. He notes that twilight memories "are both: generational memories on the wane due to the passing of time and the continuing speed of technological modernization, and memories that reflect the twilight status of memory itself. Twilight is that moment of the day that foreshadows the night of forgetting" (3). In this regard, Muñiz García sees the film as bridging the act of remembering to those that have not experienced an event.

In addition, Muñiz García sees the film as a record that sidesteps the landmines of veracity that were not so easily evaded by written *testimonios*. Given the manner in which *testimonio* is articulated separate from history, one of the main critiques against it has been its inherent subjectivity in relating historical events. Indeed, Huyssen stresses the fissure that exists between the experienced event and its remembrance, but Muñiz García argues that the difference between the film and its written counterparts is that documentary film as well as photography

> immediately reveal details that constitute in and of themselves, an ethnological knowledge. They provide us the events' details, they allow us access to an "infra-knowledge", photography and documentary film provide a series of features, of meticulous details from which to construct the datum that will constitute historical knowledge. (417)

According to Muñiz García, then, *El grito* allows us to translate the knowledge of the atrocities as articulated in written *testimonios* into part of the historical record. *El grito* would bridge that break by combining the power of the witness contained in testimonial writing with a detached objectivity of unadulterated images to provide the viewer with the material that would then allow for the construction of a reliable historical record.

Rather than focusing on the preservation of events as the film's central theme, Mariano Mestman sees it through a slightly different lens. While he still frames the film within the testimonial tradition, Mestman analyzes the manner in which *El grito*, unlike other Latin American testimonial films and unlike the subject central in *testimonio*, establishes a subaltern

subjectivity by focusing on the events and the subaltern masses rather than on a singular subject who is to represent the whole of a community:

> it is worth noting, on the other hand, that in *El grito*, the filmic text's articulating testimony is not a student's, an intellectual's, or a worker's who is representative of the protagonists of Mexico's 68, not in their role as militants in the popular student protest from August–September, nor the role of victim in the October 2 massacre. (55–56)

Mestman sees the film as capturing the movement as a multifaceted entity that, as he puts it, "conjugates the countercultural dimension (that which refers to the new sensibilities and subjectivities from the 1960s, associated with the cultural 'modernization' processes, youth counterculture, and artistic experimentation) and third world, cutting edge political radicalization" (58–59), and that ultimately frames the movement within an international context. Still, the inclination toward framing the film as a reliable referent of the student movement of 1968 persists. And in a sense, both Muñiz García and Mestman are correct since it has been read as such for a very long time. Olga Rodríguez Cruz called *El grito* "The most faithful portrait that has been made to date" (11) and frames the discussion of *El grito* in *El 68 en el cine mexicano* (*1968 in Mexican Cinema*, 2000) under the title "The most faithful portrait." The discussion follows that tone as Jorge De la Rosa notes that "*El grito* is a faithful testimony of what happened in 68, the Film School (CUEC-UNAM) was born with that film" (30). Ramón Aupart contextualizes the importance of the film 40 years later by saying that

> *El grito* has maintained the sentiment against those that conceived the October 2 carnage. It has been the documentary, apart from the commercial films, that has been most exhibited, and the material that the youth have seen the most. It is still screened in film clubs, it is still relevant, because it contains profound emotional charges that Leopardo was able to transmit.

As such, the main function of the film, according to Aupart, is an emotive one. And while an emotive affect is not traditionally a critically relevant element, it is perhaps for that reason that the film and the movement as a whole and its discourse have enjoyed a rather privileged position as reliable referents. It might also be the case that such a position is so due to the secrecy with which the government cloaked its actions during that time.

Still, while both Muñiz García and Mestman reference the silenced subaltern subjects, neither adequately articulate who those silent masses were, or rather, they both leave the reader to assume that those masses were adequately represented by the discourse of the student leadership. But, as Susan Sontag points out in "On Photography," a photograph and, by extension, a documentary film that heavily relies on still photographs "is not just the result of an encounter between an event and a photographer; picture-taking is an event in itself" (*On Photography* 11). In other words, the very act of taking a picture, of filming, of recording an event, is not simply a mimetic event, but rather, it is constituted of a series of decisions of what, when, and where to film. More importantly, it is further constituted by the all-important decision of what *not* to record. Muñiz García argues that *El grito* "is a metaphor of the silence that power imposes on the subjects" (412), and while she is correct she fails to take into account that the very power she references does not reside in a single entity and that though the masses of the movement were silenced by the state, so too were specific constituencies silenced by the student movement's leadership and the manner in which their historical narrative was constructed. As such, what *El grito* does is give voice to the masses vis-à-vis both the state *and* the student leadership. Unlike later films like *Rojo amanecer* and *El Bulto* that certainly embodied unrepresented voices but did so with the benefit of almost 20 years of hindsight, *El grito* begins to problematize the seemingly united front of the student movement almost from its very inception.

At first glance, the film would seem to support the construction of the same type of homogenous discourse seen in *Los días y los años*: it creates a narrative that predictably vilifies the Mexican government and President Díaz Ordaz. And, much like Rodriguez Cruz argues, it also seeks to establish a visual archive of the events of 1968. Considering the film's proximity to the events themselves, this should come as no surprise. Indeed the film was received in that manner with countless efforts to silence it. So much so that the trajectory of the film (and by trajectory I am not speaking of ideology but of an actual physical trajectory) saw it travel through England, France (where its exhibition was refused so as not to offend the Mexican government), Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Italy (where it was briefly confiscated until Roberto Rossellini was able to secure its release), and Chile (where the film was safeguarded at the Cuban embassy and even survived the ransacking of that embassy following the coup against Allende on September 11, 1973), before making its way back to Mexico.

However, what makes this film interesting is not its back story, but the material it captured and how it was framed and represented. What we see and hear in *El grito* supports the discourse of the student movement while at the same time exposing serious problems in the construction of that very discourse. For example, the material contained in *El grito* is a record of the brutality employed by the state against student protesters and those who supported it, as it is represented about 15 minutes into the film where we see still images of a woman showing bruises on her body that are meant to serve as evidence of the state's brutality. The same sequence exposes the manner in which women were underrepresented as political actors in the movement as a whole. The still images in the sequence are followed by a live action sequence in which we see another woman in indigenous dress at a police station arguing with a bureaucrat behind a desk. In this sequence, we see a group of young men, presumably students or lawyers, speaking on her behalf. This scene counterpoints the brutality of the state with the students' heroism. What is particularly striking about this sequence is that we do not hear anything from the live action shot. Throughout the sequence, we hear a speech directed to President Díaz Ordaz. The speech accuses him of going against the principles of the nation by invoking the martyrs of the revolution. The images on the screen would seem to support the key element in which the speech tells him that he is unwilling to support the ideals of the nation's martyrs: "You don't want to carry out your ideals because you are not the nation's father, you are a state executioner. That is why you want to instill slavery, why there have been deaths." The images show the victimization of women as evidence of the brutality of the state and seem to support the speech we hear. Muñiz García describes the scene as follows:

> The Public Prosecutor, typewriters, police officers, mothers with small children in their arms showing through gestures the parts of the body on which their children had been beaten. The lawyers, probably court appointed, speaking with the authorities, the young people behind bars with fear on their faces, heads bandaged. All of them crowded together looking at the cameras. One day they were students, the next day, delinquents. The images that *El grito* provides us "speak too much", they make us reflect, they suggest a different meaning than that of writing. (416)

To this point, the film is in line with the students' discourse in that it transmits a condemnation of the president while it illustrates the point by

showing evidence of the state's unwillingness to adequately respond to the needs of its citizens.

Nevertheless, a closer reading of the scene reveals not a clash exactly, but definitely a dissonance between the images on the screen and the audio we hear. It is in these out-of-phase moments or through these out-of-phase moments that we can begin to decipher the specters of 1968, that is, what Žižek calls a pre-ideological kernel through which one can access "the real." He writes that:

> To put it simply, reality is never directly "itself", it presents itself only via its incomplete-failed symbolization, and spectral apparitions emerge in this very gap that forever separates reality from the real, and on account of which reality has the character of a (symbolic) fiction: the spectre gives body to that which escapes (the symbolically structured) reality. (21)

In other words, there is a reality in the form of an official historical discourse that is then counterpointed through a reality as manifested in the discourse of the student movement. Both of these realities work as symbolic fictions that allow us to see the real only through the fissures in the construct. In this sense, the film erects a symbolic construct just as Žižek describes. But there are cracks in that construct through which we can appreciate the double victimization of women. In other words, the use of images of women as victims implies their lessened status in the student movement. The documentary seems to suggest that the state not only persecutes men, but *even* women are subjected to their aggression. In this way, it establishes a hierarchy where we have men on one plane and women on another. Within this construct, the victimization of men is a sign of an oppressive government but the victimization of women signifies something worse and needs no further explanation or definition. It should be stressed that in the case of women, we do not hear their voice. We only have access to the speech that superimposes itself to their experience. Initially, we see still images of a woman who, rather than the subject, becomes the object (of aggression, of evidence, of subjugation, etc.) and poses for the camera without speaking. We then see a woman that speaks, but the audience is unable to register. The circumstances by which this woman was victimized do not matter, the film would seem to suggest. All that matters is that the subject being victimized is a woman. Furthermore, it is worth noting that her voice is also unheard, at least symbolically, in the police station. Instead, her position is being staked out through male

interlocutors. In the sequence, we can see that she is surrounded by men who come to her rescue, thus fulfilling the appropriate gender roles for the time period. Within this official space, women have no voice with which to penetrate either the official discourse or the machismo of the time. To this we can add other elements that marginalize her such as an indigenous dress, mature appearance, and motherhood. Each of these difference markers further places women in a marginalized position within a marginalized discourse. *El grito*, then, leaves these breaks for us to register and within them, there is a voice to be heard, one that went largely unrepresented in the discourse of 1968.

We can counterpoint this scene with one that offers a glimpse of how men are portrayed later on in the film—about 51 minutes in where we see Heberto Castillo, a professor from the Politécnico and UNAM—in a hospital bed surrounded by reporters, none of whom speak, as he recounts his encounter with those responsible for his injuries. In this case, there is no interlocutor, no intermediary, and no speech that superimposes itself over the voice of the man in the hospital bed. All we hear is his voice, and we appreciate his courage as he frames his encounter within the discourse of the student leadership:

> Unfortunately, more than anything, it confirms that the constitutional order has been broken since the night of August 27th when the army has been patrolling the city streets. Individual guarantees have been suppressed so much and I, as a University and polytechnic teacher consider that the open dialogue we have been asking for, demanding since the beginning of the conflict will be able to resolve the problem, but the dialogue cannot be established with the manner in which the authorities have responded. We cannot dialogue with our fists. I consider that the aggression that was perpetuated against me last night is a grave mistake on the part of the authorities, that shows their unwillingness to dialogue like human beings: with arguments, not with fists. I don't have any weapons beyond ideas. They are what I can fight with. If they attack me again, I will surely be defeated again.

Castillo defends himself with his own voice and indeed this heightens the impact of the previous scene. More importantly, he casts himself within the realm of reason. He stresses his unwillingness and inability to enter into the realm of confrontation and violence, thus invalidating the assertion that the student movement was violent. His tone and pace project both confidence and reason and at the same time victimization. He is not a threat. Between this point–counterpoint is an articulation of the real of

the student movement's discourse. In other words, rather than recreating a homogenous historical discourse as it would appear at first glance, *El grito* instead represents a historical multiplicity: a system of representation within which a series of distinct articulations are manifested and that ultimately achieve meaning through their interaction with each other. In fact, meaning is produced, not just through the representational elements, but through the connections themselves. As such, the narrative tells the reader something as much as we can gather information by the manner in which each of these narratives interacts with others. At the same time, while it would appear that Heberto Castillo's segment signals a higher hierarchical status than that of the woman in the *procuraduría,* the friction between the two produces a signature that allows us to access a meaning beyond the two representational elements. In this manner, the historical multiplicity represents a nonteloic, nonhierarchical historical construct. According to Deleuze and Guattari, multiplicities are epistemological systems that resist a teleological construction, since a rhizome "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (*Thousand Plateaus* 7). In this way, *El grito* represents a dialogue between various discourses of 68, not only between the state and the student leadership, but between the various elements that formed the student movement and the very historical process through which it occurred. In this particular case, the fissures in the construction of the reality of the student leadership's discourse allow us a glance at the manner in which this discourse did not reflect the "real" of women's experience in the movement.

It is important to note, however, that Deleuze and Guattari stress that while dialogue necessarily occurs between entities, "Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, to transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away" (*Thousand Plateaus* 25). In other words, the relation between elements of 1968 (be it the state discourse, the CNH discourse, women's discourse within the student movement, or any other element within that rhizome) does not hierarchically localize any one of those elements in relation to the others. Furthermore, its position vis-à-vis any one discourse does not necessarily dictate its position relative to others based on that position. The rhizome is dynamic and in constant motion and as such, disallows a static representation. Using Žižek's notion of reality and the real as an illustration, the discourse of the CNH can be articulated as a specter of the real within the

reality of the state at the same time that it can be articulated as a reality from which we can decipher the specters of the real of women's voices in 1968 yet all three form a part of the historical multiplicity of the student movement of 1968. In addition, the role of women's voices, while articulated as a real within the construct of the discourse of the CNH, can also occupy a parallel position when articulated against the state's discourse. In this manner, the location of women's voices in relation to the CNH and the location of the discourse of the CNH in relation to the state do not dictate the way in which the discourse of women's voices is located in relation to the state's discourse.

Much in the same way that the film allows us a glimpse into the manner in which women's voices were largely absent in the leadership's discourse, so too does it allow us access to other elements of the student movement that were at times unacknowledged. Take, for example, the importance of posters and placards used during the countless rallies and marches. At about 70 minutes into the film, we are presented with the first real focus on the visual discourse of the movement. That is to say, while throughout the film we see posters, signs, and graffiti, among other manifestations of visual discourse, it is not until this point that the film turns the camera on this discourse and its means of production as a subject of study. There is no dialogue as there are a series of shots of still images of posters alternating with live action shots of students painting, reproducing, cutting, and organizing pamphlets, posters, and placards. The sequence opens with a shot of a wall covered with several posters. Over the scene, the song "El niño de Vietnam" (The child from Vietnam) gives it a somber mood and intertwines the cause of the student movement in a global context. It is at this point in the film that we can appreciate that while the visual discourse supported and helped to disseminate the leadership's philosophical argument in a more accessible manner, *El grito* includes a subtle critique of how this very discourse was represented in the larger context. In this sequence there is a sign that reads "¡Sin Estencil No Baila El Perro!" (The dog doesn't wag without stencil) alluding to those who labored to translate the CNH's message into a visual manifestation, but were perhaps not adequately represented in the CNH's discourse. That is, while some of the key referents of the 1968 student movement are posters and placards, these are often seen as simply other manifestations of a discourse that was produced and articulated in and by the CNH without giving the appropriate credit to those who labored to make this a viable medium of representation. As Alberto del Castillo Troncoso points out in 2008,

> The issue is not that the images have been absent from the writers', intellectuals' and academics' reflections in these last forty years. The problem rests in that these have played a secondary role, almost decorative, to illustrate the analysts' reflections and arguments. (Del Castillo Troncoso 64)

And while del Castillo Troncoso is specifically speaking about photographs, the same can be said about the posters of 1968. While they have certainly not been absent in the discourse of the student movement or in studies about 1968, these posters have been treated in many cases as artifacts rather than as a discourse that was part of another. Or, to be more precise, the publications in which the contributions of artists have been explored and credited have been minimal, especially when one considers the volume of publications that either come from former members of the CNH or that reinforce the notion that the movement was essentially the CNH.

The Posters of 1968

The use of posters in the student movement was key in communicating what was at times an esoteric discourse that seemed to distance itself from traditional Mexican historical figures. They adopted the figure of Ernesto "Che" Guevara and the Cuban Revolution as a counterpoint to the revolutionary discourse championed by the state.

His likeness is shown on a poster in the first shot of this sequence in the top left corner of the screen. Such a move invited the criticism that the student movement rejected traditionally Mexican values in favor of foreign interests. This move, however, was only a rejection of the revolutionary discourse as employed by the ruling regime. The movement itself, and its discourse, nonetheless maintained a legalistic tone of their demands through the Constitution of 1917 instead of the symbolic apparatus long honed by the PRI as well as a parody of Olympic symbology. Furthermore, the visual discourse depicted the regime as trampling the constitution as a means to bring about a successful Olympic campaign, thus sacrificing Mexican core ideals in favor of economic gain and international acceptance. This poster's use of the Olympic rings as wheels supporting a tank that is trampling the constitution (see Fig. 3.1) very much supported the ideology of the CNH. And while certainly the message was one that could have been derived from the CNH, Jorge Pérez Vega interviewed for the *Memorial del 68* explains that

Fig. 3.1 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/EM0034

> we began to parody the Olympic symbols, from the beginning, the typography that existed for this international event, well we began to use it as a type of disinformation. Then there you could see that we were using a symbol of the state to speak against what it was doing, in this case, against the students.

In other words, the artists responsible for disseminating the ideology of the CNH, not only were responsible for translating the message but were

also responsible for adopting a symbology that worked for the people and that resonated within current events: the Olympics. He articulates the cooption of an apparatus of symbols that had been used by the state with pervasive dissemination which, in turn, meant that it was easily identified and recognized. Pérez Vega goes on to explain that the Olympic symbols were chosen to communicate both a support of the Olympic ideals and the games themselves:

> From the beginning there was biased information against the movement, and then there were absurd declarations: that we were planning to boycott the Olympics, and because of that, we took back those images to counteract their discourse.
>
> If you see the Olympic rings with a threatening tank, well right there you are providing an image that recalls the moment we were living. And the dove that was an officially used symbol of the Olympiad (in peace all is permitted), for example, well there you already saw a red stain. All in all, we began to use these images because we thought that these were the ones that could make an impact with the people, so that they could see that the Olympics were fine, they had to go on, but that here in the country something was happening, and we were expressing ourselves.
>
> So many used the Olympic symbols to counteract this type of biased propaganda and we used them as disinformation in some form.

The visual discourse, then, negotiated a series of demands: the need to disseminate the philosophy of the CNH in a manner accessible to the populace, adapting that message to the symbology of the time, and carefully dispelling the presuppositions about the student movement. Specifically, it was ultimately necessary to convince the public that the students were neither part of a communist plot to take over the republic, vandals set on destroying public property, nor part of a movement set on trying to disrupt the Olympics and bringing shame to the country.

While the PRI, and specifically, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, had control of the press and painted the students as little more than hoodlums and the government as the guardian of the Revolution as the foundational Mexican referent, the students retorted through posters and flyers at protests and marches that depicted Díaz Ordaz as a criminal and, in some cases, a puppet of foreign interests. Here, (see Fig. 3.2) Díaz Ordaz is depicted with two dogs: the first, a bulldog wearing a helmet with the Olympic rings and the second, a bearded dog wearing what appears to be a military cap. Díaz Ordaz is smiling as the dogs stand in a threatening pose. The image, together with the slogan "El derecho a ser libres no se

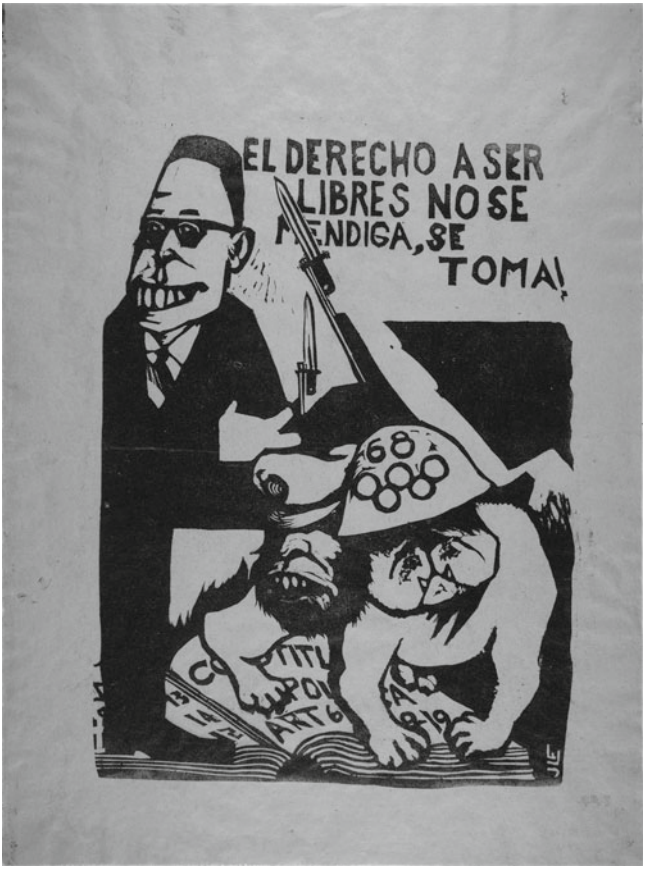

Fig. 3.2 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/ EM0021

mendiga, se toma!" (One does not beg for the right to be free, one takes it!), suggests that Díaz Ordaz is subservient to the economic interests of the Olympics and, by extension, to foreign interests. Furthermore, all are standing on the Constitution, which is opened to article 6 that reads,

> The expression of ideas shall not be subject to any judicial or administrative investigation, unless it infringes on morality, the rights of others, incites crime, or disturbs the public order … Access to information will be guaranteed by the State.

As such, the students' discourse is one that baits the administration to allow the students to challenge it. In other words, given the manner in which the student movement of 1968 operated, article 6 of the Mexican Constitution would be a shelter under which the students could openly voice their disapproval of the *priísta* regime. The poster implies that Díaz Ordaz's administration is thus sacrificing constitutional guarantees in order to appease foreign interests as manifested by the Olympic Games, or perhaps suggests that he is using the Olympics as a pretext through which he is able to unleash aggression in order to consolidate power and undermine a troublesome political and social movement. It needs to be clear that article 6 of the Mexican constitution speaks to ideas and information as opposed to actions. In other words, in order for the state to censor or otherwise limit students' speech, it would have to argue that such speech was in some form infringing on public morality, on someone else's rights, causing criminal activity, or disturbing public order.

Similarly, article 7 guaranteed freedom of the press: "Freedom of writing and publishing on any subject is inviolable. Under no circumstances may a printing press be confiscated as the instrument of an offense." In contrast, the press in 1968 was severely compromised. One need not look further than the coverage of—or lack thereof—the Tlatelolco massacre itself. Several foreign correspondents, among them Fernand Choisel and Philippe Nourry, interviewed by Anne Marie Mergier (1998) for a special edition of *Proceso*, noted with dismay the ease with which the Mexican government was able to silence the massacre. Choisel recalls, "What impressed me most was the Mexican press. What control the government had over it! I could not believe it. That massacre was so little and so poorly covered by the great majority of the newspapers!" (38). Heberto Castillo (1980) explains, "The press, radio, and TV were completely discredited. The 'truth' that they broadcasted collided head-on with the reality that the people lived" (12). And indeed, the tenor of many of the posters reflected the clash between the revolutionary discourse and this unreflected reality, as can be appreciated in Fig. 3.3, which depicts a dog barking into a microphone, in this way casting the press as Díaz Ordaz's dogs.

Celeste González de Bustamante writes that

> News reports about student movements and the Olympics demonstrate that the media executives and government officials pursued a similar goal—to construct positive images of a modern country for viewers at home and abroad. Furthermore, 1968 televised news reports showed that news executives, in

Fig. 3.3 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/EM0011

> their attempt to create positive images of the nation, often sidelined journalistic goals of providing accurate and balanced information. (3)

The government's desire to carry out a seamless Olympic campaign was not just the government's alone. Indeed, while the mutually beneficial relationship between television executives and the state is no mystery, the desire for a successful Olympics was also important to Telesistema Mexicano. González de Bustamante goes on to argue that the confluence of a number of elements that included the rise in households with a television set, the large share of programming dedicated to news, much of which was produced by government-owned stations, as well as the public's increasing reliance on television, meant that, by the late 1960s, "the majority of citizens began to receive their news through television (5)." The end result being that state's reach through television was wide reaching and highly effective.

The visual discourse begins to respond with the adoption of a specific aesthetic: Op Art, which allowed students to connect the symbology of the Olympics to the social unrest taking place in the streets. Op Art, Jorge Juanes explains,

> is an iconography that is at street level and with which people identify and the other is *op*, for a very simple reason, because *op art* is directed to perception's primary structures. You don't need to know about art history, or art, or anything. The most educated and knowledgeable expert is affected as much as the ordinary citizens because *op* directly impacts the primary structure and you are affected like a shock that affects you directly without passing through your consciousness. Everyone is affected. In that sense, it is an art that evidently people live.

The poster's use of an Op Art aesthetic was further proof of the visual discourse's autonomy in relation to the overarching narrative produced by the CNH. As Perez Vega points out, the poster reflected a specific set of aesthetics that were key to the success in disseminating the students' message through a visual narrative: "Op Art came about perhaps because of the issue of the Olympic typography design that is a series of letters that are expanding. So if you look at it formally, they are only lines in space that expand, but yes, it was something attractive that we also used visually." The apparent simplicity of the poster means to establish a connection with the viewer and the social context: "Op's disruptive patterns, unstable color vibrations, and paradoxical perspective mirrored the tensioned and

instability commensurate with mounting social unrest" (Houston 155). Furthermore, the use of Op Art's optics of movement suggests a number of critiques against the press. It is worth noting, for example, that the movement in the composition is almost exclusively on the figure of the dog and the microphone. The inscription "Año de a prensa vendida" (Year of the sold out press) as well as the year "1968" are printed without horizontal lines. Beside the image, the only other element that has this movement is the mirror image of "1968," thus tying it to the image of the barking dog before the microphone. As such, there is a static referent that is in essence unadulterated, and its articulation by the press results in an inverted articulation in flux. This representation mirrors the manner in which the massacre was covered in television news programs. Gonzalez de Bustamante, for example, writes: "During the course of October 2, 1968, at least three news programs were aired on television throughout the city. Of the three programs, only the 11:30 evening newscast on October 2 mentioned the rally or subsequent events at the plaza" (10). And even in instances where the events were mentioned, they were either given minimal mention or were framed in a manner consistent with the state's version of the events.

Another element of importance is the dog's threatening pose and expression. While it would be enough to suggest that the press was complicit in the state's repression of the student movement, it is yet another to represent it as yet another threat the students faced. Still, the manner in which the events of 1968 were covered represented just that. Looking at the 11:30 news program, González de Bustamante points out that no student voices were captured in their report, and while they gave the names of the soldiers who were injured, no student names were mentioned. On the other hand, not only did they report the events at the *Plaza de las tres culturas*, but also transmitted a message from General Barragán who warned parents to keep their children from participating in student movement activities. As such, she concludes that "the statement provides evidence that television executives as well as those who appeared on television began to recognize that the medium could be manipulated to both build as well as buckle solidarity" (17). While it has long been argued that the media's coverage of the movement of 1968 was inadequate, its role in encouraging parents to curtail student participation represents a more interventionist approach. Taking into account these conflicts of interest, it should come as no surprise that Choisel would remark, "30 years later I am still amazed that they were able to erase the deaths of so many people" (38).

The use of posters in 1968 was not limited to dry, esoteric, or formal attacks on the state. Many of the slogans reflected a carefree attitude where, for example, Díaz Ordaz's unattractiveness is exploited for both comic relief and a certain degree of theatrics. But even here, there is a strategy at play. Pérez Vega explains, "Diaz Ordaz's image, I think, was ridiculed and parodied by everyone, because he was a much hated leader, and so we used it." And while a great number of the posters and placards reflected this disdain for Díaz Ordaz, we cannot ignore that, while the ideology was well defined by the CNH, the overall strategy in the visual discourse was autonomous and evolving according to the events that unfolded before it:

> The importance of the movements graphic production lies in its testimonial character and the particular conditions in which it occurred: without any intentions other than to respond to the immediate needs of creating propaganda, of breaking the siege of lies and distortions in which society is enveloped through a vast apparatus of mass ideological indoctrination, of using images to spread the decision to fight and call for participation. (Grupo Mira 15)

The visual discourse's relative autonomy was nonetheless largely, though not entirely, compartmentalized to the manner in which the general message was to be transmitted. Additionally, it also allowed for the creation of an uncontested symbology that the students could claim as their own. José Revueltas writes that the student movement

> is not just another student riot, this needs to be understood very well by the older generations whose minds are bent on wanting to adjust new realities to old obsolete schemes of their "Mexican Revolution", of their "constitutional system", of their "system of guarantees" and other empty deceptive concepts that are opposite to what they say and are destined to maintain and perfect the alienation of Mexico's collective consciousness in relation to the lies and social hypocrisy that characterize the current prevailing regime. (51)

As Revueltas illustrates, the student movement's discourse, with the help of a visual narrative, aimed to distance itself from the symbology of the PRI and to reject the Party's revolutionary discourse. To assume, however, that in distancing itself from the state's revolutionary discourse meant that the Revolution itself was absent from the discourse of the students would

be a mistake. While the discourse of the Revolution as embodied by the PRI was in fact absent, it was so in an effort to evade a discursive trap through which it would have been impossible for the students to adequately articulate their demands. The PRI had been extremely successful in controlling and manipulating the symbolic apparatus of the Revolution. Ignacio Corona notes, "From an ideological point of view, the PRI has traditionally adapted their rhetoric of origin based on a revolutionary nationalism to the manipulation of a broad ideological spectrum" (93). Given the state's control over a deeply engrained revolutionary discourse, rather than engaging directly with a symbolic apparatus that had gone uncontested for decades, the students instead engaged the Revolution as embodied by the constitution of 1917.

It is through the visual discourse that the legalistic argument made by the leadership of the student movement is communicated with greater ease. The image seen in Fig. 3.4, for example, has various elements worth exploring with regard to the Mexican Revolution and its place in the visual discourse of 1968.

Fig. 3.4 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/EM0033

There are five figures surrounding a sixth that is lying face down over scattered sheets of paper. The inscription identifies these men as Chief of Police General Luís Cueto Ramírez, Undersecretary to the Mayor of Mexico City Raúl Mendiolea, Chief of the riot police or *Granadero* force Lt. Coronel Armando Frías, Mayor of Mexico City Alfonso Corona del Rosal, and Luis Echeverría, then the Secretary of the interior and, later, President of the Republic. Face down on the ground is a female skeletal figure wearing *cartucheras* over a dress and holding a rifle. It is not a great leap to see this clearly female revolutionary skeleton as *La Revolución*. Furthermore, one of her legs is being held by an especially lascivious figure suggesting that she is being raped. In addition, we see that this same figure is removing one of her boots thus robbing or dispossessing her. We can also see that three of the five men are holding some type of phallic object further suggesting the rape of *La Revolución* in addition to a possible articulation of church complicity, as the figure on the far right appears to be a priestly subject piously observing and symbolically giving his blessing to the events unfolding before him. It was certainly not uncommon to see visual representations of key figures such as Díaz Ordaz in less than flattering poses, but the manner in which these figures are depicted goes beyond simple vilification. Indeed, the text casts them as *agresores del pueblo mexicano* (aggressors of the Mexican people). The poster's message is further amplified by the pieces of paper that litter the ground. The scraps reference articles 7, 9, 19, 22, 29, and 110 of the 1917 Constitution. These articles outline some of the most basic rights guaranteed to Mexican citizens.

By using the Constitution of 1917 as a backdrop rather than trying to appropriate revolutionary heroes, the movement avoided the *differend* as articulated by Lyotard. That is to say, rather than falling back on a discourse that had already been used and co-opted by the regime, as Corona points out, the students' tactic was to move away from established revolutionary symbols and substitute them with others that encapsulated their arguments yet remained inaccessible to the regime. This is not to say that the state did not try to build a discourse that would ultimately exclude the student movement. In fact, it is important to remember that while the Revolution and the PRI certainly had their place in the discourse of 1968, so too did the movement have a place in the state's discourse. In his *IV Informe de Gobierno* on September 1, 1968, for example, Díaz Ordaz used the constitution to frame his stance on the issue of political prisoners:

> I do not admit that *political prisoners* exist. A *political prisoner* is one who is deprived of his liberty SOLELY because of his political views, without having committed a crime. However, if I am made aware of the name of someone who is imprisoned without judicial process in which the procedure's essential formalities have been or are being fulfilled, accused of ideas, *not of actions taken*, orders for immediate and unconditional release will be drawn up. (Cazés 119)

The discursive operation makes an argument within the same discourse impossible, just as Lyotard suggests. How could the students demand that political prisoners be freed when there were no political prisoners, that is, no prisoners imprisoned *exclusively* because of their political ideas? Diaz Ordaz's assertion, and indeed the speech as a whole, point to what Gareth Williams calls the "state of exception" in which the sovereign exists outside of the structured legal system, or exists in a perpetual state of exception. Williams argues, however, that the state of exception is hardly so in that it is a constant rather than the exception. As an illustration of the permeating state of Mexican exceptionality, he writes that

> Through Articles 145 and 145bis, the sovereign remained the law behind the law, that is, the only law, while at the same time hiding his de facto exceptionality behind the socialized mask of jurisprudence. As such the force of sovereign exceptionality was embodied in and through the articles of social dissolution. (119)

In this regard, the state was able to both maintain and hide its ability to act outside the constitutional limits. The repression of social movements was carried out without fear and in the open, justified with the idea that "it was the only organization that provided effective safe haven for the true guardians of the Mexican Revolution, the Liberal Reform, and the national independence" (Williams 124).

The visual discourse, in turn, was able to answer these assertions with a series of optics that were rather simple yet equally sophisticated. One of the more emblematic posters dealing with this point was one that made use of the Demetrio Vallejo's image with the slogan "Libertad a los presos politicos" (Liberty for political prisoners) (see Fig. 3.5). The strategy is highly effective in that it both historicizes and ridicules such a position. According to Elaine Carey, "The events and the movements of the 1950s and 1960s greatly influenced student activists of 1968, and the leaders of

Fig. 3.5 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/EM0040

the earlier protest movements became icons in the student protests of the 1960s" (28). As such, the visual discourse reaches out to those who were incarcerated in the years preceding 1968, as was the case with Demetrio Vallejo, one of the primary leaders of the railroad workers strike of 1958 who, in 1968, was still being held in Lecumberri Prison under article 145. Furthermore, the use of Demetrio Vallejo's image helps to place 1968 within a larger context of social protest. So while the slogan, which was one of the tenets of the student movement as outlined in the *seis puntos del pliego petitotrio* (six points from the petition), was plainly put, the poster

adds a number of layers that further evolve the message without losing the core meaning.

Arturo Martínez, interviewed for the *Memorial del 68* at the *Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco* (CCUT) states that

> the six points have a process of gestation, from the essence of our country, that is since the first prisoners for social dissolution in 1952 and then the *Enriquistas* imprisoned for social dissolution, railroad workers imprisoned for social dissolution, Nicandro Mendoza and people from the *Poli* imprisoned for social dissolution, teachers, Siqueiros and Filomeno Mata imprisoned for social dissolution, so it was a clamor. It was a very important movement in the struggle for political freedom in the country, the demand for the release of political prisoners and the repeal of [Article] 145.

Martínez outlines the history of social movements in Mexico and the manner in which they were halted through the use of article 145. This is particularly important, given the way in which the student movement was characterized as a cover for foreign influences wishing to violate Mexican sovereignty. Article 145 was a stark contrast to article 6 of the Constitution, referenced in Fig. 3.2. And while the scope of article 145 was meant to curtail foreign influences in Mexico, in practice, it was employed to quell domestic political unrest, as Martínez well illustrates. As such, contextualization of the student movement within a broader scheme that included other social movements formed an explicit bond of solidarity with previous "home grown" movements that could help dispel the notion that the students were somehow "un-Mexican," a notion that resonated through the official discourse. Daniel Cazés writes that during a senate session on October 4, 1968, Senator Víctor Manzanilla Schaffer stated, "We prefer to see our army's tanks safeguarding our institutions than foreign tanks guarding their interests" (221). There is a clear implication that the student movement was a front for foreign interests and that to give in to the students' demands would welcome foreign intervention in Mexico's domestic politics. The same was true of Diaz Ordaz's stance; he, in the same State of the Union address, as I previously mentioned, intimated the presence of foreign involvement in the student movement, thus marking it as unpatriotic and as un-Mexican as the foes of the Revolution itself.

Eager to demonstrate that the student movement was anything but the mob that Díaz Ordaz described, the CNH organized the Silent March

on September 13, 1968. González de Alba, as do others in the CNH, imagined the silent march as a way to showcase the movement's discipline, performing the opposite of Diaz Ordaz's claim as a way to negate his argument. Indeed, the strategy was successful, as the Silent March became one of the emblematic events of 1968. The poster announcing the march (see Fig. 3.6), however, paints a slightly different picture. Rather than signifying the silent march as a show of discipline, it refocuses the critical gaze back on the Mexican congress that sat and listened to Diaz Ordaz's speech and tacitly endorsed his accusations. In fact, such endorsement was much more explicit given the applause with which it was received. Nevertheless, the poster suggests that the silent march would act as a mirror through which the legislature could see their complicit silence transformed into an accusation by the people. As such, the performance takes a different tone. No longer is it just a response that would ultimately signal a lessened power position at the discursive level. It now became a challenge. The legislature could see their silence uncomfortably reflected. The poster further suggests that someone would have to carry the torch, and if those who had been entrusted with that responsibility had failed, then the people, breaking their chains, would need to rise and assume it. The difference in tone is subtle, but nonetheless important. It marks a shift from passive to active, from effect to affect, from a protest that asked to be seen as proof of civility to one that pointed a finger at the failings of its elected representatives.

Additionally, the Silent March, as did all of the protests and marches, ultimately found shelter in article 9 of the Mexican constitution, one of the many seen scattered in Fig. 3.4 and that also came under fire by the state:

> The right to assemble or associate peaceably for any lawful purpose cannot be restricted; but only citizens of the Republic may do so to take part in the political affairs of the country. No armed meeting has the right to deliberate.
>
> No meeting or assembly which has for its purpose the petitioning of any authority or the presentation of a complaint against any act, shall be deemed unlawful; nor may it be dissolved, unless said authority is slandered or violence is resorted to, or threats are used to intimidate or compel such authority to render a favorable decision.

As such, while the silent march was a performance with several aims, some articulated by the CNH and others by the artists that designed the

Fig. 3.6 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/EM0035

poster, the marches, and protests in general were a performance of constitutional rights. And here is where we can begin to see the importance of conceptualizing the discourse of the student movement as a rhizome. According to Deleuze and Guattari, multiplicities are epistemological systems that resist a teleological construction, since a rhizome "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power,

and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles." (*Thousand Plateaus* 7)

The connection this poster makes to the constitution and the connection the Demetrio Vallejo poster makes to other social movements are key in understanding the discourse of 1968. On the other hand, just like these connections produce meaning, so too do the lack of connections contribute to that understanding. In taking into account Vallejo's poster, it should be noted that it is one of many with the slogan "Libertad a los presos políticos" and that almost without exception, these all have one thing in common, not in terms of what we do see, but in terms of what we do not: women. This is not to say that women were not imprisoned in 1968, but that their representation, rather than articulated as that of activists, is often as that of victims fulfilling the appropriate gender roles for women in the late 1960s.

Take, for instance, the poster in Fig. 3.7 where there is a woman being threatened by an unseen actor whose finger is pointed threateningly at her. Her clothing and overall appearance recall the *Virgen the Guadalupe,* and her demeanor, her clenched fist and facial expression, suggests anger and desperation. The woman is obviously the only figure in plain view. She is not, however, the real protagonist of the composition. That role is played by the dead son who has paid the ultimate price for the cause or even the threatening male hand that belongs to an unseen aggressor. The woman is further left to continue her role as mother protecting the rest of her sons, fittingly enough with her silence. The poster suggests that this woman's struggle is not public as part of a demonstration or march. Instead, her struggle is defined within the private. She must struggle to contain her anger for fear of losing more children. Their safety is in her hands and her responsibility is anchored to the *marianismo* prevalent in 1968 Mexico. She must contribute to the cause with her silence. What we do not see is male silence. Men fight, men yell, men sacrifice. Women, on the other hand, support as best they can, as can be seen in the poster on the left side of Fig. 3.8 that portrays the caricature of a woman with the inscription "¡ay! petra, mi hijo en la peni, mi esposo en la cárcel dizque de disolución social. ya namás nos toca a las **mujeres** tomar las armas" (Oh! petra, my son in the penitentiary, my husband in jail supposedly for social dissolution. All that is left is for us **women** to take up arms). The caricature is meant to portray an older woman who is presumably a housewife. Additionally, the image suggests a conservative woman, given the manner in which she is dressed, thus visually establishing a generational divide. Moreover, her name, in addition to demarcating an age difference,

Fig. 3.7 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Carteles/EM0038

also suggests an indigenous background, as it is one of the names stereotypically associated with lower class, uneducated, rural women. The poster resonates with some of the images in *El grito*, in that it also portrays a woman along with several difference markers who is willing to take up arms in order to defend her rights. Still, the poster also serves to establish

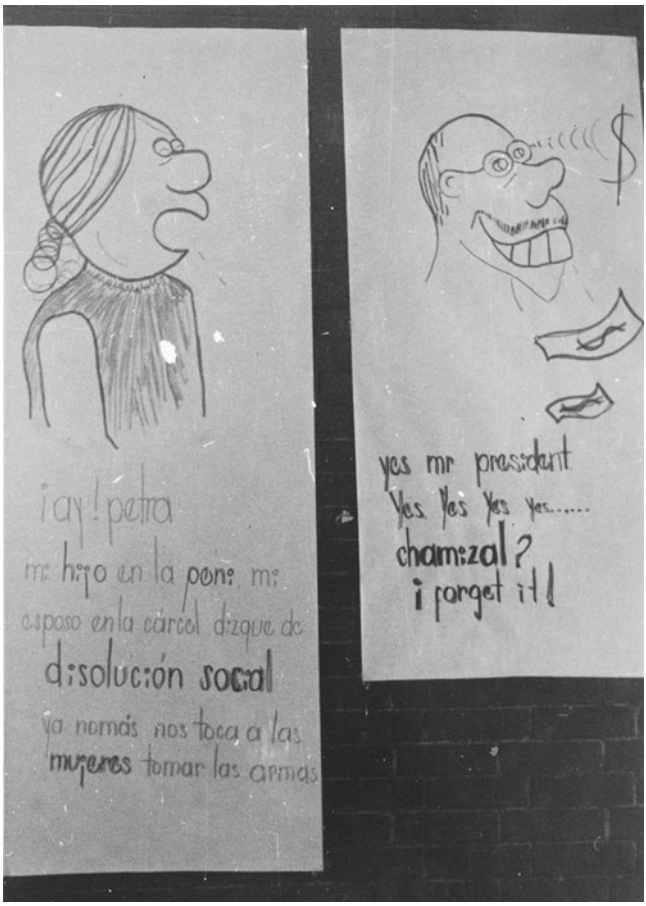

Fig. 3.8 ISSUE/AHUNAM/Fondo Esther Montero/Sección Fotografías/EM060

a series of subtle and not so subtle divisions between the mostly middle-class, urban, male student leadership and others who may have well been an important part of the student movement. The most obvious is the portrayal of women as those willing to take up arms in the absence of men. The poster bolds "mujeres," to stress that the political persecution is such that even women are considering taking up arms. It is the man's role to take up arms in defense of the cause. But what must it mean that the situa-

tion is so dire that even women, and not just women, but women like this woman, are willing to take up the fight? The woman the poster purports to represent is one that has been left without men in the family to defend her. Her son is in the penitentiary and husband in jail and as such, she is left on her own. We see a patriarchal hierarchy where her agency rests, first on her husband, and then on her son. Only in their absence is she able to act on her behalf, and that is represented as evidence of the deplorable conditions in which the country finds itself. Additionally, there is an implicit hierarchy vis-à-vis social class and race. As I mentioned earlier, the name "Petra" is one that is commonly associated with rural Mexico. That, coupled with her basic sociolect, suggests an uneducated woman, once again falling within the stereotypes of rural people. Just as we can see how women are portrayed within specific gender roles, the emphasis on her social class seems to suggest that even the uneducated know enough to take action. The poster implicitly separates men from women, students from the masses, the urban from the rural, thus creating a series of pockets of representation. In doing so, it allows a glimpse into the real behind the reality of the visual discourse opening a window inside a window.

What can be gleaned from these images is that the ideology of the CNH was clearly present in the visual discourse of 1968, but that ideology was carefully interpreted and translated into a visual representation with a keen awareness of the weight the Revolution and other variables had in the psyche of the Mexican population. As a result, artists were careful not to tarnish it or question its value as a foundational event, but to instead question the revolutionary discourse employed by the state. This operation was tricky at best, given the stronghold the PRI had over media outlets. Still, the rhetorical center, the *pliego petitorio* and the student movement's visual discourse, was clearly anchored to what the students perceived to be Mexican core values. Carlos Monsiváis, also interviewed for the *Memorial del 68*, synthesizes the nature of the movement as follows:

> It is basically a movement with a legal air: punishment for those responsible, disappearance of the riot police, disappearance of Article 145 and 145bis from of the Federal Penal Code which outlines the crime of social dissolution, dismissal of police chiefs, compensation for victims or the families of the victims. All of this together is a legal demand, so then the movement begins under the law's protection. That's what the authorities are never able to understand, that they are facing a movement protected by the law and, ultimately, by the constitution.

In other words, the students' demands were based on the very Mexicanness that the government was supposed to represent. While it was important for the student movement to dispel other notions about them—that they were nothing more than misguided and reckless youths, for example—it was more so that they proclaimed their Mexicanness, thus affronting the discursive assaults from the state.

What we can see, as we examine the vast array of posters produced during the student movement, is that there were a number of different styles and discourses at play. Perez Vega, for example, explains that

> You see elements from the most spontaneous and perhaps naive, but expressing a visual opinion, to highly skilled pieces, made by teachers like Adolfo Mexiac, Francisco Bueno Capdevilla, Santos Balmori, and Fernández Ledesma. Also, the student body worked with very simple silhouettes, stains, bayonets as if approaching. So then you could begin to see another visual discourse. There were elements of a pre-Hispanic character. I remember we did some raffle tickets to raise funds for the movement, I updated the oil, and another colleague used the semicolon and so those elements were being used as well. And remember the images of the dialogue that was being asked for, where there are some silhouettes in profile and intertwined semicolons to express the need for dialogue. You could see these elements well, the other thing, the expressionist, the soldier with a fixed bayonet on the tank, the riot police officer, which was used quite a bit as a formal element, connecting it with the gorilla, to the detriment of the gorilla, of course. But there were all those kinds of images, and even some images that were like cartoons that were influenced by Rius, which were made on silkscreen, which was a technique that allowed very defined forms. And you had all this, some had their dialogue balloons and all that, so there were elements that were formally being used.

While it might be convenient to assume that the ideology represented by the totality of the visual discourse came from a unified effort—and to the degree that each formed part of the movement, it certainly was—it nonetheless came from a variety of sources that were at times barely in concert with one another. When asked, for example, if the work produced by his group was circulated among other schools, Víctor Muñoz responded: "No, it did not happen very often. They did sometimes ask, but more than graphics, they asked for large posters." In other words, the manner in which this work was produced and disseminated varied greatly from group to group. Each, in one form or another, connected to the CNH at

the same time that it connected to other constituencies and to the political climate and current events. At the same time, while the leadership's discourse did not necessarily reflect the efforts and influence of the artists and their contributions, or of women and their contributions, neither did the visual discourse reflect the contributions of others equally important to the constitution of the student movement, as were farmers, medical students, or parents, among many others.

Both *El grito* and posters from the student movement represent the ideology of the CNH as articulated by the student leadership. What separates them from many written *testimonios* is that they also offer us a glimpse of the real of voices outside that power scheme allowing the viewer to access the rhizome that was the student movement. Aupart synthesizes this position when he says, "Neither *El grito* nor *Rojo amanecer* can be defined as total films, but are instead part of a small reality" (Rodríguez Cruz 36). The multiplicity of voices and the manner in which each connected to the leadership's discourse, to the state's discourse, to specific constituencies, and the specific historical, cultural, and political contexts is far too complex to map as a simple binary system since once these connections are established, one does not designate the other, breaking away from the old adage "an enemy of my enemy is my friend." That it has been articulated as such by so many can be seen as a desire to represent a galvanized front in opposition to a widely vilified government. This approach, however, has allowed the fissures and fractures within the movement to crystallize. A fresh examination of both visual and written texts can facilitate a more rich and nuanced reading of the differences within the movement and ultimately give voice to the many that formed the whole of the student movement of 1968. In this way, *El grito* represents an oscillation that searches and gives voice to those who were denied it in a historical moment of utmost importance, not by malice, but because while the student movement was perhaps a tree, women, brigades, farmers, doctors, that is to say, its roots, were merely just that, roots that were out of the sight of many, but were nevertheless responsible for nurturing the rhizome that was the student movement.

4

Cárcel de mujeres: Gender and Gendering in "La Tita" Avendaño's *De la libertad y el encierro*

The publication of *Los días y los años* and *La noche de Tlatelolco* in 1971 was the epicenter for the production of a large body of work concerning the student movement of 1968. Some were testimonial, some historical, and some literary. As was the case with González de Alba and Poniatowska, the difference between genres was at times blurred, and while some were published before 1971, Poniatowska and González de Alba certainly garnered the most attention. In this manner, they separated themselves from other works such as Gilberto Balam's *Tlatelolco, 1968; Reflexiones de un testigo* (*Tlatelolco, 1968; A Witness's Reflection*, 1968); *Javier Barros Sierra, 1968; Conversaciones con Gastón García Cantú* (*Javier Barros Sierra, 1968; Conversations with Gastón García Cantú*, 1972); and José Revueltas's *Mexico '68, Revolución y juventud* (*Mexico'68, Revolution and Youth*, 1978), among many others. The majority of these works represented constructed images of the students ranging from innocent victims to martyred politically involved activists, while at the same time making the case that the student movement of 1968 had a just cause. Gilberto Balam, for example, relates his experiences before his incarceration and during his time in Lecumberri. He situates the student movement within a national and international historical context and outlines the manner in which several elements (the Olympics, the events of July 22, 1968, communist paranoia, etc.) contributed to the massacre at Tlatelolco. Javier Barros Sierra at least partially agrees that the events of 1968 could not be pinpointed on a single element, but that any number of events contributed

J.J. Rojo, *Revisiting the Mexican Student Movement of 1968*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_4

to its ultimate culmination on October 2, 1968. Revueltas's text, on the other hand, is a posthumously published collection of essays, manifestos, and open letters directed at several intellectuals around the world written while he was a prisoner in Lecumberri. It seems that his approach was to attract attention to the students' cause through a contextualization of the student movement in Mexico with other leftist causes around the globe. What these narratives all have in common is a constant, if not permeating, articulation of the student movement as a largely intellectually driven apparatus. Balam, Barros Sierra, and Revueltas offer a complex view of the manner in which Mexican history and international movements shaped 1968. Likewise, they problematize the type of romantic depiction of 1968 as an idealistic venture. Still, much like González de Alba in *Los días y los años* as well as many other testimonial narratives about Tlatelolco, the student movement itself is articulated inside a rather homogenous bubble: one that articulated the movement almost exclusively from the perspective of the student leadership. These images persisted through most of the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s until slowly, other visions began to surface that suggested a much more complex construction of the student movement of 1968.

One work that stands apart from the others is Roberta "La Tita" Avendaño Martinez's *De la libertad y el encierro* (1998). This particular *testimonio*, which, it is worth noting, was published almost 30 years after the 1968 massacre, represents a problematic work in that the memories contained in it are articulated from a far greater distance than those contained in Poniatowska's, González de Alba's, or Balam's texts. The narrative persona is located more than 20 years after the massacre, placing the speaking subject closer to the realm of metamemory than that memory. That is, that what we read is a memory of the memories of 1968. Instead of having a more direct link to the events referenced in the text, the subject is remembering the events within a different political context than that of the subject from 1971. Specifically, the subject from 1999 would know the manner in which the subject from 1971 had been articulated or unarticulated from the discourse of 1968. In fact, that subject has a better working knowledge of the very discourse in which it is inserting itself. Rather than crafting a discourse, she is engaging it from both the past and the present. In addition, La Tita's writing represents a departure from most, if not all, of the *testimonios* concerning Tlatelolco in that the narrative voice comes from a woman. Within the construction of the discourse of 1968, the woman's voice has been largely absent except as constructed

by/in the minds of others. In other words, there are no self-authored representations of women's contributions to the movement. We only have access to either the manner in which men have portrayed their contributions or the manner in which Poniatowska frames their short *testimonios* and participation in *La noche de Tlatelolco*. What is lacking in the whole of the publications from 1968 is a perspective from a woman student who saw and understood her active involvement in some aspect of the student movement. As such, *De la libertad y el encierro* stands alone in the massive body of literary and cultural production after 1968 and begins to rescue the representation of women in the student movement. That women's *testimonios* have been so few in number, and this one in particular published so late, relative to the vast numbers of male *testimonios*, speaks about the way in which women's political participation was negated and made unthinkable/unspeakable in the construction of the overarching student discourse. As a whole, La Tita's text begins to expose the gendered discourse of the 1968 student movement.

One might argue that Oriana Fallaci's *Nada y así sea* (*Nothing, and so be it*, 1969), as well as her several reflections about Tlatelolco since 1968, would help fill the void in the representation of women. Fallaci was at the *Plaza de las tres culturas*, after all, and was wounded and held along with other student leaders. Not only did she report the events, like many others, but she also lived the experience of 1968 and, in that regard, could speak from personal experience. I would argue, however, that while Fallaci is undoubtedly a woman, she is nonetheless an outsider and a journalist. Her experience is not that of a woman in the movement but of a woman observing the events of 1968. While it may certainly be true that she lived through the atrocities of October 2, Fallaci dedicates the bulk of her book to her experience in the Vietnam War, which she then segues into her discussion of the Tlatelolco massacre which, she says, is

> a massacre worse than any massacre I had seen in the war. Because in war it is a thing in which armed people shoot at armed people, thinking about it, war has a correction mechanism: you kill me and I'll kill you; in a massacre, however, one kills and that is it, and more than three hundred, and some say they killed five hundred that night. Kids, pregnant women, children. (300)

Fallaci's perspective is clearly anchored to her experiences as a journalist and cosmopolitan correspondent with experience covering combat, an experience that few, if any, of the students in the movement shared. This is

especially clear in her recollection of the flares that signaled the beginning of the assault at the *Plaza de las tres culturas*:

> – Careful!—I yelled—It's a signal!
> But the boys shrugged.
> – No. How can it be a signal?
> – They fire flares to pinpoint the location on which to fire—I insisted.
> – You see things like in Vietnam. (305)

Fallaci's knowledge of military tactics is counterpointed by the students' naiveté in regard to the same subject. What is more, Fallaci's gaze is that of the observer rather than that of a participant in the events. Her participation in the events of 1968 is a matter of happenstance. She is there to report and becomes involved, not out of her own volition, but by the actions of the government and her presence in the rally. Up until that point, she is unaffected by the government's actions in the months preceding October. Additionally, there is a certain degree of reverence that is afforded to the foreign press. In that regard, Fallaci cannot represent a student's perspective. In the buildup to the student massacre, Fallaci has little to fear, and the consequences for her actions could only be positive: she is ultimately "getting the story."

Elena Poniatowska, on the other hand, does offer us a series of glimpses into the female experience during the 1968 student movement in *La noche de Tlatelolco*. In Poniatowska's *testimonio*, we see women in many types of auxiliary roles, such as forming part of a theater *brigade*, as is the case of Margarita Isabel who recounts:

> We decided to turn to the only thing we knew how to do: act. We said "We are going to try to make people understand what the movement is, what the students want, what the six points are, we are going to show them that they are not vandals or savages." How?: Acting. (29)

The woman in this *testimonio*, while not a member of the CNH, decides that she must form a part of the student movement by trying to convince people that the students have a worthwhile cause. One point of interest is that, while she agrees with the movement, she does not see herself as part of it. She clearly states that she wants to show the people that the students (they) are not vandals. But if she is not part of the movement, we are left to wonder who is. At least this woman signifies the movement

as something other than the actions of young people in the streets, trying to educate their peers about the cause. Similarly, there are a number of women represented as victims due to their participation in the student movement: "I left my car on La Milla Avenue, next to the Museum of Anthropology, and my mom stayed in it and we went to the demonstration and when I came back neither my car or mom were there anymore" (63). The generational divide between mother and daughter is hinted at in this fragment, but the victimization is nonetheless present. Either the young woman is abandoned by her mother as she attends a rally or both are victimized by an outside force responsible for her mother's disappearance. Still, the most potent representation of women's victimization during the student movement comes with the reference to Alcira Soust:

> During the fifteen days of CU's army occupation a girl, Alcira, locked herself in a bathroom in the University. She was terrified. She could not or would not escape. Seeing the soldiers, the first thing that came to her was to lock herself inside. It was horrible. One of the employees who does the cleaning found her half dead, lying on the bathroom tile. Fifteen days later! (71)

Soust's story later became the center of Bolaño's *Amuleto* (*Amulet*, 1999). While certainly brave, this experience and its representation fit in with accepted gender roles of the time and are emblematic of the place women presumably occupied in the student movement, if we were to assume that those roles went unchallenged in 1968.

Still, Poniatowska does record a series of portraits of women in a position of power either as part of the 1968 movement or outside the family structure. As part of the student movement, Poniatowska cites Ana Ignacia "Nacha" Rodriguez and Roberta "La Tita" Avendaño about twenty times. Each represents a strong woman who challenges the established gender roles of the time, but they do not compare to the extent that their male counterparts are represented. Guevara Niebla, for example, is referenced twenty-two times, Raul Álvarez Garín twenty-three times, and González de Alba about thirty-five times. Each of these men are undoubtedly important in developing the discourse of the student movement, but by citing them as often as she does in comparison to the rest of the actors in her work, Poniatowska helps to perpetuate the notion that the movement was indeed centered on the musings of the male student leadership.

That they are represented at all in *La noche de Tlatelolco* can be seen as a victory for women, if we take into account the roles in which we

see them in *Los días y los años*, where they are absent altogether from the center of power and locus of narration. Instead, González de Alba articulates women as important to the movement but only in service roles or in roles that see them supporting the efforts of the student leadership, almost exclusively composed of men. He writes, for example,

> At first, Maria Elena and Selma brought us food every day since the "ranch" was very bad, even though it later improved somewhat; but, given that several of us received food for one person every day, we decided to organize the families, as some others already were, to spare them so much work. (162)

María Elena and Selma are mentioned several times throughout the text, but their roles are generally associated with supporting the men in one form or another. At times they drive the men to a location, at times they bring them food in jail, but generally they function as a support system for the student leadership. Even when they are mentioned as part of the movement itself, they are still relegated to secondary positions.

> No, we could not continue wasting paper on Alcira's poems, Marjorie. But they had only made a few hundred. And the stencil? In addition, they delayed the printing of flyers. It was fine, they would print them when the mimeograph was not being used. Alcira had become angry with me when I tried to halt their private issues, but in the end we reached a compromise: no more than five hundred. (108)

González de Alba articulates Alcira Soust's political efforts as wasting resources. Additionally, he characterizes her work as being part of the private realm, thus establishing the appropriate gendered space for women and differentiating the spheres each occupied. Furthermore, her 2-week-long plight inside the bathroom, presumably just as terrifying as any prison, is relegated as something other than a purely political action. If we take Villoro's assertion that only through the testimonial writing of González de Alba and Poniatowska are we able to access the "true" story of the movement, then we must ask what this true story about the movement encompasses. What did in fact fall into oblivion? In examining the *testimonios* of the era, we find that *women* were among those who disappeared from the movement's story about itself.

La Tita's *De la libertad y el encierro* almost by default takes on this gendered discourse by offering the reader a glimpse into the female experience and contributions during the student movement of 1968. In the

same way that *Los días y los años* functions as a metahistory of the historical processes that led to the unarticulation of Tlatelolco from the official discourse, so too can we examine La Tita's text as a metahistory of the student movement in that it also exposes the mechanisms that led to the unarticulation of women's voices from the male students' construction of the discourse of 1968.

Taking Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic paradigm, we can explore how these texts do not so much frame nor are framed by other texts as much as they are enveloped by the very connections to those texts. These connections, I would argue, do not have to be articulated in the positive. In other words, there need not be a reference or explicit relation. Instead, the connection may well be, as it is in this case, that one text, experience, or discourse is not included or articulated in another. These connections, they argue, are neither static nor hierarchical. In other words, while I describe *Los días y los años* as a metahistory of 1968, I do not propose that it frames or encompasses that history. Rather, I propose that it intersects it in the same way that *De la libertad y el encierro* intersects *Los días y los años* and the same way that *Los días y los años* intersects the government's discourse constructed around the Tlatelolco massacre. It is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari argue that "not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse forms of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status" (*Plateaus* 7). The resulting paradigm then forces us to look at the *testimonios* of 1968 as a series of texts that, in chorus with marches, distinct gender experiences, and other traits in the rhizome, rather than supplanting other versions of the events, engage with them in order to form a more nuanced multiplicity. If, on the one hand, we were to envision these discourses as frames, the resulting construction would lead to a very predictable hierarchical construct through which there would appear to be but a single question: which is the history *par excellence* of the student movement? On the other hand, following Villoro's argument, we would be forced to look for the "true" account of the student movement of 1968. I consider this question to be misguided and the one that has, to some extent, guided the study of Tlatelolco for much of the twentieth century. In fact, I do not propose that *De la libertad y el encierro* is history at all, but rather, that it is a historical representation that contributes to the overall construction of a narrative that will

lead to a more complete understanding of the 1968 student movement that includes not only women's perspectives, but also their reflections about their own participation in the movement. I stress this last point because there have been articulations concerning the role of women in the movement to which I have already alluded; however, these articulations tend to mirror the traditional gender roles in Mexico in the 1960s. As a result, the perspective we have about their role in the movement is a rather biased and incomplete construct that, rather than defining women's active participation, is used to further enhance the role men played in 1968. In this regard, while *De la libertad y el encierro* certainly adds to the corpus of works concerning 1968, it more importantly problematizes the state/CNH binary and the construction of discourse around that dyad. This last point is especially important since the notion that it simply adds to the existing body of work would feed into the prevailing idea that the movement was a male-centered movement, not just in discourse but also in praxis, and that women could only add to that rather than contribute to its very constitution as affective political actors.

La Tita's *testimonio* begins with her arrest on January 2, 1969, 3 months after the student massacre at Tlatelolco. And while I have already mentioned that the *testimonio* is unique in that it is written almost 30 years after the massacre and by a woman, there is another important element that differentiates it from others: while there is no doubt left in the mind of the reader concerning La Tita's involvement in the student movement, the bulk of *De la libertad y el encierro* is dedicated to exploring the lives of the women prisoners not labeled as "presas políticas," rather than exploring the intricacies of the student movement or its philosophy. We learn about the various crimes for which the women are in prison and the circumstances through which many remained there for years before their official sentencing or years after their original sentences had lapsed. As opposed to *testimonios* by González de Alba, José Revueltas, or Gilberto Balam, there is only a minimal mention of the movement itself or the philosophy behind it. The question is, of course, why would a *testimonio de Tlatelolco* not narrate the narrator's experience, philosophy, or views on the movement? Plainly put, given that previous works had already created and perpetuated a widely accepted narrative that did not adequately represent her experience, this *testimonio* does not mean to restate what had already been written in other works. Frazier and Cohen argue that much of male-driven *testimonios* formulate a universalist discourse in response to

the state's, through which they become representative of the movement as a whole. They write that

> Leaders' accounts of the movement showcase as protagonists not only leaders but also the state; by emphasizing the period of state repression rather than the earlier formative process, these narratives further privilege state agency. Thus, the relationship between the state and the student leaders becomes the centerpiece of public narratives, while women and other non-leaders are written out of the story. (627)

In other words, Frazier and Cohen suggest that the construction of the student narrative was carefully articulated so as to establish a single narrative center that could only be produced via the CNH. Furthermore, they would seem to suggest that much like the state's discourse was articulated so as to limit the manner in which any one entity could engage it, so too did the student leadership's discourse articulate the state as the only aggressor in order to better define the CNH as the single entity capable of negotiating with the state. In this manner, by establishing a structural and narrative interdependency, both the state and the CNH formed part of a dialectic that other voices could not penetrate. Given that, as Cohen and Frazier point out, gender roles assigned to men and women dictated that the political or public sphere belonged to men and the private sphere belonged to women, in order to relate a woman's perspective of their experience in the student movement, it would necessarily be articulated differently from her male counterparts'. In this sense, La Tita's discourse does not aim to penetrate the dialectical discourse of the CNH, since that dialectic does not adequately represent her experience and, as a result, is impenetrable by her discourse precisely due to that inherent lack of representation. As such, La Tita's work underscores the permeating gendering of the discourse of 1968 by using a seemingly oblique approximation to the student movement as a discursive strategy that pulls the reader away from the already established overarching narrative.

The gendering of the student movement of 1968 was manifested through many processes and elements. Perhaps the most multifaceted one was the incarceration of prisoners. While men were housed in Lecumberri prison in the center of Mexico City, and indeed in the limelight to those involved in the movement and anyone following it, women were housed in *Cárcel de mujeres* (now known as the women's correctional center), far

from the center of the city and at the edge of the public's consciousness. Furthermore, the symbolic importance of Lecumberri greatly outweighed that of *Cárcel de mujeres.* Speaking of Lecumberri as the home of Mexico's National Archive, Ryan Long writes:

> Its reincarnation as archive parallels its original purpose in the sense that many important witnesses of Mexico's twentieth-century history were once kept there. Lecumberri's most famous inmates include muralist David Alfredo Siqueiros; novelist, essayist, and political theorist José Revueltas; railroad worker and union organizer Demetrio Vallejo; urban-guerilla leader Salvador Castañeda; and hundreds of activists who participated in the Mexican student movement of 1968. (Lecumberri 361)

Long illustrates the historical and symbolic gravitas Lecumberri carried and from which the student leadership was able to benefit. As prisoners in Lecumberri, they were immediately part of a historical continuum of social causes. Additionally, given that one of the *seis puntos* called for the release of all political prisoners, Lecumberri was further entrenched as an emblem of the student movement, particularly in the wake of the Tlatelolco massacre after which, as Long points out, so many student protesters were imprisoned. Lecumberri, while still a prison, nonetheless provided those who were held there an element of community with history and visibility to the outside world. Plainly put, Lecumberri was important in a way that *Cárcel de mujeres* was not. One was historically relevant, the other was not. One was in the limelight, the other was not. One was in the center of the city, the other was in the outskirts, on the edge of the old Puebla-México *autopista*.

Symbolically, then, La Tita is very much isolated from the movement while in *Cárcel de mujeres.* Her isolation, however, also reaches her on a day-to-day basis. While, indeed, Lecumberri provided students with a sense of community with the outside world, given that the majority of the students imprisoned were ultimately housed in Lecumberri, it also provided them with a support structure, by the sheer number of political prisoners. This was not the case with La Tita in *Cárcel de mujeres.* In fact, shortly after her arrest, while briefly held in Lecumberri, she recalls:

> They moved us to the main office, Salvador Villegas, who was from UNAM's Engineering School was there. He had been arrested on his birthday near his home, he had been interrogated in a house or hotel and just now he was

> being processed. *El Che* along with Rodolfo Echeverría arrived too, so the five of us we greeted and consoled each other. (11–12)[1]

La Tita and Nacha briefly enter Lecumberri and almost immediately encounter another student and are able to find the most minimal comfort in each other. This haven is short-lived as La Tita and Nacha are moved out:

> They called the men and took them away, when they returned, they told us that they had "just now" issued the arrest warrant, then they called us women, I thought they were going to do the same to us, but I was wrong so there was no chance to say goodbye, they took us directly to the "Women's Section" but as we passed through "C" block which was full of students, some of them recognized us and started shouting slogans from the movement. When we realized it we made the V for Victory with our hands, but the guards kept us from standing there. (12)

La Tita's support structure is quickly taken away as they are moved, first to the women's section of the prison and then on to *Cárcel de mujeres*, where she will spend 24 months, and so begins the systematic gendering process in the penal system. This, however, in no way implies that there was no systematic gendering process preceding La Tita's abduction or before she was formally jailed.

La Tita illustrates the manner in which the *Cárcel de mujeres* compares with Lecumberri when she is transferred a few days after her official arrest and writes about her first night there: "I remember that in the dark I thought 'now there is nowhere to go, I'm in the big house,' what might my mom be thinking, and my dad. Do they know that they moved me to the Women's Prison?" (31). While La Tita has already seen both her parents in Lecumberri, upon being transferred out of that space, she can no longer be sure that they will know where she is. Such is the invisibility of the women's prison that even a woman like La Tita cannot *know* that her parents will learn where she will eventually be held. In other words, the women's prison and, by extension, women, become an "other," both within the construct of the movement as articulated by the student leadership and in the minds of the very women who were active in the movement. The discursive erasure that had already begun to take place and that would

[1] La Tita's adherence to grammar conventions is inconsistent throughout her work. I have tried to maintain the tone and pace of her writing in my translations.

later be legitimized by the sheer number of publications that perpetuated it is translated into a public erasure that is symbolized by an invisible prison that would ultimately be vanished from the overarching narrative construct. Cohen and Frazier state that

> when we first began to investigate women's participation, we were told by leading historians that women simply had not participated in '68. When, during our first research stint, we interviewed sixty women and compiled a list of twice that many, these findings were discounted with the second standard response facing scholars of women's history—that women's participation had not *really* affected the course of the movement. (*Gender and Sexuality* 155)

The articulation of women as agents in the movement is almost nonexistent. They are portrayed as secondary actors who had no impact on the manner in which the movement took account of itself, and their space of incarceration is equally discarded. What should be noted is that the historians Cohen and Frazier reference are partly right. Women's participation did not really affect the course of the movement as it was articulated. That, however, only means that the movement needs to be rearticulated in a manner that reflects women's contributions. In other words, more than a reflection on women's negligible impact on the student movement, their representation as such reflects the impossibility of representation in a narrative history that is pre-articulated outside of their social location.

The same type of pre-articulated agency could be seen in the manner that gender roles encompassed predetermined levels of citizenship. In fact, as Frazier and Cohen point out, women were discounted as less than full participants even before they were imprisoned. They write that

> Even though the idea of women could and should play a more visible political role was gaining currency, individual women were too often not considered legitimate political actors. Seen as lacking the skills, political experience, or other qualities deemed inherent to masculinist ideals of leadership (bravery, intellect, courage), they were shut out of highly competitive political positions. (156)

Political agency and citizenship are articulated based on already established masculine standards which women are unable to penetrate. So while they were isolated from civil society by the penal system, just like those in Lecumberri, women's position was further isolated by the very

definition of citizenship used to characterize them and, in turn, their very incarceration is imagined as less important. Men are political actors before being imprisoned and are further politicized by Lecumberri, while women, already stripped of a level of citizenship before their incarceration, are further depoliticized behind bars. Judith Butler writes, "The question of 'the subject' is crucial for politics, and for feminist politics in particular, because juridical subjects are invariably produced through certain exclusionary practices that do not 'show' once the juridical structure of politics has been established" (2). She further adds, "Juridical power inevitably 'produces' what it claims to represent" (2). Seen through this lens, we can appreciate how women in Mexico in the 1960s were produced as something less than full participatory political subjects, rather than simply represented as such. I would stress that this production is purely discursive. In other words, it is not suggested that women were in fact apolitical, but that their politics were unrepresented in the latent discourse which, in turn, meant that they could easily be articulated outside the political realm. It is no accident, for example, that the CNH, composed of over 200 representatives, had only a handful of women in their membership. In that regard, women's incarceration does not deprive them of political agency since they never wholly possessed it.

As La Tita begins the recollection of her experience during the abduction preceding her official arrest, we immediately begin to see the manner in which gender guides her narrative in a way that it does not come into play in male-written narratives.

> Apparently they put me in the parking lot of a building, it could have been the office of the Attorney General. There, the two men in the back of the car got out and another one from the front, leaving the one behind the wheel who began to mock me, he said to me "Let's see you make the V for Victory now. I thought you didn't give your rights up." About this, he was referring to a plastic button I wore, it was black with orange, the colors of the School, and had that message. I said, "How easy it is to have a *vieja*, alone and blindfolded and having the upper hand, make fun of her!" I only received the policeman's silence. (2)

What is telling in this recollection is the manner in which La Tita seemingly accepts that a woman alone against three armed men is easier to subdue and frighten than would a man in a similar situation. In fact, while it might be logical to assume that a man against three armed men might be equally subdued, there is ultimately no comparison between men and women.

Whether men are or are not subdued in this manner is irrelevant. What matters is that women suffer from this inherent lessened quality. In addition, her choice of the word "vieja" to describe herself points to a self-victimization so engrained that she replays it without pause. While the word has many connotations, in this context, it has a disparaging overtone that sets women apart from men in terms of power and status. The divide La Tita draws between men and women is tacitly accepted by her male captor, from whom she only elicits silence as a response. He is unable to contradict her notion that women are weaker than men and is so convinced by her logic that he is unable to rebut her. Instead, as one might expect, her captors view her in the same manner as is illustrated by the brief exchange between La Tita and another one of her captors: "they sat me in a chair and I could hear them around the room, they moved furniture and opened packages, so I said, 'I want to go to the bathroom.' 'She is already going to start to bitch' said one of them. 'Oh, well', I said" (3). La Tita's request to use the restroom is once again interpreted as a sign of weakness only attributable to a woman. His response that "va a empezar a chingar" suggests that a man would not make such a request or is impervious to the weaknesses of biological functions. In either case, when one kidnaps a woman, it would seem that such inconveniences must be expected from the "weaker sex."

La Tita's gendered experience continues when she recalls her near epiphany concerning her imprisonment in a clandestine prison:

> I think that one does not know what one is capable of withstanding in terms of physical or psychological torture and in terms of controlling one's emotions, especially in cases like these that are quite unusual. I would beg and say "My God, don't let me be one of the women that they slap once so they'll talk and slap again so they'll shut up. Help me." (3)

This particular recollection is highly significant, since there is clearly a gendered subject being alluded to. She does not wish to be one of those *people* who easily break, but rather one of those *women*. Furthermore, the violence she fears is reduced to being slapped. It is interesting that she chooses "cachetada," a typical form of domestic abuse against women, rather than torture; or in place of the most familiar form of gendered torture: rape. In this regard, La Tita parallels the systematic judicial repression of women with the systematic cultural repression of women. We see the underlying belief that women are broken with greater ease than men, a concern that

does not enter into the fray in other testimonials by men. Indeed, while others do break under torture or threats, these "shortcomings" are often relayed as lack of commitment, thirst for power, philosophical differences, or simply, the acceptance that a person can only endure so much before *he* gives in to the torture. Yet, even in this instance, it is articulated outside of a male gendered weakness. Instead, it is represented as a feminization of the subject. As Paz points out in his discussion of the popular and vulgar act of *rajarse*, "the ideal of manliness is never to 'crack' or back down" (*Laberinto* 32–33). Monsiváis recalls that this was not an option in 1968:

> Now you are really fucked. They caught you on that bus with other members of a brigade and they took you to the police station and they recognized you and threw you in jail. Before Tlatelolco. Only you, all of you would have thought of this. Imagine a rally in front of Santa Marta Acatitla. What country did you think you were living in? But you were stubborn and the rest too. There is no turning back now, no *rajados* here, you are committed to the ones they beat, the ones that disappeared, the prisoners, and the dead. It wasn't machismo, but it was a matter of jumping in, again, of taking advantage of your experiences in the mess in CU, in the fights with the *porros*, in the happenings of the students from the provinces, and jumping in full force into the movement. (*Nexos* 4)

To give up on the movement, to give in to torture, to *rajarse*, is to be a traitor, not just to the cause, but more importantly, to one's gender, to one's masculinity, to one's manhood. Women, writes Paz, "are inferior beings because, in giving themselves, they open themselves up. Their inferiority is constitutional and resides in their sex, in their *rajada*, a wound that never scars" (33). As such, gender is a nonissue in male-written *testimonios*. It goes unmentioned, indeed unquestioned. There is only one gender that matters. It is a given. Indeed, here we also see that it is not only women that have gender, but that men do as well, though it is largely unarticulated, not because of an omission, but because it is already an inherent component of the discourse of the student movement, that which Foucault calls the "manifest discourse," which, he argues, is a latent component, a series of predetermining imperatives that drive discourse. More than an explicit set of negations or barriers, he writes that it is "a 'never-said', an incorporeal discourse, a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely the hollow of its own mark" (*Archeology* 25). He goes on to say, "The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a

hollow that undermines from within all that is said" (*Archeology* 25). In this regard, the gendering process is absolute in the discourse of 1968. We do not see or read about men who break and who in turn cause a self-reflection that might lead one to examine the assumption that women break easier than men.

However, what is particularly interesting about this operation is the manner in which female gendering is articulated as static, yet male gendering is rather a performance. While women's weakness is inherently tied to their gender, male gender is such that it precludes weakness. Yet, those who do show such a weakness are no longer really men. The moment they are betrayed by this weakness, they are "*rajados*," devoid of maleness and relegated to the "other" gender. Of course, what remains unquestioned in this assumption is that if one were to take as a given that women break easier than men do (and this is certainly not what I propose), would there be a reasonable discourse within which it were true? Would the real question be *why* do *our* women break easier than our men? Or why do they break easier than us? Ultimately, this last question itself begins to provide an answer. There exist an implicit and inherent "us" and "them" in the discourse of the student movement. While I will not venture to say that the realities of men and women in 1968 were on opposite poles, though surely they were different from one another, what can be said is that the representations of the male and female experience were highly contrasting. La Tita's earlier thought provides evidence of this. While the experience of her arrest and imprisonment is similar to her male counterparts (she is arrested by undercover police officers, blindfolded, threatened, held under questionable circumstances, etc.), the experience within it is related in different terms. On the one hand, there is the fear of being betrayed by her gender, which again is an experience that we do not see in other testimonials and, on the other, the isolation that is generally not experienced by those housed in Lecumberri, and indeed, that isolation could be seen as one of the reasons why women were subjected to greater torment. The space that women occupied was minimal, and they were given little importance in the student leadership's discourse. Lecumberri became one of the most important symbols of the government's repression against the students while *Cárcel de mujeres* was sporadically mentioned as a reminder that women were also imprisoned in other locales. As such, the space to which women were relegated mirrored their place within the movement. That is, women were outcast to a position distant from the center of power and representation. So while men were articulated as central actors in the

ongoing negotiations and confrontations with the government, women were articulated as supportive of secondary measures of those efforts, and while women were actively participating in the movement, they were rarely mentioned as political prisoners.

Taking into account the manner in which the articulation of Lecumberri became the discursive anchor of the student movement and the manner in which women were displaced to ancillary figures in its constitution, it should come as no surprise that the prison experiences of each also illustrated the same divide. One of the tenets of the student movement was the call for the release of all political prisoners. This call was often relayed by the use of posters with the slogan "Libertad a los presos políticos," which featured drawings of faces, none of which were women. Indeed, one of the main points of contention between the student leadership and the government was concerning the question of whether political prisoners existed at all. The Mexican government denied that anyone was imprisoned exclusively because of their political views. This cause was taken up in the film *2 de octubre* (*October 2nd*, 1969), in which prisoners in Lecumberri filmed their everyday lives in prison with cameras that had been smuggled in. The film contextualized the plight of political prisoners between 1958 and 1970, thus framing the historical community Long mentions. But, as Elaine Carey points out,

> The film offered startling political images, but an element of the actual student uprising was missing. It referred to struggles of the people, but it excluded women. Women from the student demonstrations were imprisoned in the Women's Prison. They did not appear in the film, and they went unmentioned. (160)

This omission highlights the manner in which men in Lecumberri were able to form what Long calls "narrative identities" through which they were able to establish a community with the outside world and foment a support system that went beyond their own family units. This connection was lacking in *Cárcel de mujeres*, as they were not adequately represented in the national imaginary by the student leadership's discourse.

In a similar manner, women were also isolated from the majority of their comrades, thus denying them the ability to unite and form a viable coalition behind the prison walls, dictating a position in prison that is different from that which men occupied in Lecumberri. La Tita is acutely aware of this position within *Cárcel de mujeres*. She writes that the abuses in the prison

> had to be endured along with the impotence of knowing that there, the rules were made by people who barely knew how to read and write, one had to accept it whether we liked it or not. We, the political prisoners, were the minority and the other women would eat us alive. The same did not happen with the men because since there were more of them and they were concentrated in "C" and "M" blocks, they could reach some mutually convenient improvements. (123)

La Tita articulates her position in prison as a political prisoner as different from that of the men in Lecumberri who were concentrated in two prison blocks. The women, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly outnumbered by what Nacha called the "presas comunes" (common prisoners). And while La Tita is rather diplomatic in the manner in which she describes the disadvantage women political prisoners faced, Nacha is less so:

> We ended up in some very disadvantaged positions as opposed to our *compañeros*, and I always proclaim it, not because it was their fault, after all, poor them, they were also in prison. But it feels like the government showed no mercy with us women, firstly because we were so far away and secondly, because in the women's prison there were things that the men did not experience.

She clearly alludes to the physical realities of the prison that made it more difficult for families to visit resulting in what she calls the *carcelazo*:

> Everyone goes through the *carcelazo* differently, but it is true that the *carcelazo* hits you when you don't get any visitors on visiting day. Generally, you get very emotional and you feel very sad, you feel isolated, you feel like no one cares about you or that something happened with your family and you don't know about it. So you lower your gaze. You get very emotional, you go and sit alone in your cell. Many will cry, I don't know what others might do. They might scream or I don't know. I'm not going to tell you that the men cry because all of a sudden they are too macho.

Nacha, in a vivid and powerful self-reflection, articulates the real and tangible impact of the prison's isolation from the city and the impact it had, not just on prisoners' political articulation, but also on their day-to-day existence. What is more, she describes the manner in which the consequences of that geographical distance result in further self-isolation. Already imprisoned and isolated from society, upon discovering that she has no visitors, Nacha isolates herself in her cell. She does not admit to

crying, though we can assume that she does, but she willingly locks herself up in a cell, poignantly illustrating the damage suffered. Indeed, La Tita recounts the manner in which the realities of the prison's symbolic and geographic isolation manifest themselves: "In the beginning, we women political prisoners had as many as 100 visitors in a single day, but only in the beginning. Slowly the numbers dwindled until it was only a few *compañeros* who were part of the Action Committee of the Law School" (129). La Tita's visits are quickly reduced to only those members of her school. Gone is any national recognition or any recognition from the movement as a whole. Given the manner in which political agency is articulated by those in powerful positions, these sacrifices will not be cast within the political realm, thus locking women in a prison that is outside of the dominant narrative structures of both nation and movement.

In addition to the psychological torture endured by Nacha, La Tita, and other political prisoners in *Cárcel de mujeres*, La Tita learns from another prisoner of the threat of sexual assault that awaits her:

> She told us that in *Cárcel de mujeres*, there were many lesbians, and even if you didn't want to they would make you, and if you didn't cooperate with one of the smart ones, you'd get a beating. It was hell. Full of fear, Nacha would say to me "no, *Gorda*, you protect me, don't let them do anything to me." I said to myself, "you picked a good one." Never in my life had I been in a fight, and certainly not with my hands. I was big and fat, but I was a coward too. Even so she insisted, "you'll defend me, don't leave me alone, you'll help me." To calm her down, I told her "all right, I'll defend you." (13–14)

La Tita articulates the fear of violence within a sexual realm: one that coincides with accepted gender roles. That is, while her fear of being violated is certainly grave and absolutely justified, her concern is one that could be articulated within the framework of chastity or honor that was emblematic of the machismo of the era. Ultimately, the threat of violence is a personal and private one. This is not to suggest that the men in Lecumberri did not face a threat of violence. In fact, as González de Alba narrates in *Los días y los años*, they were subjected to a brutal repression in the prison walls at the hands of the "presos comunes," with the implicit backing of the state. The difference between the two is that while La Tita's fear of violence is at the personal level, the violence against the political prisoners in Lecumberri, while brutal, is cast as a restaging of the violence occurring outside the prison walls. In other words, the violence against them

is an act that parallels the already established dialectic of the state versus the student movement and, as such, it ultimately functions as yet another way in which the student movement is signified almost exclusively by the prisoners at Lecumberri. The violence against them is politically motivated and ultimately serves to underscore their status as political prisoners. The violence women experience, on the other hand, is articulated outside that realm. Their sense of threat and danger cannot be translated into the systemic levels of state or movement as the men's can. Women's experience of violence is a dead-end, an experience that cannot be inserted into another narrative structure in which it becomes more valuable and powerful. It is merely what happens to all women.

Nacha, rather than recounting the fear she experienced in anticipation of her arrival in the *Cárcel de mujeres*, recounts her actual victimization within its walls:

> We were victims of many things, I definitely was a victim of the common prisoners, of a special group, that I think now looking back, after having studied human rights, I feel that they are special groups formed by the very authorities to decimate your spirit.

Nacha recasts the violence and articulates it in the same terms as the political prisoners in Lecumberri: in the political realm. In this manner, she tries to insert herself into the student discourse of 1968 on equal footing. It is important to note that, while the discursive battle between the student movement and the government took place in terms of which discourse to employ, as I previously argued, the debate nonetheless took place between two entities: the student leadership and the government agents. So while indeed there was a reaction against a homogenous and universalist discourse, the discourse of the students was no less so, and the female experience was not adequately represented within the political realm.

The prisons' geographies and the importance they carried paralleled a similar operation in the discursive space. This operation is cemented after 1968, when the primary discourse of the student movement becomes the prison memoir. This first-person narrative came to exemplify the "true" experience of the movement. Indeed, many of the *testimonios* of the era are prison narratives that detail life in prison rather than the progression of the movement from beginning to end, thus collapsing the whole of the student movement to the male leadership's prison experience and, in so doing, argue Frazier and Cohen, "effectively erasing the participation of

hundreds of the thousands who gave the struggle its unique character and place in recent history" (146). The use of *testimonio* as the chosen genre goes against the grain of the very genre. Therefore, while it has historically been used to represent the voice of the unrepresented by a representative member of that group, in this case, the writers of the *testimonios* are educated middle-class students who cannot adequately represent the people at the center of the struggle. In addition, as Long points out, the students already had access to forms of representation through the media and the propaganda machinery they themselves created. All these men can do is articulate their experience of the movement from a top-down perspective that necessarily casts them as the most representative actors of the movement.

Still, La Tita's representation of her prison experience is vastly different from that of her male counterparts. The bulk of her *testimonio* apparently has little to do with the political aspect of the student movement. Instead, what we see is the place to which women were relegated in the *Cárcel de mujeres.* For La Tita, being part of a progressive movement was not an escape from established gender roles in Mexico. In describing the space of the prison she writes, for example,

> going towards the interior on the right side, there was a small room/shop that belonged to Don Pepe, who was the electrician. He was an ugly man about fifty years old and to whom I am grateful, for after my mom died, he was the one that brought me the groceries I needed to cook a dish on Sundays for my dad. (83)

In the absence of her mother, she is now responsible for cooking meals for her father even while she is in prison. What is striking about this description is the manner in which it is brought into the narration. La Tita inserts the topic in the middle of a physical description of the prison, in a sense inserting the symbolic prison of a patriarchal system within the physical prison space. In the absence of La Tita's mother to play the traditional role of food preparer for her father, La Tita assumes that role from behind bars. Carey points out that while women prisoners were absent in the film *2 de octubre*, "The film did however depict the disruption to family lives. An image of Eli de Gortari carrying his children in his arms during visiting hours behind prison walls reflected the difficulties endured by the families of prisoners" (160). In other words, the imprisonment of political actors in Lecumberri has an impact beyond the political. Both men and women

are multifaceted individuals with political and personal lives. La Tita parallels this discursive operation where the father becomes a victim as a result of not having his daughter home to take over the family matriarch's role. She articulates her role, however, not as a victim, but as an irresponsible woman who selfishly ignored her family's needs while being involved in the movement (130). It is worth noting, however, that La Tita, along with other prisoners in the *Cárcel de mujeres,* does fulfill that matriarchal role in other respects. She writes:

> I knitted table covers with a rose in the middle and everyone liked them and everyone made at least one set, even me. Someone else ended up knitting some socks. They had a heel and an elastic. We knitted pairs and pairs for our families as well as for our *compañeros* in Lecumberri. (93)

This alone is not evidence of a gendered discourse, nor does it prove that women in the movement of 1968 were relegated to service positions simply because La Tita describes women performing activities stereotypically deemed appropriate for women. Nevertheless, while we see a concern for their fellow prisoners in Lecumberri on the part of the women, these gestures of camaraderie are not reciprocated by those housed in Lecumberri, or at least we see little of such reciprocity in their *testimonios.*

As we read La Tita's text, one cannot help but notice the manner in which many of her actions are guided by a latent gendering. The most obvious of these comes as she recounts one of her trips to the courthouse, where she knows she will see some of her male counterparts:

> on those occasions, not just us but all the women that were going to court, made an effort to look good. We would lend each other jewelry, make-up, perfumes, stockings, shoes, and even uniforms since sometimes the one that was going had a really old or stained uniform and someone would lend her another one in better shape.
>
> We also tried to bring them a gift, sometimes we would make them bread and they allowed us to take it to them, or we would knit them something, or we would write letters to the ones we didn't see and we would ask the people that interviewed us to pass them along. (80)

Once again, La Tita and her fellow *presas políticas* prepare gifts for the men. But what is even more striking is the manner in which they willingly underscore the female persona their *compañeros* expect to see. Gone are the politicized gestures of the "V" to symbolize victory or talk of the

movement or political discussions. Instead, these gestures are supplanted by the rearticulation of established gender and sexuality norms. Moreover, this is not a case of one party making him or herself attractive to his or her partner, but of women making themselves attractive to men with whom they may or may not have a romantic relationship. There are several ways of reading these episodes. We could conclude that they represent a capitulation to established gender norms in an attempt to connect to the movement via the men that represent it. Or we could read them as an attempt to establish any type of connection after an extended period of isolation and self-isolation. In either case, what is telling is the manner in which these connections are established through the performance of assigned gender-specific roles rather than a performance of politicized discourse.

While La Tita does spend some time detailing the connections she had to the movement, these tend to be broad. As I mentioned before, she does not address the philosophy of the movement, nor does she explain her contributions to the movement, nor does she recall her participation in the marches or demonstrations. Instead, what we read about is the manner in which the movement and her connection to it affect her in her everyday life: the manner in which she looks forward to seeing her *compañeros* or explaining what happened when she was apprehended or underscoring that she is one of a handful of *presas políticas*. Indeed, that might be one of the reasons why she chooses not to relate the student movement experience: the lack of student activists in the *Cárcel de mujeres*. But while political prisoners might well be lacking, nonpolitical prisoners certainly are not. La Tita dedicates much of her narration to introducing the reader to the women housed there, and she paints a vivid portrait of her experience in a women's prison. It is clear in her narrative that many of the women in prison are there for crimes that warranted incarceration. Many of the women she describes were involved in murders, drug trafficking, or some other major offense. What is striking about her account, however, is the focus on a general sense of injustice that hangs over many of the women in the prison. There is, for example, "La Abuela" (the Grandmother), whose file she describes as "abultado" or thick. "La Abuela" is a woman who is in and out of prison, apparently by choice, but in fact, due to her inability to survive in the outside world: "Those who have seen her come and go say that she has some grandchildren, but no one ever visits her. She goes free, but when she gets tired of being outside or simply can't find a way to survive she 'steals in plain sight', they catch her and imprison her" (59). "La Abuela" is a woman forgotten by the system, unable to succeed outside the prison walls.

There are also other more palpable injustices in the prison. Perhaps the most poignant is that of Rocío and Martha, who forge a romantic relationship in prison that persists well after their release. Rocío, she tells her reader, "lived or sometimes slept with some famous athlete, from whom she stole some expensive piece of jewelry. He turned her in and she was arrested and sent to *Cárcel de mujeres*" (54). Rocío's case is peculiar for a number of reasons, not the least significant of which is that she tells us that she "wasn't going to get out soon" (54). The reader can assume that she was having an affair with the famous athlete and, due to his stature, he was able to make sure she was jailed for an extended period of time even if the offense does not appear to be very serious. Why, then, is Rocío jailed for so long? One could speculate that the athlete was married, that he wanted to break up with her, that he wanted to put some distance between himself and Rocío, or any other possibilities. But one can only speculate. There is no explicit reason given. La Tita in passing mentions that Rocío is pregnant, which provides another possibility as to why she is really in jail: that her famous athlete did not want the responsibility of assuming the role of father to the unborn child and arranges to have her sent to prison on a charge of theft.

Martha, much like Rocío, is also in jail for theft and also finds out that she is pregnant while in prison:

> Martha was from Veracruz. She was convicted of robbery. While drunk, she had been raped and once imprisoned she found out about her pregnancy. She had a baby boy and even though she did not abandon her sexual preferences I can say in her support that she turned out to be a good mother. She was in charge of selling soft drinks and with what she made she took care of the feeding and other needs of her son. She got high very little. (54)

What is striking about this description is the manner in which La Tita both glosses over Martha's rape and subtly assigns an element of blame to her by framing it in the context of a drunken stupor. Equally pervasive is the manner in which Martha's sexuality is seen as a negative. Martha is able to perform her gender-appropriate duties as a mother *in spite* of her inappropriate sexual preferences. La Tita reveals the manner in which yet another voice could very well have gone unrepresented in the students' discourse and how a different type of latent gendering guides La Tita's narrative. Butler points out:

> Feminist critique ought to explore the totalizing claims of a masculinist signifying economy, but also remain self-critical with respect to the totalizing

> gestures of feminism. The effort to identify the enemy as singular in form is a reverse-discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms. That the tactic can operate in feminist and antifeminist contexts alike suggests that the colonizing gesture is not primarily or irreducibly masculinist. It can operate to effect other relations of racial, class, and heterosexist subordination, to name a few. (13)

In other words, if the student leadership's discourse underrepresented women's (among others') voices and contributions, which La Tita now tries to remedy by writing her *testimonio*, it does not mean that she is not equally blind to the voices and contributions of other constituencies. In the same manner in which the latent gendered position adopted in male-written *testimonios* ignores women's contributions, a similar latent gendering guides La Tita's writing. In fact, the gendering process, one could argue, occurs within each individual narrative construct as much as it does in between them. *De la libertad y el encierro* sheds light on the gendered discourse of the student movement, establishes a gendered dialog between it, and is guided by its own gender-normative vision. In this regard, La Tita's *testimonio* is not representative of all women; or, to put it another way, women's contributions to the student movement cannot be reduced to the experience of one woman or two women, or three. Instead, it must be understood that this is *simply* La Tita's experience in the movement that is more revelatory of the disarticulation of women from the male students' narratives than it is a representation of women as whole. What this means in a larger context is that any one discourse will inevitably have blind spots, biases, and omissions.

Still, what can be gleaned from both these cases is the inherent injustice of which both Rocío and Martha are victims. That those injustices are perpetrated by men should not go unnoticed. Similarly, Fedra, whom La Tita describes as having the "body of a model, thin, tall and movements that, without her intending it, made her appear elegant " (65), also seems to fall victim to a series of unfortunate events after her incarceration. While in jail, she establishes a relationship with Gerardo who, La Tita tells us, is often at the prison to visit "some friends." Their relationship becomes serious, and he begins to procure certain privileges for both Fedra and her friends. He was

> willing to help her procure some favors, previously paid for, of course, and smart enough to not compromise himself and ready to support in what was needed. But there are those who wouldn't be able to achieve them even with money. Favors like an after-hours visitor now and again with his lover,

> or passing some things usually banned like clothes for both Fedra and the little girl.
>
> He managed, for example, to support the volleyball team by coming every day as the coach and helped us to get things for the team from the outside, making himself useful. (66)

What is clear is that Gerardo is intimately aware of the manner in which prisons work and is able to navigate the system with relative ease. Fedra is released and, even though La Tita believes they will be able to forge ahead with their relationship, she is once again incarcerated, this time on drug charges. Furthermore, she becomes a drug dealer in the prison "with Gerardo's help who somehow managed to get them delivered to her" (66). Fedra is then convicted of an additional charge of selling drugs in the prison. While it would seem that she is a victim of an experienced drug trafficker who is able to manipulate her with great skill, it should be noted that Gerardo is able to do so with the implicit cooperation of the prison staff, suggesting an arrangement between the two. It should also be clear that Fedra is not an innocent girl corrupted by the system. She is in fact originally jailed for trying to murder her lover's child, though the injustice that follows is unrelated to her previous conviction.

Perhaps the most potent sense of injustice comes from two sisters jailed together for the apparent kidnapping of a 1-year-old child from a well-off family. According to La Tita, the boy was kidnapped by a third party who planned to ask for a ransom but abandoned the child instead. The child was found by an illiterate *campesino* who, instead of taking him to the police, takes him to his sister:

> she, who already had many children and little money, refused to keep him and suggested that he take him to the other sister who also lived in the town and had no children and that's what he did. As time went on, the police, having continued the investigation since there was money and influence involved, found him in the town and the woman told us that scared, she ran and hid with the child in the corn fields where they found them. Their explanations notwithstanding, they were taken to jail, he to Lecumberri and the two sisters, the one who didn't want the child and the one who raised him, to *Cárcel de mujeres.* (75)

It would appear that these women are victims of both their social class and level of education. They are neither educated enough to know to take the child to the authorities nor important enough to warrant consideration

from the state. They are jailed for the sake of closing the case and finding someone (anyone) responsible for the crime. The two women are disposable and are used by the system as a way of appeasing the family seeking justice. Indeed the two remain anonymous both symbolically and literally. We never find out their names. They remain invisible "working like good *campesinas* 'from sun up to sun down' without complaints" (75).

These are the portraits that permeate *De la libertad y el encierrro*, leaving us with the question of why then La Tita declines to address issues directly related to the student movement or women in the student movement throughout the majority of her text. Perhaps a more accurate question would be why she refuses to *explicitly* voice those issues. Foucault writes that

> There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (*Sexuality Volume One* 27)

Following Foucault's argument, we can suggest that La Tita's work does indeed begin to speak of a female experience during the movement and unspeak the mechanisms through which their discourse has been largely omitted. In other words, La Tita's *testimonio* is precisely about the women in the movement and the manner in which they were unarticulated from the leadership's discourse. In her 144-page text, she only mentions the *seis puntos* at the center of the student movement's discourse on page 139: "I cannot finish these *testimonios* without saying that the six points for which the Popular Student Movement of 1968 initially fought did not intend to bring down the government, as we were accused by the government through its controlled media" (139). She goes on to say that the *seis puntos* were not about turning the country toward socialism or bringing down the government, but instead, they were about democracy. And so, given the brevity with which she addresses the student movement, at first glance, this book has more to do with denouncing prison conditions than it does with exploring the movement of 1968. However, it is worth mentioning that she characterizes her work as *testimonios* in the plural. She is capturing not just her experience, but other women's experiences in prison, and in

so doing, she suggests that the movement mirrored the injustices particular to women through its discourse and perhaps even in praxis. She opens her text saying, "Prison, I don't have the dictionary's definition, but there are so many and so many different ones. There are those who live their lives imprisoned by their prejudices, by their customs, by their economic situation, by their illnesses, by things, and by people" (1). La Tita uses the reality of the prison as a symbol of the injustices suffered by women and, as such, the prison system functions as a microcosm of the way in which women are marginalized and victimized by a permeating patriarchal system, though it should be clear that this is not to say that the work is meant to elicit pity for women; instead, it underscores the ways in which justice, among other constructs, is also a gendered discourse.

What becomes clear as we read this *testimonio* and compare it to others is that the discourse of the student movement was a highly gendered discourse. That is to say, the experiences related in many other *testimonios* that have come to form the essence of the student movement of 1968 were representative of an exclusively male perspective. Returning to Beverly's notion that in *testimonios* "the narrator speaks for, or in the name of, a community or group, approximating in this way the symbolic function of the epic hero, without at the same time assuming his hierarchical and patriarchal status" (Gugelberger 27), we should consider that shedding this patriarchal status is not always possible or it is too deeply ingrained as a latent manifest discourse that it is invisible yet still present and driving one's world view. La Tita's *testimonio* adds the representation of a woman's voice without speaking against the movement. More importantly, however, she introduces her voice as a way of problematizing the gendered discourse of 1968, though it must be stressed that she does so while remaining anchored to gender-normative identities. As such, her work inadvertently illustrates the ubiquitous nature of colonizing discourses and the rhizomatic modality of discourse as a whole. Even so, she is able to unspeak of the injustices of the movement without undermining its cause. We must also keep in mind that La Tita was a member of the CNH, and even though she was one of only a few women, she nonetheless formed part of that leadership structure. In that regard, though La Tita's presence does not amount to adequate representation of women, La Tita is not the average woman who participated in the movement but was not part of the consolidated power structure. What is ultimately clear after reading *De la libertad y el encierro* is that she too was brutalized, she too spent time in prison, she too lost a part of her life, but, in addition, she was

also relegated to a secondary status within the movement in the same way that women in general were relegated to secondary status in other sectors of society. In this *testimonio*, La Tita stakes her claim to be represented in the polyphony of 1968 and gives authority to her voice. There can be no argument that women had voiced their experience during the student movement of 1968. That women's voices went largely unrepresented in the decades that followed Tlatelolco does not mean that women were silent during the movement. The operation in this *testimonio* is not one that articulates a female voice for the first time, but rather, one that represents it and establishes it as an authored and authorized referent.

5

The Specters Come Back to Life: *Rojo amanecer* and *El Bulto*

Taking into account the state's continued permeating control over the press and the historical unarticulation of the student movement after 1968, it is not surprising that after the release of *El grito*, filmic representation of the events of Tlatelolco or its aftermath were virtually nonexistent in the 1970s and through most of the 1980s. In that time, the 1968 student movement and the massacre at Tlatelolco were the subject of study and debate and, given the official silence concerning these events, the Mexican intelligentsia continued to assume the role of uncovering the "true" history of Tlatelolco. As a result, Tlatelolco became a central referent for a massive literary and intellectual production. Novelists, poets, playwrights, short story writers, and graphic artists all contributed to capturing, preserving, and to a lesser degree, problematizing what would have otherwise been lost to the will of the PRI-sponsored historical construction of the nation. But it is not until 1989 and 1991, with the releases of *Rojo amanecer* and *El Bulto*, respectively, that the events of Tlatelolco and its aftermath are approached in feature-length films. While *Rojo amanecer* examined the events of the night of Tlatelolco from the point of view of a divided family that acts as an allegory of the nation, it also became an integral part of the visual discourse of 1968 and was, to some extent, the only historical referent for the generation that followed. In many ways, *Rojo amanecer* was part of a strategy best articulated by the rallying cry "El 2 de octubre no se olvida," namely, keeping the memory of Tlatelolco alive. *El Bulto*, on the other hand, aims to problematize this strategy by

J.J. Rojo, *Revisiting the Mexican Student Movement of 1968*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_5

questioning its ultimate end through the figure of Lauro, a man from the generation of 1968 who is left in a coma and awakens 20 years later.

Rojo amanecer

That a fictionalized account of October 2, 1968 was received in a manner similar to the *La noche de Tlatelolco* was indeed a testament to the manner in which the state managed to control the dissemination of information concerning Tlatelolco. According to Francisco Sánchez

> It has been said—and there is some truth to it—that *Rojo Amanecer* should have been filmed no later than Luis Echeverria's *sexenio* (1970–1976). This alleged delay in its completion is not a reproach against its authors. One lives in the real country and not in an ideal country. Filmed twenty years after the events, the film had problems with censorship. (Robles 13–14)

While films like the documentaries *El* grito and *Lecumberri, palacio negro* (1976), as well as the feature film *Canoa* (1975) had broached the topic and thematics of Tlatelolco (although, in the case of *Canoa*, this approach was purely metaphoric), it is not until 1989, with the debut of Jorge Fons's *Rojo amanecer*, that a feature film exclusively about the Tlatelolco massacre was shot and released. One must ask, why the delay in the production of such a film? Given the realities of film production in Mexico in the late 1980s, *Rojo amanecer* takes advantage of the factors standing in its way to represent a sophisticated articulation of what Slavoj Žižek might call a "specter" of Mexican history.

According to Žižek, there is a clear distinction to be made between "reality" and the "real." Access to the latter can only be gained through what he terms a "specter." He writes that reality is what can be seen from an "objective" point of view while the real is that which is not seen or represented by those that construct a discursive reality. Fons's film brings forth and gives body to "the real" of the Tlatelolco massacre. It fills the gaps created by the PRI's historical reality following Tlatelolco, thus becoming the specter Žižek describes. According to Žižek, a specter represents a "pre-ideological kernel" through which one can access the real and, furthermore, through which one can articulate a critique of an ideological discourse without being tied down to the rhetoric of another. In this way, *Rojo amanecer* attempts to go beyond ideology to preserve the memory of Tlatelolco. In the film, we see the manner in which memory is

represented as the only way to record the events of Tlatelolco. In essence, memories will appear as a specter, being that the clues and evidence of the massacre will only exist outside of the symbolically structured reality. In the same manner, the film appropriates and defies elements contrary to its ideological construction arising from what Althusser calls Ideological State Apparatuses. Finally, *Rojo amanecer* can be read as a filmic specter that manages to see the light of day despite the obstacles in its path.

Stylistically, *Rojo amanecer* embodies the appropriation of a negative space into an affective product. It is a film that follows in the tradition of the *New Latin American Cinema*, which in turn followed in the tradition of Italian *neorealism* that aimed to "create national cinema in the face of underdevelopment and the failures of industrial efforts" (Martin 1:140) in Italy after World War II. *Neorealism* abandoned Hollywood's model of film making in that it set out to represent the unrepresented Italian reality following Italy's World War II defeat. Poverty, Mafia influence, and failure took center stage in *neorealist* films, as did the modes of production, which often included nonactors, small budgets, and location shooting (Martin 1:140). Millicent Marcus notes that

> the neorealists' commitment to social change did not endear them to the guardians of the postwar status quo. Despite their reluctance, for the most part, to embrace a Marxist perspective, the filmmakers maintained a resolutely antiestablishment stance and presented an image of Italy that was anything but comforting to Italian officialdom. (26)

Many of these same characteristics will also carry over to the *New Latin American Cinema*. Influenced by the *neorealist* movement, Latin American filmmakers adopt the aesthetics and social consciousness in films, which likewise try to distance themselves from the filmic status quo in the 1960s. Ana M. López writes that: "the New Latin American Cinema posits the cinema as a response to and an activator of a different kind of nationhood or a subject position of nationality than the one sponsored by dominant cultural forces" (Martin 1:141–142). The wording of such a position is important, because one must note that this type of cinema is not a response to dominant discourses. The agent of the production of this particular cinema is this "other" construction of nationhood, marking the cinema itself not as a counter cinema (one that responds to an existing cinema or social agents), but rather, as an "other" cinema (one which is inherently able to actuate its own voice and position).

Much in the same way in which *neorealism* resurfaced in Italy in the 1960s, so too can we examine a film like *Rojo amanecer* as one which recaptures the aesthetics and social consciousness of the New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s. This is a film that stood alone in dealing with the events of Tlatelolco.[1] As David William Foster points out

> Jorge Fons's *Rojo Amanecer* occupies a unique place in Mexican filmography: it is the only film dealing directly with the massacre of students in Tlatelolco, the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Plaza of the Three Cultures) on the evening of October 2, 1968. (2–3)

While this is indeed true, the reason for which it is so has more to do with censorship and finances than it did with the reluctance of filmmakers to engage in such a venture. Foster goes on to write: "Although there is extensive literary and sociohistorical material on the Tlatelolco massacre, the problems of recreating such an event on film have discouraged—or prevented—other filmmakers from undertaking such a project" (3). The problems of recreating scenes from the *Plaza de las tres culturas* are directly tied to budget constraints as well as the inability of gaining permission to film such scenes. Both of these problems are related, since the odds of securing financing for a film which may never be shown would compel many to step away from such a project. On the one hand, securing permission to film these scenes would have been highly unlikely. Even in the original release of *Rojo amanecer*, one cannot help but notice that the violence in it does not come from the military, but rather from unaffiliated third parties who we are left to assume are members of either the infamous *Batallón Olimpia* or some other type of paramilitary unit. There is no direct implication of culpability and, in fact, some scenes were deleted from the film when it was shown in Mexican movie theaters and in its original DVD release. The fact that this movie was even made and allowed to see the light of day is almost a matter of political happenstance. Carlos Mendoza concludes that the film was allowed to proceed because at the time it was submitted to the *Supervisión de Guiones de la Secrertaría de Gobernación* (Script Supervision of the Interior Ministry), then Mexican president Salinas de Gortari could not afford another political battle. Mendoza writes:

> In this case, it better suited Salinas de Gortari to allow the release of *Rojo Amanecer* than to have it canned, because this would create a series of

[1] It would be over 20 years before another feature film dealt with the Tlatelolco massacre: *Tlatelolco. Verano del 68* (2013).

> problems that could be seen coming out of sheer accumulation of energy, because of the censorship that had prevailed for many years. Fortunately, the production benefitted from the boldness of Valentín Trujillo and Héctor Bonilla and also benefitted from good timing because Salinas was quite weak during the first months due to the electoral fraud. (Rodríguez Cruz 58)

It is in this manner that 20 years after the events of Tlatelolco, a film dealing with the events of October 2, 1968, is finally made.

Given that, as Misha MacLaird, points out, "With the advent of neoliberalism under de la Madrid, funding cuts became the primary means of stifling film production, while letting the blame fall on the market itself" (82), it is in the realm of finances that perhaps most creativity was to be employed and where the adaptation of negativity truly takes place. The film, which is set almost entirely within the confines of an apartment, was produced with a budget of 310,000 (MXP) equal to approximately $100,000 before the 1994 devaluation of the Peso. The amount is truly exceptional when one considers that *Romero*, also produced in Mexico at the end of the 1980s, had a budget of $3,000,000 or more than 9,000,000 (MXP). Of course, to say that there was a budget for that amount would almost be a fallacy. *Rojo amanecer* was hardly budgeted at all. The film was produced privately after it was rejected by all of the producers to whom Héctor Bonilla and Jorge Fons pitched it. The film's budget consisted of Bonilla's personal finances, loans from friends, and even a mortgage on a home. In other words, the making of the film was plagued with an almost prohibitive political and financial situation. Fons recalls that

> [Héctor Bonilla] had a number of friends who had promised him that when he made his film, whatever it was, they were going to lend him some money. When they learned it was about Tlatelolco they changed their minds, except one who brought him 25 thousand pesos in a bag of bread and said, "Here, take it, don't sign anything for me, I don't want to know anything, you're crazy, and I don't even want you to pay me back, goodbye." (Rodríguez Cruz 91)

Clearly, the political climate was nonconducive to financing a film dealing with the Tlatelolco massacre. As such, the only recourse to the film was to envelope it in a style that best fit its financial resources.

Similar to many testimonials from Tlatelolco, Fons's film is produced from the margins. One might even say that it is produced from the very "gaps" Žižek posits as the specter's spring. *Rojo amanecer* falls within the parameters of what is known as *cine imperfecto*. This type of cinema, writes

Jorge Muñoz, "seeks to avoid the perfection of Hollywood cinema, and instead, using the available resources, aims to recreate and rewrite Latin American histories censored and deleted by corrupt governments that silence the people" (562). Fons, then, adapts to the economic realities that stand in the way of a movie like *Rojo amanecer*. That is to say, the use of *cine imperfecto* is an effect of underfunding that is then transformed into affect by adopting an aesthetics that fits the film's funding. In addition, through what Žižek calls a symptomal reading, this film draws our attention to a narrative hole in the discourse of the nation. The film acts as a visual record of the experience of a family, beginning the day of the student massacre in Tlatelolco and concluding the morning after.

Rojo amanecer is set in a small apartment in the building adjacent to the *Plaza de las tres culturas*. In the household there is a typical middle-class Mexican family composed of two parents, four children, and their maternal grandfather. The father (Humberto) is a low-level bureaucrat in the Mexican government. The mother (Alicia) is a housewife, and her father (Don Roque) is a retired veteran of the Mexican Revolution. There are two grade-school children (Carlitos and Graciela) and two teenage sons (Jorge and Sergio), both of whom are involved in the student movement. The action of the film begins at 6:40 on the morning of October 2, 1968. At the breakfast table, the family argues about their concern over the two eldest sons' involvement in the Student Movement. The father recounts the idealism of his youth and admonishes Jorge and Sergio telling them: "They are going to teach you a lesson. You don't play with the government." The grandfather is even more incensed. He would rather that his grandsons be taught a lesson for rebelling against the principles of the Mexican Revolution for which he fought.

The family disperses and continues with their everyday life. Still, the atmosphere continues to intensify as Don Roque and his youngest grandson spot sharpshooters setting up on the roof of the building. It is important to note that the snipers are not uniformed soldiers but men in civilian clothing, who we are left to assume are members of the *Batallón Olimpia*. Through this scene, the film begins to suggest the manner in which reality manifests itself in terms of a specter, thus hiding the real or official involvement under the cloak of deniable rogue units. Other elements further warn of the coming danger as the telephone stops working and the electricity is cut off. The mother tries to remain calm but is clearly alarmed by the series of events. She is at the window watching with Carlitos while a rally is taking place below and violence erupts. Hours later, Jorge and

Sergio return home with four people, one of whom has been seriously wounded. Shortly after, the father arrives and all remain in the apartment in panic planning to help the students escape the following day. Early the next morning, they are discovered by two members of the *Batallón Olimpia* and are murdered in their apartment. The lone survivor is young Carlitos who is hidden by Don Roque before the men enter the apartment. As the film closes, Carlitos exits the apartment and slowly walks down the stairs and into the open as a street cleaner begins to perform the mundane action of cleaning the plaza.

Carlitos, as the lone survivor, suggests that ultimately there will only be two witnesses to the violence of the day: Carlitos and the audience. What is particularly striking is that neither we nor the young child have access to a recollection of all the events. Carlitos witnesses the rally outside his window which we do not see, and the audience witnesses the carnage that takes place inside his apartment which he does not see. As a result, neither Carlitos nor we can piece together the events around which the film is constructed and it is only through cooperation that a history can be pieced together from both perspectives. However, as Carlitos comes out of hiding, he does so only to be faced with the tragic sight of his dead family. He slowly walks down the stairs and into the plaza away from his home. That is the final shot before the credits begin to roll. One must ask, what is Carlitos's symbolic value? This final scene is telling of the state of the history of Tlatelolco. Tyrus Miller suggests that

> insofar as children exhibit in nascent form the capacities of adult subjects, and insofar as the unprecedented circumstances of twentieth-century history have raised serious issues of comprehensibility of history by individuals, child characters offer a poignant metaphor for *adult* subjectivity faced with the baffling, inexplicable, and overwhelming contingencies of history. (Douglass and Vogler 231)

Seen from this perspective, Carlitos can be read as a symbol of the manner in which the history of Tlatelolco and its transmission caused some type of regression through which the subject is able to escape his inability to understand the historical process. Miller adds that

> child characters and narrators offer filmmakers (and novelists) key narrative "devices" by which to approach artistically the intractable historical situation. In their acts of witnessing, their mimetic games, their imaginative transformations of themselves and others, and their travel across the

> divisions of time, they figuratively dramatize the individual's attempt to cope imaginatively and affectively with historical circumstances that often exceed his or her capacity to understand them rationally. Yet they also suggest alternative forms of historical witness, in which factual testimony yields its place of privilege to a wider range of subjectively inflected expressions of historical truth. (231)

Given that *Rojo amanecer* is released 20 years after the massacre, one could conclude that the film is articulated from the point of view of an adult Carlitos and, as he walks into the unknown, he carries within him the history of the events of the previous 24 hours. In a very real sense, Carlitos is a walking history. This point is further underscored by Carlitos telling his grandfather that his favorite school subject is history. He tells his grandfather: "We had History. It's the class I like best … We studied about the Independence again." Carlitos shows a historical consciousness and will now act as the sole surviving historical agent in the film. One should note, however, that he has been conditioned in school in the ways of the great national ethos, that which equates the official narrative with Mexicanness. It is noteworthy to see that the topic of his history class is the Mexican Independence, certainly an important subject to be covered in a Mexican school. However, Carlitos pulls back the curtain on the way reality is constructed by saying that they covered it "again." The discourse of the nation is passed on by reinforcing certain key events that glorify the nation state: the Independence and the Revolution. The child's tone, however, underscores the failure of the national revolutionary discourse that becomes worn out through its repetition within the school system but yet is central to the construction of "reality."

Carlitos and his grandfather return home and the family assumes the role of witnesses as they are the ones that experience the horror of the events that unfold outside their window. What the audience does not see is the violence of the events themselves. Not until the final scene are we witnesses to the antagonists' actions when they enter the small apartment where most of the action takes place. And even though there is evidence of violence that manifests itself through an imbedded patriarchal hierarchy within the family, the movie itself only implies violence through most of its running. We do not see tanks, we only hear them. We do not see the massacre, we only see Carlitos's and Alicia's reaction to it and the students who take refuge in the apartment after the said events. As such, the audience is shielded from the events around which the film is constructed.

In *Rojo amanecer* there is no visual space dedicated to the Tlatelolco massacre. Instead, the director presents us with images and sounds that entice the viewer with the violence beyond the screen. It is precisely through these gaps that the specter materializes. While this approach is also a way in which Fons manages to keep suspense in the film, being that the average viewer will likely know how the events unfold, the film also uses these types of blanks to play with the notion of the real and reality. Fons is able to hold our attention by withholding the sight of violence, and at the same time symbolizes that which has been repressed in the construction of reality. According to Žižek, what the specter conceals "is not reality but its 'primordially repressed', the irrepresentable X on whose repression reality itself is founded" (21). This X factor that Žižek identifies is the real of Tlatelolco.

Given the absence of the totality of the violence in the film, there are, nonetheless, cues that suggest to both the audience and Carlitos what is happening and what will happen. *Rojo amanecer* begins on the morning of October 2, 1968, with the ticking of an alarm clock, which serves as an auditory foreshadowing of the impending events. Muñoz writes,

> The importance of time and sound is present throughout the film, being that during the opening credits and much of the film, we are aware of the "tic-toc" of a clock that seems to have the ominous quality of a time bomb counting down that announces the tragic events to come. (563)

The clock also serves as a marker of the way in which the audience will know what happens in the film. While we do not see the hands of the clock move, we are nonetheless aware of the passage of time due to the incessant sound of the seconds ticking away. Similarly, what access the audience will have to the actual events occurring in the *Plaza de las tres culturas* will also come to us without us seeing them. We will see the reaction of the family members to that violence but we will not see the events that drive the film. Through these cues, (what we hear but cannot see, what we see through others, etc.), *Rojo amanecer* paints a spectral representation of Mexico's history. The film evidences "the real" of the student movement of 1968 and the Tlatelolco massacre. In other words, *Rojo amanecer* would appear to fill the void created by the PRI's historical apparatus after Tlatelolco.

One of the defining characteristics of the film is an absence of external shots and it is this very absence that helps articulate the specters. With the exception of the closing sequence and the scene where Carlitos is playing

with his grandfather on the *azotea*, the film takes place exclusively inside that apartment. This fact draws the criticism of Ayala Blanco, who complains, "Accept as an inflexible rule that the camera will never leave the small Tlatelolco apartment, except in kid's final descent" (21). He further admonishes the lack of outside shots as evidence of lack of political commitment, as they do not show the plaza where the massacre took place. The reasons behind these apparent flaws are both strategic and of circumstance. On the one hand, the political and economic realities of the time did not permit the filming of a scene shot at the Plaza with hundreds of actors playing the parts of wounded students. This, writes Fons, would have been impossible:

> if we consider that it is a film that must end in the evening in the *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* and that we should see the *Batallón Olimpia*, the army, the students and the leaders, then it becomes a production that escapes our cinema's economic possibilities. (Rodríguez Cruz 89)

Furthermore, a scene showing the plaza would have inevitably included shots of the military forces either carrying out the massacre or facilitating it. This would have been tantamount to filming a home movie to store in a vault, as it would have never passed the eye of the censors, given that, while Salinas de Gortari's administration gave the go-ahead to the film, according to MacLaird, there was an overall spike in censorship at that time. She writes that "forbidden topics included anything that brought to mind Salinas's leftist opponent, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, including references to former president Lázaro Cárdenas" (82). In fact, the release of the film in its final form was still problematic, as scenes and dialogue were deleted in order to appease state censors. David R. Maciel writes that, "Going to great lengths to minimize the role of the military is consistent throughout the movie. The principal villains in the censored version of *Rojo amanecer* are the secret police and not the army" (Hershfield and Maciel 218). Still, the film does manage to present to us a way of perceiving the violence, namely, through a specter, that is, through a phantasmagoric suggestion that stresses its presence precisely through its absence in the filmic reality.

While *Rojo amanecer* is a film that does not escape Tlatelolco as its focus, it nonetheless manages to withhold Tlatelolco from the audience. Fons sets his film in the 24-hour period in which the massacre takes place. Fons represents a historical void through visual frustration in *Rojo amanecer*. It is important to note that there are witnesses to the events of Tlatelolco in the film, but the audience does not have access

to that privileged perspective. As the film is essentially told from a familial point of view through the lens of everyday life, this absence of visual violence acts as a foreshadowing of the family's eventual demise. The audience is not shown the violent scenes because ultimately there will be no witnesses left other than Carlitos, and he will not be in a state to recount it. In a sense, our knowledge of the massacre comes from an interlocutor. We need to read the facial expressions of those who saw the violence in order to decipher what happened.

The final scene in *Rojo amanecer* shows the lone witness of the student massacre walking away from the building in what can only be described as a state of shock. This young witness is our only possible access to the events of Tlatelolco. As a result, we are left with no real witness of the massacre in the apartment nor the one in the plaza. The subject who does witness the events, albeit thorough infantile eyes, is left to survey the aftermath through which we can surmise he will one day be able to piece together an incoherent private history based on his memories. What remains is that potential reconstruction as the sole history of Tlatelolco. As such, it fulfills its spectral function, given that, according to Derrida, "At bottom, the specter is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back" (39).

Access to the historical record, then, will have to take place in the memory of a young child. We can assume that this memory will be forever scarred by the trauma of the events that mark him as the lone historical artifact of the time. What is particularly interesting is that, as Carlitos exits the building he is ignored by those that surround him. The street sweeper sweeps around him without ever speaking to him or even noticing that he is there. Herein lies one of the most evident specters. If history can forget and even erase the dead by constructing a reality, it is nonetheless impossible to bury the secondary victims of the tragedy that is Tlatelolco. Carlitos as a survivor and orphan becomes a phantasmagoric figure from which emanates the repressed real.

I would like to return to the concept of the specter that Žižek argues is space from which to articulate a nonideological critique. It cannot be reasonably argued that *Rojo amanecer* attempts to articulate a nonideological critique. The film is clearly anchored to the students' perspective of 1968. However, while the outside forces and secret police are clearly vilified in this film, far from representing a clear-cut dichotomy between students and government forces as if they existed in a closed dialectical plane, *Rojo amanecer* illustrates many subdivisions of the factors working against

the students. Indeed, as the movie opens, we are almost immediately made aware of the differences between what are essentially four generations. One is represented by the grandfather who, throughout the film, wishes that his two older grandchildren were more respectful of the authority figures embodied by government agents as well as the image of Mexico which has been etched into him through the Revolution. The parents, however, while still disapproving of the activities of their older sons, nonetheless manage to support them as best they can. In fact, they are the only characters in the film that oscillate between two distinct positions. The third is represented by the two university students who are very much involved in the student movement. The two youngest children represent the fourth generation, one that, while at best is only vaguely aware of the events taking place, will one day presumably have to try to piece together the history of 1968.

However, beyond the students' politics, there are other generational issues that cause conflict in the home. There is the long hair, American music, and the appropriation of foreign heroes such as "el Che" Guevara to which the parents and the grandfather object. *Rojo amanecer* presents us with a family that is not at all unified behind a single cause, though ironically they become equally victimized by the apparatus of power. Foster writes that

> too late, they discover that the sons who are involved in the protest movement are right after all about the degree to which Mexico under Díaz Ordaz, and under the PRI's hold on government, has drifted toward the same sort of police tactic that Mexico officially deplored with reference to the military dictatorships elsewhere in Latin America. (7)

While Foster's assertion is a bit idealistic in his belief that a sort of political epiphany takes place within the confines of the apartment, it does ring partially true. Still, we cannot forget that the parents do seem to be aware of the tactics that might be employed by the government. That is not to say that they expect the carnage of October 2, but rather, that they are a bit more aware of the political climate than Foster suggests. They might even be sympathetic to the students' cause, but also jaded by Mexico's history, as can be observed by Humberto's plea to his sons:

> I was an almazanista! Thirty years ago we were just as idealistic as you! We took to the streets to defend the vote, even with machine guns. And what happened? Another government fraud. They paid Almazán so he would shut up. That's politics: pure crap.

Humberto, at least, seems to have been in the same position as his sons, and while trying to be understanding, he is also trying to warn and discourage them from continuing with the movement. There is a certain degree of ambiguity, as one could certainly argue that the family presented here is set against the students' cause and that the support they show is directed toward their children rather than the cause itself.

While it would be naïve to submit that this film has no ideological leaning or that it means to present an objective reconstruction of the events, what can be said is that it does not aim to be perceived as propaganda. In fact, in a scathing critique of the film, Ayala Blanco writes that the film "wants to please everyone (the government, the army, the police, the media, former militants, old fashioned parents, the right, the left)" (21). While I disagree that the film tries to please everyone, it does nonetheless present a number of different points of view that seemingly detract from the students' cause, especially in terms of the family, which seems to be fragmented in relation to the student movement. The symbolism of this fragmentation can be seen in two ways. First of all, it represents the victims of Tlatelolco. Maciel writes that "the violence directed at the family is analogous to the massacre directed at the hundreds of victims by the repressive army and police forces" (Martin 2:113). In other words, inside the confines of the apartment we see the various victims of the massacre that included not only students directly involved in the movement, but also those that offered help to them, such as the parents. We can add to them those that happened to be there by happenstance, as perhaps the grandfather might well be, and perhaps, most importantly, the innocents, such as young Graciela.

Secondly, the family's fragmented nature can also be related to the nation as a whole and their reaction to the massacre and eventual victimization by the same forces that carried it out. This could then be read as a warning against complacency. Remembering that *Rojo amanecer* takes a neorealist approach to both the massacre and the protagonists, we can take into account that, according to Miller, "The neo-realist protagonist is no longer primarily a protagonist of an action that will effect some sort of change in the historical situation, but rather a protagonist of witness—a point of entry into the central imperative of these films to 'come and see'" (Douglass and Vogler 210). It is noteworthy that the family only becomes united after the massacre has been carried out near their home. To be more precise, they become united when they directly witness the violence and its effects. And while it could be said that this might have been their

first knowledge of the violence, it becomes clear, at least in Alicia's case, that she is keenly aware of it elsewhere in the city when she warns her children: "Your dad's right. You don't play with the government. You see how many dead there are, how many disappeared, how many students in prison. They want to end this before the Olympics." The violence that erupts outside her window is the first she witnesses, but not the first about which she has knowledge. That same violence will later invade her home in the form of a bullet that hits the image of the sacred heart on the wall. In a sense, this bullet breaks the sanctity of her household and symbolically pierces their shielded innocence.

In the same way, Tlatelolco affected the nation, even though this was not the first massacre in Mexico's recent history, Foster points out that

> the attack took place in a highly visible place: it is one thing to massacre peasants in a village that most people may never have even heard about, but it was quite something else to fire on students in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, in full view of the TV photographers' cameras, and the residents of the high-rise buildings in the neighborhood. (4)

As such, while the family is indeed victimized, they also represent the process by which the massacre takes place. That is to say that they represent both the ends and the means of the Tlatelolco massacre. It is their complacency to the previous violence and their comfort that they are outside the realm in which that violence takes place that ultimately leads the family to their death.

With the death of the family and the orphaned lone historical agent Carlitos, we are left to ponder the question, what is the state of history in this film? I would argue that, like Carlitos, it is equally orphaned. It is disconnected and absent in the same unknown to which Carlitos flees. Symbolically, the history of Tlatelolco lays in a troubled memory. In this case, it resides in an infantile memory that is unlikely to coincide with the state sponsored history. While indeed there is hope of a reinscription of the history of Tlatelolco through Carlitos, that hope is nonetheless problematic, as this history will have to be reconstructed and also inserted into an already existing historical discourse (reality). Miller suggests that "because of their incompleteness, their immaturity, and their partial unformedness as social agents and actors, child characters may represent a utopian reserve of openness and hope within an otherwise closed historical horizon of adult experience" (Douglass and Vogler 231). When will that

hope materialize? When will Carlitos be able to access and/or recount this history? These questions must remain unanswered, being that, according to Derrida, specters lack epistemological corporality:

> *It is* something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if precisely it *is*, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence. One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge. (6)

All we can know is that there exists another history in a separate epistemological plane that we know exists, but to which we do not have access.

The complexity of this last point is underscored in a scene in which the students hiding in the apartment try to reconstruct the events they have just survived.

> *Young Man 1*: I … I was on the steps of the "Chihuahua." There were a lot of us there trying to protect the Council leaders that were on the third floor. When the rally ended, I was leaving and I saw some guys go by with a white handkerchief on their hand. I went back to see what was happening and then I saw the flares the helicopters were dropping.
> *Young Man 2*: That was the signal for the army to shoot. I saw them clearly. I was almost in the middle of the plaza.
> *Sergio*: Right away the shooting started.
> *Young Man 1*: The men with the white gloves blocked all the exits and would not let anyone in or out. They shouted: "*Batallón Olimpia* here! Nobody move!" And then began shooting wildly, against anything that moved. I ran, but several ended up lying near me.
> *Jorge*: We saw the flashes on the stairs where the leaders were but we didn't know what was up. We ran over here but then all hell broke loose and people began to push and run in every direction.
> *Sergio*: Some didn't run. Someone on the loudspeaker said, "Don't run. It's a provocation. Don't run." And many stood really still in the plaza.
> *Young Man 2*: I was one of those. But then we all ran too. I saw a girl fall with this whole part of her face full of blood. Damn murderers!
> *Young Woman*: The plaza was full of dead bodies and shoes. Women's shoes.
> *Sergio*: And children. I saw two dead children. One on top of the other. All full of blood.
> *Young Man 1*: Who ordered this? This is a crime.

There are several elements worth noting in this scene. The first is that the story is constructed based on a series of fragments and that not all of them coincide. Only through cooperation are the students able to put together the historical puzzle, piece by piece. This reconstruction, however, is completely divorced from the news story heard on the television set shortly after, where one can hear the voice of the newsman that cites General Marcelino Barragán, who affirms that "Mexico is a country where freedom prevails and will continue to prevail." The news broadcast closes with, "Only ten days until the beginning of the Olympics Mexico 68." In this same scene, we can see how Carlitos carefully listens to the retelling of the events, suggesting that a similar process of reconstruction will take place in his memory. Finally, we can hear the mention of the shoes in the plaza that will come to symbolize the dead of Tlatelolco. Given that the final official tally will be much lower than commonly accepted figures, the shoes will point to that specter from which we can capture the real of the massacre. The film cannot show the dead bodies in the plaza, but shortly before the credits roll, it shows us the shoes that signify Tlatelolco's ghosts.

Ultimately, the most powerful specters come from the censors themselves. In its original release, there were a total of nine scenes or segments that were either edited or censored in one form or another. The majority of these segments are no longer than a few seconds. Still, the cuts were so poorly done that there are moments where one can see the evidence of those censored scenes. Given the low quality of the soundtrack and poor lighting in the film, one could easily interpret these imperfections as just more evidence of its low budget. Still, as Derrida points out, "A specter is always a *revenant*. One cannot control its comings and goings because it *begins by coming back*" (11). With the release of a limited edition of *Rojo amanecer* in 2005, we can see that these imperfections function as the very specters that Žižek and Derrida describe. In other words, through the censored scenes, we can grasp the real that the Mexican government tried to repress. So while the real might escape signification within their historical construct, it becomes embodied within a shifting articulation of what that construct is.

The majority of the cuts were made with an apparent attempt to try to deny any connection between the violence and the army, and instead try to cast it upon the *Batallón Olimpia*. One of the first deleted scenes comes at around minute 13 and is just one line spoken by Jorge: "And then they threw the army at us because we were too much for the *granaderos*." The line implies that the army was directly involved in the aggression against

the students. Similarly, 2 minutes later, "The army entered C.U. Some hid in the bathrooms and they found them dead the day before yesterday. We can't allow these crimes," is deleted from a dialogue between the two sons and Alicia. This line implies that the atrocities committed by the army were systematic and widespread. Contrary to the government's position that the gunfire erupted when snipers on the rooftops opened fire against the army, these scenes suggest that it was the army that began the hostilities, a conclusion that has been widely accepted and documented by a number of scholars and historians.[2] Their omission surrounds them in a phantasmal bubble that places the responsibility on the military.

There is one scene, however, that is almost a defense of the army and that was cut at around 1:06:45 of the film:

Carlitos: Are you angry?
Don Roque: Not with you.
Carlitos: Why did the soldiers do that?
Don Roque: Because they were given orders.
Charlie: And do soldiers always have to follow orders?
Don Roque: Always.

Here, Don Roque, a lieutenant in the Mexican Revolution, appears to defend the troops, an act that ultimately places the responsibility, not necessarily on the army's shoulders, but on those in a position of power in the military complex and within the civilian power structure. While this subtle attack is not evident in the original release of the film, its specter appears 15 years later and the impact of this scene comes from the fact that it was originally censored.

The last scene of the film was another victim of censorship. Here, Carlitos walks down the steps of the building and goes out into the plaza. A few steps later, the film abruptly cuts to the final credits. The original scene, however, ran an additional 22 s and shows two soldiers who cross in front of Carlitos before the camera fades and the credits begin to roll. While both scenes appear to allude to Paz's "Interruptions from the West (3) (Mexico City: The 1968 Olympiad)" where Paz contemplates the

[2] For a more complete study of the events surrounding the massacre at the *Plaza de las tres culturas*, see Sergio Aguayo Quezada's *1968. Los archivos de la violencia* (*The archives of Violence*, 1998) and Julio Scherer García's and Carlos Montiváis's *Los patriotas. De Tlatelolco a la guerra sucia* (2004) and *Parte de guerra. Tlatelolco 1968. Documentos del general Marcelino García Barragán. Los hechos y la historia* (1999).

loss of innocence marked by the massacre, the censored scene appears to directly implicate the army, given that both soldiers see the child walking away from the blood-stained building and walking over puddles of blood, but ultimately do nothing. In fact, what is striking about this scene is the manner in which Carlitos is ignored and *ninguneado* by the soldiers and the street sweeper who is tasked with eliminating the evidence of the previous night that include the shoes already mentioned. The significance of this scene resides in the manner in which Carlitos is now an orphan and at the same time turns into a specter. While the massacre will be covered up, and the news reports will not reflect the real of Tlatelolco, Carlitos is still there, invisible in the construction of reality but representing that repressed X factor that one day will be seen through the fissures in the narrative construction of the PRI.

While it is clear that these scenes were cut by a government agency (the *Supervisión de Guiones de la Secretaría de Gobernación*), Maciel argues that the film is complicit in the operation:

> By denouncing and focusing on atrocities carried out by the secret police, the film is fully in keeping with the current political climate and suits the state's purposes. Since the secret police organizations have come under intense criticism by national as well as international groups for human rights violations, it could be argued that by allowing the exhibition of *Rojo Amanecer*, the state not only appears to be moving toward political democratization but also is sensitive to the national concern for human rights. (Hershfield and Maciel 218)

If we accept Maciel's argument, then the censored scenes begin to occupy an in-between place that belongs to no one. Or, to use Žižek's terms, they cease to be ideological elements and they become that pre-ideological kernel that he describes, given that, while they were placed within a film with a clear ideological base, they abandon that ideology when they are censored with the complicity of the film's producers.

Rojo amanecer is a film that defies political and economic realities in order to present a specter of the history of Tlatelolco. The "imperfections" of the film are many. Among these we can certainly count the inability of the filmmaker to film scenes in the plaza, which in turn dictates the action of the film. Also among them is the rudimentary quality of the film itself. However, that in itself is the advantage of imperfect cinema. Sánchez writes that beyond the impossibility of financing a film in which thousands of actors would have to be employed to capture the events of Tlatelolco

"the real drama would quite possibly become a sideshow and—as Borges would say—the tiger in reality would be the one not in the verse" (Robles 11). Much of what we do not see in the film is what makes the project worthwhile. The use of imperfect cinema carries along with it a series of political connotations that situate the film in a negative narrative space defying and perhaps embracing the limits imposed by Ideological State Apparatuses. Contrary to what Garcia Espinoza suggests to be the function of popular art, the purpose of this film is not to entertain, but rather to proclaim an injustice and explore a series of variables that led to it. Both in form and in content, the film takes advantage of absence. On one side, the absence of money leads to a less than aesthetically perfect film, which through its very nature speaks to the effectiveness of the Ideological State Apparatuses which discouraged funds from being invested in such a project. On the other hand, the absence of a visual record on which the audience can focus parallels the way in which Mexicans experienced the history of Tlatelolco, namely, through the absence of information and through a manipulation of the facts by the state-controlled media. Ultimately, the film well illustrates a void in the national discourse, a void that, in the 1990s, then Mexican Presidential Candidate Vicente Fox promised to fill. Not surprisingly, that promise was neither immediately nor fully kept. García Espinoza suggests that imperfect cinema need not be concerned with quality or technique, but that instead it should strive to work in "cooperation" with revolutionaries. *Rojo amanecer* does just that. It inserts itself into a chorus of poetry, novels, graphics, and testimonials of Tlatelolco. *Rojo amanecer* constitutes a strong critique of the official Mexican historical discourse and articulates the Tlatelolco massacre as a type of historical phantasm. It does so with a grasp of the advantages of a negative space of representation and in doing so disappears, not into nothingness, but into an irrepresentable space within the symbolic construction. The film incorporates the real of Tlatelolco and, as Garcia Espinoza well points out, it disappears into a chorus; it disappears into a specter of Mexican history. In other words, it disappears from the reach of the construction of history accessible to the state.

El Bulto

Forging a different path than that of *Rojo amanecer, El Bulto* begins to problematize the reworking of Mexican historiography inherent in the preservation of Tlatelolco's history and the never-ending search for the

"truth" behind it. *El Bulto*'s protagonist is a historical subject articulated, first, as a nonentity and second, as a nonaffective subject that must ultimately be made to fit the established political and symbolic orders, thus questioning the power of history vis-à-vis historical discourse. At the same time, the film suggests a type of a posteriori complicity by a Mexican middle class eager to enter into globalization at the end of the twentieth century.

In this film, a young photographer (Lauro) is injured during the June 10, 1971, protest in San Cosme and is left in a state of coma for the next 20 years. In that time, his son (Daniel) and daughter (Sonia) grow up, and his wife (Alba) finds a new partner. He is cared for by both children who resent having to give up their time to be with a father they do not really know. He is also cared for by their friend Adela with whom he will later become romantically involved. When Lauro awakens after 20 years, everyone is overjoyed and seemingly welcomes him back into the family, a family that he never left yet lost him for 20 years. Soon after, the family and Lauro come to the gripping and frightening realization that they must both adapt to each other and that such an operation might be more difficult to accomplish than either imagined. As such, *El Bulto* uses Lauro's family as an allegory of the nation that must eventually come to terms with an uncomfortable history and its effect on contemporary life.

According to García Canclini, the film "reworks[s] the crisis of personal identity and political projects with irony and irreverence and without complacent nostalgia" (Stock 256). Lauro finds himself a man out of time and is unable to adjust rapidly into his new surroundings. He tries in vain to assert authority as a father and as a husband, which only results in being perceived as a tyrannical and outdated patriarch. He is further struck by the manner in which the friends from his youth have, in his eyes, betrayed the ideals to which he still clings. This is the case especially with his brother-in-law Toño, whom he remembers as being the most radical of his friends, and who is now a member of the Establishment—as a member of the PRI. He even contemplates suicide as an escape from his new alien life after he has a falling out with Daniel, Sonia, Adela, his sister (Valeria), and her husband Toño. His one anchor is Alberto who works as a newspaper editor and who gives him a column so he may tell his story. The film ends with Lauro asking for forgiveness and understanding through his newspaper column, which he reads out aloud at his daughter's housewarming party, where he meets his wife's new partner and seems to come to terms with his new existence. Still, he is unable to completely fit in, as

the film closes with an impromptu rap about him, which he tries to join in a self-deprecating though somewhat clashing rock n' roll style.

As the film opens, the viewer is presented with a number of images that will only serve as a backdrop for the film. While Lauro is clearly a man of 1968, the film aims to create some distance between itself and the events of Tlatelolco, yet it is impossible to miss the connection. The opening credits are displayed while the screen is filled with black and white images of *Halcones*[3] practicing attack maneuvers with bamboo sticks (though some firearms can be seen as well) in preparation for their offensive. The rest of the film, however, is shot in color, thus establishing a clear visual cue that distinguishes one era from another. The cries that are being repeated by the *Halcones* also sound dated. "They are communists," shouts the *Halcón* leader as justification for the impending attack. As Lauro will find out after he awakens, that charge hardly carries the same weight in a world where the U.S.S.R. has collapsed, and Russia is involved in a free-market economic system that means to mimic the one in place in the USA. Still, the black-and-white images allude to López Arretche's *El grito*. Miriam Haddu suggests: "This deliberate resemblance is an attempt to authenticate Retes' portrayal of the 1971 riots while fictionalizing the character of Lauro who is played by Retes himself" (20). I would argue that more than simply trying to authenticate the film, this clear allusion to 1968 has two purposes. First of all, it recalls the events of Tlatelolco and San Cosme as Lauro's last conscious existence. And secondly, it serves to mark the difference in historical contexts in the film. It is important to note the opening sequence begins with a freeze-frame shot of the *Halcón* leader who then begins to walk toward the camera shouting orders. This sequence repeatedly uses freeze-frame shots until we see Lauro photographing the day's events in the film's second shot. This technique, in conjunction with Lauro's role as a photographer creates the impression that the events of June 10, 1971, are being preserved into a historical record and are not part of the film's present. While the themes of Tlatelolco are clearly manifested, their articulation has shifted to the point where Tlatelolco is now a referent from which to propose another series of arguments. David Maciel writes, "*El Bulto* is a film that certainly raises critical questions and prospects facing Mexico's citizenry and its political leadership in the present and future" (Martin 113). It is worth pointing out that this film does

[3] The *Halcones* were a paramilitary police force that was most visible during a repression of protesters in 1971 that came to be known as *El Halconazo*.

not seem overly concerned with the past as a subject of study and/or debate. In this case, the state of coma to which Lauro was relegated and his inclusion into a world 20 years later is a way to examine the possibility of reinserting a history which had been absent for 20 years. The film does not dismiss the important events of Tlatelolco and San Cosme but instead directs its gaze toward the future.

Still, while the events of Tlatelolco do not appear to have a central role in this film, its history and certainly its memory are very much central to its development, being that Lauro comes to represent that very history. He is, in fact, a personified history. It is noteworthy that Lauro suffers his injuries while working as a photographer. Presumably, he is documenting the events of June 10, 1971. His profession is one dedicated to capturing and preserving a historical moment. Curiously, we do not see an attempt to uncover the circumstances that led to his near death. Nor do we see the evidence he might have taken by means of his camera. There is no need to uncover a history because Lauro *is* that history. However, it is not a history that has been co-opted, adjusted, or manipulated in any way. Instead, it is a history that has been suspended in a cocoon of death for 20 years. Lauro represents a protected history, and while this history has indeed been protected, it is also undeveloped and stale.

Lauro's story acts as an allegory of Mexican history. His family symbolizes the nation that must now find a way to include a previously unearthed history, here represented by Lauro. This film is no longer concerned with the same issues addressed by González de Alba in *Los días y los años* or by Jorge Fons in *Rojo amanecer*, namely what Jacqueline Bixler calls a "re-membering of Tlatelolco" and of the history of the Student Movement of 1968. Bixler writes that "the insistent remembering and 're-membering' (reconstruction) of Tlatelolco reflects the postmodern obsession with marginal testimonies and with collective memories long repressed and usurped by official history" (123). Both González de Alba and Fons try to represent a history of Tlatelolco as seen through a lens of intimacy and the personal experience of marginal subjects. González de Alba does so by choosing the genre of *testimonio*, and Fons by employing the aesthetics of imperfect cinema. In this sense, Lauro and his family are neither marginal nor forgotten. They are now members of an established middle class and Lauro's presence very much weighs on the members of his family. The film also does not appear to center on a concern with uncovering the facts of the massacre; rather, it is the possible inclusion of that history and ideals into the current time and political landscape and the problems that might

cause. While there is a protective operation in *El Bulto* through Lauro's coma, the history once protected suddenly and unexpectedly comes alive, and clashes with the status quo and with those who, in the 1970s, were radical enough to have claimed Lauro's values and historical perspective as their own.

As Lauro begins to awaken, we are given clues as to the state of his being. We see, for example, that his body, while certainly not dead, cannot exactly be described as living. Or perhaps it would be more apt to say that while he is alive, he does not live. Agamben writes that:

> The Greeks had no single term to express what we mean by the word "life." They used two terms that, although traceable to a common etymological root, are semantically and morphologically distinct: *zoē*, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods) and *bios*, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or group. (*Homo Sacer* 1)

In this case, Lauro's life (*zoē*) falls well short of living (*bios*). We see a grown man in diapers that, beyond the inherent indignity, brings forth images of feces. Adela also notices that he is developing pimples in his ears that his daughter must take the time to rupture. In other words, Lauro is alive but does not live what Agamben refers to as a "qualified life" or a life worth living. As such, Lauro's status as a political being lacks agency and is instead little more than a building block through which others constitute themselves. Thanks to Lauro's dead father who wills him everything, his family lives in Lauro's house and are able to do so comfortably *only* while Lauro remains alive but not living a qualified life. As such, Lauro's presence is one that facilitates others' existence yet lacks a proper agency.

Given Lauro's rather ambiguous status within the film's symbolic order, it is not surprising that he becomes a thing that, since he is not dead, cannot be mourned and is instead incorporated. According to Abraham and Torok, "such is the fantasy of *incorporation*. Introducing all or part of a love object or thing into one's own body" (126). This psychic operation is further literalized as Lauro's body is the (in)corporation of Tlatelolco's history. The manner in which the viewer is introduced to him provides an image of the festering process entailed in an incorporation of history and it is from that point (perhaps because of it) that Lauro ceases to be alive and attempts to live. As Julia Kristeva points out, "A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify*

death" (3). Instead, it is that very decay that underscores life itself. She goes on to say that:

> as in true theater, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. (3)

Kristeva recalls a Heideggerian definition of life in which it is death itself that defines what he might call the *dasein*. Lauro's near-death existence proclaims his very living return to a state of *bios*, which will create a series of problems, given the manner in which the family thinks of him. His son, for example, sees him as little more than a nuisance. He complains about the time he must commit to him, but ultimately decides that it is just a custom to which he has to adhere. In addition, we find that his survival has more to do with external realities such as interest rates and the price of therapists than it does much else, further cementing his status as alive but not living. While Valeria laments that they may no longer be middle class, her mother suggest that she get a job:

> *Valeria*: Oh, sure, mom. I am running around all day like the kids' chauffer. I have to take them to school, swimming, karate. When do you think I'm going to have time to work? On top of that, you ask me for more and more money for my brother.
> *Grandmother*: Because of the hospital fees. They are going up a lot, honey. Oh, how the interest rates are falling.
> *Valeria*: Well then put him in a double room and that's that.
> *Grandmother*: It doesn't matter, as far as he's concerned. At the end of the day, it doesn't affect him. But Sonia and Daniel spend all their time in that room with their father.

As Lauro's mother points out, the issues concerning him are not really about him. In this case, she does not want to move him to a shared room because she does not want to put Sonia and Daniel in that position. Lauro's presence is felt but it is static. His sudden awakening brings about many changes and it becomes apparent that the possibility of Lauro coming back had not seemed plausible. His children do not know how to break the news to their grandmother or their mother. Only as a secondary thought do they consider that the news might be even harder to take for

Lauro himself. It is not until that moment that they start to realize that he is a living being.

The scene in which Sonia tries to prepare her grandmother for the eventual return of her son is significant in terms of the status of Lauro in the family.

> *Sonia*: What if my father woke up, grandma?
> *Grandmother*: Oh honey, I stopped thinking about that long ago.
> *Sonia*: Well, think about it right now. If he woke up, what would happen?
> *Grandma*: What do you want to happen? Nothing.

Her response is telling of the fact that they do not expect he will ever awaken. He is there asleep and while there is hope that he will one day return, the expectation is that he will not and there are no preparations for that eventuality. Furthermore, she believes that nothing will change in the event that he does come out of his coma. Lauro's presence is perhaps best described by his nickname of "el Bulto." He is nothing more than a lump, a nuisance, a thing that simply is but has no consciousness and no say in the affairs of the family. He is not nothing, but falls short of being somebody. He is something: a body but not a subject. As a living history, this attitude toward Lauro is telling of a set of values in relation to the history of Tlatelolco and San Cosme. In a very real sense, history is portrayed as nonaffective. The history of that era is there somewhere but the family is unaware of the potential ramifications of it coming back to life. History as such has no affect. It is there to be shaped rather than to be a referent from which conclusions can be drawn or which can shape the existing symbolic order. In a sense, there appears to be a desire for recuperation for the mere sake of recuperation. In other words, the family would like to have Lauro back but had grown so accustomed to being without him that, without articulating it, they hoped that if he were to come back, their life would go on just as it did before, without interference from *el Bulto*. The question is raised of what exactly is at stake in trying to uncover the history of Tlatelolco. Is the operation one that only means to recover certain facts without the expectation that these might well change how Mexico views the world today?

It is not a coincidence that the family is having this discussion while watching a soap opera in which the same storylines are played and replayed. Life goes on no matter what. Moreover, the grandmother seemed to think that life would go on in a similar fashion if *el Bulto* were to come back to life. Unfortunately for the family, these expectations are far from the

realistic. Yet, perhaps the most significant (certainly the most entertaining) way the relation between Lauro and the rest of the world is illustrated is by a montage of visits from his friends and family, all of whom, in their own way, try to acclimate him to the new times. Each tells him what they feel are the most important things he should know in order to best fit in. Valeria, for example, says, "You know that we are the prototype of beauty in the world? We just won the Miss Universe title." He is equally bombarded with other more political statements that seem to contradict each other. Valeria again says, "With the Free Trade Agreement, we are going to be great, Lauro." Meanwhile, a friend tells him that "when it comes to the Free Trade Agreement, nobody knows anything about anything."

Lauro's position *vis-à-vis* the rest of his family suggests that even awake he occupies a space less than fully living. He is in a state that straddles what Žižek calls "the two deaths." Žižek argues that death occurs in two distinct spaces: the real and the symbolic. In the case of the former, real death is a biological process that signals the end of one's existence in the real. In the case of the latter, symbolic death is manifested by a "settling of accounts" or "the accomplishment of symbolic destiny" (*Sublime* 135). It is worth noting here that, while Žižek articulates two spaces of death, the second can occur in various contexts. In other words, while there is only one biological death, there can be many symbolic deaths. These distinct forms of death come to play in Lauro from two different perspectives. Lauro sees himself as still fighting the battles of yesteryear, thus has not accomplished his symbolic destiny. However, keeping in mind that he is still a man from 1968, he is no longer articulated within the symbolic order. Furthermore, his family does see him as having accomplished his symbolic destiny: he has awakened from his coma and has returned to them. As a result, they articulate Lauro as a being between two deaths. The man from 1968 is dead and the man before him must be reborn into a new world: their world. Žižek points out that

> This place "between two deaths", a place of sublime beauty as well as terrifying monsters, is the site of *das Ding*, of the real-traumatic kernel in the midst of the symbolic order. This place is opened by symbolization/historicization: the process of historicization implies an empty place, a non-historical kernel around which the symbolic network is articulated. (135)

The previously mentioned encounters point to Lauro as that empty place. The people surrounding Lauro do not try to welcome him and his

history into their world. Instead, they try to incorporate him into their world, not taking into account that Lauro's self-articulation is different from theirs.

All of this reflects the way in which the family views him and, by extension, the way history is perceived; namely, a one-way street—particularly since this family has progressed economically during Lauro's coma. Still, Lauro represents an unciteable past, one that does not comfortably lead to the current historical moment. Walter Benjamin writes that

> The chronicler who narrates events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accord with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost to history. Of course only a redeemed mankind is granted the fullness of its past—which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. (390)

Lauro awakens to be welcomed into a new time but those living in that time want little interference from the history that Lauro represents. He is a reminder of a past that does not fit their comfortable present. All want to indoctrinate him into the current setting, but none is prepared to deal with him as someone who also has something to offer, since what he has to offer is a reminder of the brutal past whose flow leads to the comfortable present. Perhaps only one of his friends is aware of the historical conundrum Lauro faces when he, in one of the most poignant comments, tells him, "As Jose Emilio Pacheco wrote, brother: 'We are now what we detested twenty years ago'." Indeed, that may be true, but what goes apparently unnoticed by this friend is that Lauro is still a man from 20 years before. Moreover, while his friend might have had 20 years to look back and reflect on what he has now become, Lauro has not had that opportunity. Furthermore, since he is still the man he was 20 years before, it would seem that he must hate the friends he used to have.

What becomes evident is that Lauro has a different set of values than those shared by his friends. Those values, in fact, beyond simply being different, are near obsolete in the world in which he awakens, as is illustrated in a conversation with Alberto, a friend who tries to bring him up to date without the same type of paternalistic tone seen from his other friends. One of the artifacts he gives to Lauro to help him acclimate is a videocassette of *Rojo amanecer*, which is only briefly mentioned. That in itself is telling, considering the film's initial impact. Ignacio Sánchez Prado

sees the value of this scene as one "in which *El Bulto* strongly counters *Rojo amanecer*, deactivating it through its presentation as nothing more than videotape, thus scenifying the futility of memory in contemporary politics and culture" (112). This scene questions *Rojo amanecer*'s effective potential at the conclusion of the twentieth century in Mexico. Can Lauro's values (though perhaps it might be more accurate to say history) and the affect they contain be openly received by those around him? In other words, we must ask if Lauro and the history he represents are at all affective or is history an effect of current political forces. Would he indeed be the same man with the same values had he been awake for all those years or was he simply spared the inevitable corruption or cooption the others experienced? Indeed, a key question is if his brother-in-law Toño, who he remembers as being one of his most radical friends, still shares the same values as Lauro or if he has betrayed his values, as Lauro believes. In a key confrontation, Lauro accuses him of being a member of the Establishment and having no principles. Toño, on the other hand, attributes his success to the ultimate goal of progress and tells Lauro that if he had been alive for those 20 years, he would be doing the same thing Toño is now doing, in this manner demonstrating a dogmatic allegiance to Mexican progress and modernization. Furthermore, such an accusation aims to further erase Lauro as an affective force. Lauro is a reminder that clashes with the present time and, as such, this accusation is an effort to reorient Lauro to the present time. Lauro is in essence what Benjamin describes as "an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image" (391). Toño does not see himself as continuing from the discursive line Lauro represents. His only recourse is to invalidate that line by suggesting that it would have ultimately led to him, had Lauro been able to continue living it. This position is mirrored by his sister Valeria (Toño's wife), who tells him "We Mexicans are on the way up, Lauro. That's why I learned to speak English. [In English] You know that?" We can see in her attitude that she equates Mexican progress with acceptance in the global market as symbolized by her need to learn English.

Lauro is equally at odds with his children, whom he sees as having no political consciousness. But what is truly different is the set of values each era placed highest. Lauro is a product of 1968 and the student protests of the time. His support of communism as the ultimate goal was central to radical thinking of the 1970s. This is seen quite clearly in his reaction to the outcome of the Vietnam War.

Lauro: … and in Vietnam, who won?
Alberto: We won.
Lauro: Logical.
Alberto: Oh sure, [mocking him] logical.

Lauro is clearly still tied to the thinking of the 1970s, in which radical thinking saw communism as the ultimate and inevitable goal of mankind. His children, whom he accuses of having no political consciousness, are involved in a play that denounces the destruction of the environment. This would appear to be the same type of grass-roots activity in which Lauro was involved at their age. Toño, on the other hand, is poised to be a reformer from within. It appears that while each has different priorities, they nonetheless see themselves as having a political consciousness. When they reconcile, he tells Lauro that "what changes are not our ideas, but how we apply them in a different historical moment." In a family drama, this is the type of happy ending that would make the most sense. Patricia Hart writes that the film "serves to make the point that it is only through affection, flexibility, apology, and love that people of opposing ideologies can ever be reconciled" (Cabello-Castallet 34). However, with respect to the film's investment in a historiographical discussion, this approach appears to be a first step toward cooption through which Lauro would be inscribed in the already existing symbolic order. Toño invites Lauro to join him in politics, to which Lauro responds that he would rather be an independent (a doomed proposition for a politician in Mexico).[4]

As the film unfolds, Lauro, the once radical activist of the 1970s, is unable to find himself 20 years later. While he seems dangerously radical to some, to others he is quite the opposite. During a confrontation with Daniel, for example, Daniel asks if he is really "the old man" that he appears to represent. The issue is highly complicated due to the complexity of the times, which Lauro is unable to grasp. Part of it is represented by his fear of leaving the house, which later can be seen to be a fear of modernity as it is manifested in the streets of Mexico City that continued to grow at an alarming pace since the time Lauro went into his coma. Another part has to do with a type of tunnel vision Lauro has of the world.

[4] In 2009, Retes announced he would film a sequel to *El Bulto* titled *El Bulto para president* (*The Lump for President*). It would be of interest to see how that film will address the issues of historicity in specific relation to politics in Mexico, in light of the PRI no longer being the anchored power base.

In other words, an activist like Lauro had but one cause in which to insert himself. In fact, the ideals were perfectly clear and outlined in chants and slogans. In the world he awakens, these causes are less clear, a point best illustrated by his friend Alberto—who tells him that it is very hard to distinguish between guerrilla and terrorist. He tells him that the systems of misinformation have been greatly improved through satellites and computers: both, manifestations of modernity that others like Toño embrace as symbols of progress. Such a Janus like perspective of the same elements recalls Benjamin's discussion of Klee's *Angelus Novus* in which progress is articulated as movement toward the future *and* the debris it leaves behind.

Lauro is unable to reconcile this lack of simplicity into his activist thinking. As Haddu well points out:

> The main desires for change, as Lauro learns, are no longer directed at the government and modifying its political infrastructure. Today's social activists, as his friend Alberto explains, are concerned with domestic and international issues such as the risk of global warming, the AIDS epidemic, the improvement of living conditions, and the reduction of air pollution in the nation's capital (22).

This type of political vertigo is seen in a number of ways in the film, as Lauro tries to reestablish himself as husband to his wife. He tells her that he understands she needed the company of a man, but now he is there and she is, he tells her, "my woman." He also tries to establish the same authority with his children by telling them what they can and cannot do, which also has negative results. The once activist is very much cemented in a patriarchal mindset. He seems unaware of, or fails to recognize, even the most minimal feminist or ecological thinking as activism. Ultimately, he tries to assert an authority based on politics upon Toño, whom he accuses of being a traitor for not continuing the same fight he had fought 20 years before. This scene is counterpointed by a similar yet laughable discourse from one of his friends who tells him: "We'll keep fighting, Lauro. The usual ones. The few of us who remain. We don't know any other way to live." While that exchange is used for comic relief, coming from Lauro it is an entirely different matter. Lauro is very much trying to impose an authority based on the values of 1968 onto his current world. He sees himself as an uncorrupted subject among the corrupted masses. The reaction is understandable, but also somewhat troubling. Is this the reaction that is to be expected to the unveiling of a history so many have searched

for so long? Will Mexicans be prepared to find out what really happened during and after the Student Movement of 1968? Will they want to know if that knowledge brings with it an authority to which they do not want to submit?

Since, at the time this film was released in 1991, there had been no official acknowledgment of the events of Tlatelolco, there had likewise been no institutional or national mourning. In addition, there had been no one to blame nor anyone to accept responsibility. There is a distinct difference to the way in which this type of scenario had played out in other countries such as Chile and Argentina, where a type of institutional *mea culpa* took place at least at a discursive level with the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. I cannot suggest that those responsible were brought to justice, as is clear with the public spectacle surrounding the arrest of Pinochet. Still, the commissions performed a key function in bringing about the necessary circumstances for proper mourning. I am not suggesting that these countries were transparent in the investigation of the crimes committed during the military regimes, simply that there was a mechanism through which an institutional gesture has been made to right the wrongs of years past. This, in a sense, legitimizes the many dead from the dirty wars. That same type of institutional legitimization of the dead had not taken place in Mexico and, as a result, the task of mourning had not been carried out. LaCapra writes: "Historical losses call for mourning—and possibly for critique and transformative sociopolitical practice" (68). The critique and transformative sociopolitical practice LaCapra mentions is glaringly absent from those surrounding Lauro. Most of his family is comfortably rooted in a modern Mexico at the doorstep of acceptance into the global market, as exemplified by NAFTA and as is evidenced by the outside recognition that Mexican beauty is prototypical beauty, as dictated by the Miss Universe Pageant. What goes unmentioned is that Mexico's grand entrance into the world stage was to be precisely during the 1968 Olympics, which, in turn, was the reason for the need to silence the student protests with such finality and, in this regard, we can begin to see a type of articulation of history as a repetition of certain themes. The family's status, then, benefits from Lauro's tragedy. LaCapra goes on to say: "When absence, approximated to loss, becomes the object of mourning, the mourning may (perhaps must) become impossible and turn continually back into endless melancholy" (68). This is precisely the case in the film. Since a melancholic subject cannot separate or define the border between the lost object and itself, the subject cannot distinguish between

either. As such, Lauro's family is unable to allow him to reestablish his own subjectivity separate from theirs. He must silence his uncomfortable truth and become what Agamben calls a "bare life" (*Potentialities* 229). He must accept as his own the values that others attribute to him. He must become a receptacle of others' values, and a mirror through which others validate their politics without shame. In other words, he must become an image in whose intent others can recognize themselves.

Since Lauro has not been dead nor has he been living, the family is able to speak of his absence with the assurance that he is not totally lost. As a result, there is no real mourning. In a sense, this is analogous to the historical situation in Mexico in the early 1990s. While loss is usually associated with trauma, absence is not. However, in the case of Tlatelolco, both operations function as a type of trauma. Loss is rather easy to understand. There is the loss of human life at Tlatelolco, the loss of freedom by those later jailed, and the loss of innocence. All these are clear losses suffered by the Mexican people. There are events that mark the loss of something or someone. Loss, writes LaCapra "is situated on a historical level and is the consequence of particular events" (64). However, in the case of Tlatelolco the issue of loss is complicated by the usurpation of the event itself. In other words, since the Mexican government refuses to acknowledge the magnitude of Tlatelolco, there is no event to which one can point as the catalyst of the loss. The result of having no event to point to that can serve as the historical moment responsible for the loss if that loss is transformed into absence and that absence does not allow itself to be mourned because one can only mourn what has been lost. As the historical event of loss is absent, it envelops the loss of the nation in that very absence. Without mourning the loss, Mexico falls into a melancholic state through which it is unable to distinguish between itself and the lost object. As such, it articulates it in the same manner, and with the same values as itself, which, in turn, marks the history of 1968 as having achieved a symbolic destiny: progress, modernization, and acceptance into the global market.

Lauro represents a battle that will decide who must adjust to whom. Must the ideals of 1968 adjust to the present or must it be the opposite? Indeed the question itself suggests that a compromise is inevitable and that in itself must be questioned. Must an inclusion of an awakened history necessarily involve a type of renegotiation in historical terms? Or must Mexicans be willing to reevaluate the current political and historical apparatus from 1968 onward and examine their own complicity in the erasure of Tlatelolco from the historical record. This film proposes various

strategies as a way to deal with the inclusion of a previously ignored history into the existing historical apparatus. It suggests that just as there are a number of competing histories, there are also a number of competing factions with which this new history must be reconciled. History as such becomes much more fluid than the constructions proposed by those who seek to uncover or "re-member" the *true* history of Tlatelolco. Additionally, the film implies that history may function in the same way that discourse does according to Deleuze and Guattari. That is to say, history is an intersection of variables that may or may not be able to dialogue with each other.

In *El Bulto*, history is carried by a man scarred by trauma and being that Lauro is not awake during the 20 years following Tlatelolco, his loss comes after the fact. In other words, he does not witness the process by which his memories are erased from the national discourse, but awakens to a world already constructed over his memories, a world to which he will never totally belong. Let us note, for example, that as Lauro awakens, he is never really able to reinsert himself without any negotiation, and that there are roles and spaces to which he will not be able to do so at all, namely, the space of husband to his (former) wife. In the same way then, history may never be able to reconcile with all the possible historical constructions. Perhaps the effort of reconciling is indeed a lost cause. What is certain, and what the film ultimately posits, is that the inclusion of Tlatelolco's history into the existing historical construct must lead to a true mourning of 1968 that includes the necessary yet uncomfortable self-reflection of Mexico's a posteriori complicity.

Both *Rojo amanecer* and *El Bulto* represent an evolving discourse about 1968. Both films contributed to anchoring the events of Tlatelolco in the national imaginary. It is fair to say that without them, a crowd-pleasing caricature of a film filled with Disney-like tropes like *Tlatelolco. Verano del 68* (*Tlatelolco. Summer of 68*, 2013) would not have been possible.[5] In other words, they helped to establish Tlatelolco within a widely articulated discourse to the point that, years later, it could be used as a distinguishable

[5] This film uses the events of 1968 as background for a predictable romance between Felix, a working-class university student, and Ana María, daughter of an upper-class, politically connected family. The film makes use of a series of tropes such as a villainous patriarch, a benevolent dying grandfather, a forbidden love (at first sight) between two young people from different social classes, two brothers on opposite sides of the political spectrum, among many others, to drive what is a highly predictable love story set against the student movement of 1968.

moment from which to tell a pop-culture love story. And while both films received *Premios Ariel* nominations, *Rojo amanecer* did particularly well in winning nine *Arieles*, including best picture. More importantly, however, these films marked another step toward inserting the discussion of 1968 in a broader light. For many years, the main goal of said discourse was one of discovery, of remembering and (re)membering, of not forgetting. The resulting rhetoric did, by and large, articulate the state as a straw man, easily vilifying it and, to a certain extent, idealized the student movement of 1968. These films begin to problematize the manner in which this movement has been articulated and while both undoubtedly remain a part of that discourse, they nonetheless do so with a degree of self-reflection that was lacking in earlier works and that slowly and inevitably became more prevalent as the discourse of 1968 continued to evolve.

6

Looking Back After 40 Years: *El Memorial del 68*

Throughout this study, I have argued that the discourse of the student movement has evolved from the initial production that articulated itself as a united entity against a homogenous state discourse to one that examined the student movement as a complex and constantly changing entity that even today remains in flux. Inevitably, the changes in the student movement's discourse can be connected to changes in the political, social, and historical landscapes. It would only be a matter of time, for example, before the role that women played in the movement began to be discussed as a result of the progress women forged since the 1960s. This led to a reflection on the manner in which gender played an important role in defining what was and was not the discourse of 1968. Similarly, it could only be a matter of time before the impact of 1968 on neoliberalism and the a posteriori complicity of those who benefited from it were examined. While each of the literary and cultural events studied here (the publication of *Los días y los años*, the release of *El grito*, followed many years later with the release and rerelease of *Rojo amanecer*, as well as the release of *El Bulto* and the publication of *De la libertad y el encierro*) marked a shift in the way in which the discourse of 1968 was articulated, none signaled a dramatic deviation in the overall trajectory of this discourse. Instead, these works came about as logical, though at times late, progressions in the evolution of one of the most discussed social movements in Mexico's twentieth century. And while each had a significant impact and stood alone as a

J.J. Rojo, *Revisiting the Mexican Student Movement of 1968*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_6

representation of a change of perspective, they nonetheless encapsulated the views and experiences of others that had been building over time. It is worth pointing out, however, that each of these texts nonetheless came about as a first approximation by those who produced it. In other words, despite the range in the dates of production, each one of these texts is the producer's first attempt to deal with the student movement of 1968, the Tlatelolco massacre, or its aftermath.

With the opening of the *Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco* and particularly its permanent exhibit, *Memorial del 68*, there is, for the first time, a dramatic shift in this very discourse. And while perhaps the *testimonios* housed at the *Memorial del 68*, much like the works studied here, were and are also representative of others' perspectives and could very well mark a logical trajectory and timely contribution to this discourse, never before had so much material with so many different approaches been released at once and housed in a single place and readily available to all. Furthermore, it marks an attempt to not just revisit the events of 1968, but to revisit the very material that has powered the discourse of the student movement: the memories of 1968 and the manner in which they were constructed.

The *Memorial del 68* opened in 2007, nearly 40 years after the Tlatelolco massacre. The *Memorial* is part of the *Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco* (CCUT) that is housed in what used to be the *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* and also includes the Stavenhagen Collection and Tlatelolco Museum. Up until 2012, the CCUT housed the Blaisten collection. The complex itself is very much a cultural center. It hosts film screenings on a variety of topics, functions as a recital hall, offers language classes, art classes for children, summer programs, and a plethora of other activities. Still, the crux of the complex is the *Memorial del 68*. The site itself is significant for a number of reasons, not the least important of which is that the space was donated by the Government of Mexico City headed by Andres Manuel López Obrador, who would go on to lose Mexico's presidential election in 2006 to the UNAM, with the goal of building not just a cultural center but a monument to 1968.

The location of the *Memorial* is important because it recalls the most recognized signifier of a movement that spanned months, if not years. One need only utter "Tlatelolco" in order to elicit a series of emotional, political, social, and historical responses. As such, the placement of the museum in the *Plaza de las tres culturas* would seem to encapsulate a series of referents in a single space. As Elena Cespeda de León writes in

the introduction to the publication *Memorial del 68*, "Tlatelolco is now all memory. Its plaza, a synthesis of the geographic site, was built throughout the centuries through clashes of juxtaposed civilizations, and it was called *Plaza de las Tres Culturas.* Then came that October 2nd and the name of Tlatelolco took another meaning in Mexican memory" (10). The space, then, is a conflation of a number of historical realities that are central to the construction of a Mexican imaginary: the pre-Columbian heritage constantly alluded to and glorified in the Mexican flag, the Catholic heritage inscribed after Columbus, the nation's *mestizaje*—all of which are present in the modern Mexico of the 1960s. After 1968, Tlatelolco is infused with yet another set of referents that do not just share the word "Tlatelolco," but also begin to overtake them as *the* signifiers for that space. And herein lies a highly problematic aspect of establishing the *Memorial* at the *Plaza de las tres culturas.* While on the one hand, the site has become synonymous with the student movement of 1968, on the other, tying the *Memorial* to a signifier that also stands for the climax cements a widely held belief in what is most certainly a fallacy: that the movement can be reduced to the events of October 2, 1968. This, of course, leads to the question of whether there is or should have been a better place for the *Memorial.* Perhaps, as José Ramón Ruisánchez Serra seems to suggest, a site near the Zócalo would have made sense given the number of museums that are scattered in the area. He argues, however, that, unlike these museums in the *Centro histórico* that are featured in a number of promotional publications, the *Memorial* has been purposely left out and that "this lack of official publicity reflects the larger geographic situation of the Memorial vis-à-vis the gentrification process of downtown Mexico City—from which Tlatelolco was excluded—and the new map of the city it proposes" (182). In this regard, the geographical location of the CCUT places it, physically and symbolically, outside of the national narrative. Still, while certainly having the *Memorial* in proximity to other museums might well have resulted in higher traffic through the site, given the museum's investment in preserving memory and the gravitas of the site, it would have been extremely difficult to imagine having the museum elsewhere. This is particularly the case since that inclusion into the established corpus of museums could be interpreted as co-option into the Althusserian function of ideological state apparatus, thus limiting the *Memorial*'s function to upholding an accepted national narrative. The publicity apparatus Ruisánchez Serra alludes to would seem to support Huyssen's assertion that

> Banners and billboards on museum fronts indicate how close the museum has moved to the world of spectacle, of the popular fair and mass entertainment. The museum itself has been sucked into the maelstrom of modernization: museum shows are managed and advertised as major spectacles with calculable benefits for sponsors, organizers, and city budgets, and the claim to fame of any major metropolis will depend considerably on the attractiveness of its museal sites. (21)

Would including the *Memorial* within this paradigm ultimately not reduce its affective power due to a perceived subservience to the state and to the market? In fact, one could easily argue that placing the *Memorial* away from Tlatelolco would be a deflective and co-optive operation meant to draw the focus away from the tragic site and incorporate Tlatelolco's history into the state's narrative.

Indeed, almost every element surrounding the museum seems to deflect the visitors' attention. It should be underscored that while the *Memorial* is key in the CCUT, one is by no means visually drawn to it. The very placement of the *Memorial* within the complex would seem to parallel the place the history of 1968 occupied in the official historical apparatus. One must enter the CCUT complex, walk down some steps, exit the building, cross a patio, and then enter another building in order to reach it. In other words, the *Memorial* is somewhat hidden in the corner of the CCUT. Once in the *Memorial*, one can appreciate that it includes an impressive series of artifacts from the student movement of 1968. It is organized with a certain sense of chronology that invites the visitor to walk through, not just the movement, but through its context. It tries to facilitate a journey through 1968s domestic and international antecedents and contemporaries. In fact, rather than allow the visitor to wander through the space, the exhibit is set up so as to direct one through a series of events. On the first floor are the photographs of each of the fifty-seven *testimoniantes* interviewed between July of 2006 and February of 2007. Those who gave *testimonios* include Elena Poniatowska, Andrea Revueltas, Sócrates Campos Lemus, Luis González de Alba, Ignacia Rodríguez, among many others. As one moves forward, music from the era plays through speakers and excerpts from the *testimonios* play on screens on both sides of the corridor. There are articles and artifacts concerning several international and domestic events, such as the Vietnam War and the railroad workers' strike of 1958. Further down the corridor are a number of photographs, replicas of posters and signs used during the various marches and demonstrations before

one descends to the basement and finds a series of double screens that play more excerpts from *testimonios* on one side and show images from the 1960s on the other. There is also an installation by Víctor Muñoz that purports to show the banal remains left behind at the plaza and another that is a cell with the photographs of detained protestors in a single line covering the walls. One then returns to the first floor to find photographs and publications by a number of actors from 1968, including Elena Poniatowska and Luis González de Alba, and a series of television screens that play a variety of multimedia material before being invited to leave a *testimonio* using the computer terminals that line the wall.

The manner in which the *Memorial del 68* is organized reminds the visitor of Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco*. The images are reminiscent of the photographs in the opening pages of her text, but more importantly, the audiovisual cacophony mimics the textual polyphony in that seminal text. Ruisánchez Serra explains, "Like Poniatowska's text, the museum attempts to replicate the intervention of a multitude of different voices, acting against the monolithic discourses of the state and the media who sought to silence this history" (181). He argues that Poniatowska's text acts as a microcosm of the political climate in 1968 in that it not only represents the ideology of the student movement but also of other constituencies involved for and against it. In particular, Ruisánchez Serra argues, "Other voices are not just tacitly implied as those silencing the voice of the *testimoniante*, but instead are daringly juxtaposed" (189). Poniatowska's text does indeed reflect this polyphony of voices. I would argue, however, that much like the *Memorial*, Poniatowska frames her text within the ideology of the student movement and, in that regard, they are really very much alike. Ruisánchez Serra, however, argues that "precisely here is where the book and the museum begin to diverge significantly, as the Memorial offers only a certain subset of voices and perspectives, which in turn circumscribes interpretative possibilities much more narrowly than does the book" (189). And certainly, at first glance, one could very well walk away with that impression. In fact, after examining the exhibit that invites the visitor to walk through it in a specific circuit, listening to the sound bites that are played in a loop throughout, and examining the list of *testimoniantes*, one could very well conclude that the exhibit narrows the manner in which one can read the student movement.

In many ways, the museum replicates the history of 1968. It provides the version most of us have heard about as a first impression when one walks in. The collage of posters on the first floor (see Fig. 6.1), for example,

Fig. 6.1 Photograph of posters, Memorial del 68, Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. *Photographer*—Juan J. Rojo (October 5, 2015)

through which one can appreciate the visual discourse employed during the marches and protests in 1968, lacks context and, in this regard, the *Memorial* seems to privilege the same type of rhetorical line created by the CNH. The artifacts that surround the visitor seem to complement an already established historical construction. Rather than being objects of study, the posters simply support CNH's vision of the movement. One can certainly admire them as a whole, but they are not set up to be studied as individual manifestations created by a particular artist or brigade.

The exhibit is meant to act as a repository of memories from the 1968 student movement and is designed to embody the rallying cry often heard after 1968: "El 2 de octubre no se olvida." In fact, the exhibit is framed as follows:

> The *Memorial* is a symbolic space where awareness is built through the public's reflection on the events experienced during the summer of 1968 in our country. Concepts such as injustice, institutional violence, human rights, peaceful protest, political prisoners or democracy are some of the questions that lead us to the construction of the collective memory of the country's recent history.

This short introduction to the exhibit taken from the museum's website frames the events of 1968 as never ending and tasks the visiting public with forming part of the historical process presumably begun in 1968. Still, what remains unarticulated is the type of memory that is contained in the *Memorial* and the type of memory it aims to construct. Eugenia Allier-Montaño maps the type of memories surrounding 1968 through several stages. She describes the first as a memory of denunciation that was prevalent following the massacre, though, as she notes, this type of memory "disappears if we examine the records of the parliamentary debates, which instead reveal a constant criticism of students and the government's use of a *conspiracy memory* depicting students as part of an antigovernment communist conspiracy (with foreign overtones)" (132). She characterizes this type of memory as one that calls attention "to the fact that the wound inflicted in the past is still open" (134), thus establishing a call for justice that will ultimately result in healing. This memory then gives way to a *memory of praise* that is "a celebration of the student movement because it sought to pave the way for the country's democratization" (134). She notes that through this process "the dead were transformed from 'victims' into 'political actors,' agents" (136), thus renegotiating the affective power of the activists in 1968.

The *Memorial* contains artifacts that embody both sets of memories as well as a third: that of metamemory. The *testimonios* contained in the archive are now recollections, not about the events of 1968, but of the recollections of 1968, which continue to be negotiated. While the introduction clearly aligns itself with the ideology of the CNH, or at least is sympathetic to the student demonstrators' cause, it nonetheless provides the visiting public an opportunity to watch and listen to a variety of *testimonios* from many of the actors involved in 1968. Included in this collection are the *testimonios* from the two negotiators for the state, Andrés Caso Lombardo and Jorge de la Vega, as well as Sócrates Campos Lemus, whose inclusion was met with skepticism by some and outright anger by others who felt his *testimonio* was compromised and not representative of the 1968 student movement. In addition, the visitor also has an opportunity to contribute to the exhibit by recording his or her own testimonio, which then becomes part of the exhibit itself, thus staying true to the mission of the *Memorial*: the construction of consciousness though the public's reflection about the events of 1968.

As one moves to the basement, one can appreciate Víctor Muñoz's installation (see Fig. 6.2) that displays objects left behind that nostalgically purport to recall the specters of those who died on the plaza. Each shoe, each purse, each article of clothing that once belonged to a living being is all that remains.

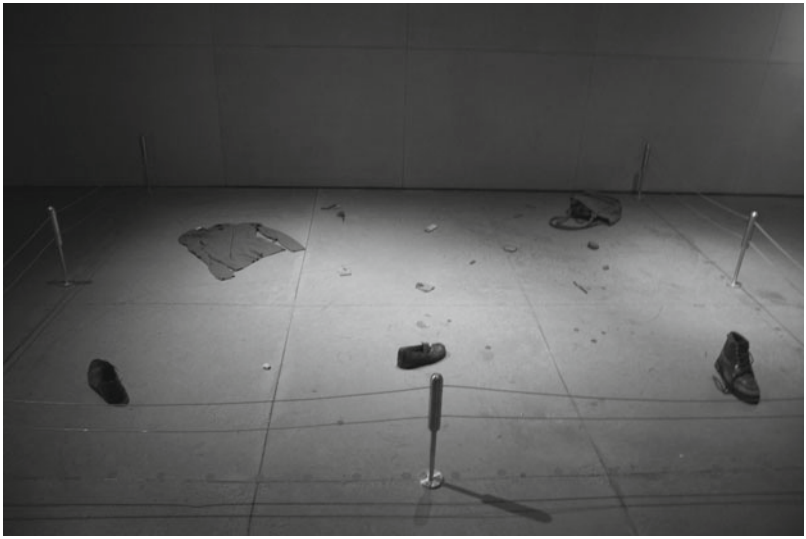

Fig. 6.2 Photograph of installation "2 de octubre," Memorial del 68, Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. *Photographer*—Juan J. Rojo (December 5, 2015)

The installation is not really about the objects left behind, but about the absence of those who unwillingly left them there. This piece would seem to recall Allier-Montaño's notion of a *memory of denunciation* that she articulates as "a memory focused on the repression unleashed against students and civilians" (133). It is simple in that it suggests only victims and aggressors, the identities of which cannot be deciphered by the articles in view, and which parallels both the unidentified victims in the official records and the lack of a responsible party brought to justice. Still, while they are both nameless, only the victims are anonymous as the installation implicitly names the government as the aggressor.

Also in the lower level of the exhibit, the screens in which actors from 1968 tell their story 40 years later are replaced with larger twin screens placed at an angle in dark viewing rooms in which actors from the student movement tell their story on one color screen while on the other, black-and-white still images flash by as do black-and-white clips from protests, rallies, marches, and speeches (see Fig. 6.3). Arroyo and García Aguinaco write: "The use of synchronized projections and double image editing on

Fig. 6.3 Photograph of parallel screen installation, Memorial del 68, Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. *Photographer*—Juan J. Rojo (October 5, 2015)

plasma screens is not gratuitous, it responds to an attempt to synthesize and document views, but also to an attempt to present history along with a dynamic that makes it more and more tangible and less distant" (17).

While the approach might be similar to the one used in the opening sequence of *El Bulto*, in which the contrast between the black-and-white and color shots underscore the difference in eras, in this instance, the color shot of the *testimoniante* playing next to the black-and-white shot from 1968 creates a connection. It leaves the viewer to assume that the person in the "historical" shot is the same as the person speaking, thus accomplishing the mission stated. The historical event does indeed appear closer to the present day. This approach complicates the referential points in that it brings the events closer to the speaker and not the speaker closer to the event. The viewer is tasked with viewing/interpreting the events of 1968 through the lens provided by the subject, not from 40 years later, but from maybe 50 or even 60 years later. The black-and-white image is clearly from the late 1960s, but the speaker, while recorded in 2006–2007, is not contextualized in the same manner. While the year these *testimonios*

is not a secret, the information is not placed on the screen, thus giving the impression that the speaker is speaking from an ever-shifting "today." In essence, the bridge between the two events grows longer as the years pass given that only one of the points of reference is fixed and perceived to have happened a long time ago. Furthermore, the manner in which the screens are framed by the black nothingness further decontextualizes them within a visual vacuum similar to what one might find in a movie theater, allowing the viewer to enter into a world contained only in the screen(s). The visual vacuum, however, is also representative of a historical vacuum that fools the viewer into believing that the people in both screens are the same person when, in fact, they are not. And here, it should be understood that I do not mean to question if, as in the image shown here, the person on the left is Jesús Martín del Campo. The average visitor would have no way of knowing this information. But even if we accept that the people in the black-and-white shots in these screens are the younger selves of the *testimoniantes* from 2006 to 2007, we cannot claim that they are the same people. Nor can we claim that their discourse in 2006–2007 is representative of their position from 40 years prior. Still, this seems to be the goal of the installation. It must be stressed that the 40 years that separate the two subjects contained radical changes in Mexico's cultural and political spheres that undoubtedly influenced the later subject. The very nature of the memories of 1968 shifted, as Allier-Montaño argues, from that of denunciation to praise, which ultimately resulted in officializing the public memories of 1968 during Vicente Fox's presidency between 2000 and 2006 (140).

In the case of Martín del Campo, however, his position in 2006 seems to be unchanged from that of 1968. In fact, not unlike *El Bulto's* Lauro, he establishes a clear divide between those like himself that have remained true to their 1968 values and those who have not:

> In any event, I want to say that even in these personal testimonies with the men from the *priísta* power, I see that they needed to refer to 68 and they believed that with just mentioning it, it would be the slogan or the term that would cleanse them, but no, very few of those who were active in 68 went on to the PRI. In reality, most of us try to lead a decent life, an honest life which are issues that appeared in 68, issues of dignity, honesty, civil courage.

Martín del Campo excludes those who later would join the PRI from his 1968 comrades and the values they represented at the same time that he establishes a litmus test of true activism by alluding to those who did *in*

fact participate in 1968. How that participation might be defined is not established, though it would surely shift depending on who invoked the term "participation." Still, what can be said is that even in this unadulterated position, one can appreciate an expansion of the idea of participation. He says, for example:

> We would go to the *mercados*, the Sonora *mercado*, La Merced, the *mercado* at Jamaica and toward the *colonias* where the buses were going. Soon we formed a brigade from High school 7 and so we were aware of the information coming out of the first informational assemblies before the creation of the National Strike Council. And when it is finally established, we would rotate the arrival of our *compañeros* to the high school council like mine, especially the shift. We all didn't have the time to go to the council meetings during the morning shift, so we would rotate because we worked in the mornings.

It is worth nothing the manner in which the brigades they formed predated the formation of the CNH, thus collapsing the notion that the ideology behind the student movement emanated from the centralized body. As such, while the *Memorial* appears to go hand-in-hand with the CNH's discourse, a dedicated investigation can begin to decipher the manner in which the façade is just that, and that under it exists a rhizome of voices, perspectives, and possibilities that need to be fleshed out. Take, for instance, Martín del Campo's admission of a type of tunnel vision while he poignantly tells of his experience on the evening of October 2:

> In the few meters closest to me where I could see and hear the words more clearly, a man screamed, "I live here, don't shoot" and raised his hands and then just laid on the square. He got shot, I don't know where. A woman ended up face up also screaming and moaning, we don't know, I'm not sure if she was shot or just fainted. These are the images that I have of 20 or 30 meters around me, because if we turned, the nearest soldier yelled at us or if he could, he would smack us with his rifle. The soldiers ended up where I was, they were there a few meters away. I guess that they have that measured, I imagine now, that they were a certain distance from each other and to those of us who ended up the closest, they always said, "Get down assholes"; and, well, there was cross fire from the ones who were closest to me.

His admission that his field of experience was limited to only a few meters and that soldiers behind him were either trying to protect him or themselves ultimately points to the possibility of a reinterpretation of the events

of October 2. One has to wonder, however, how this recollection changed from when he was in Lecumberri. While the actors may well be the same from 1968, what is not the same is the voice. That is, while there are many *testimonios* from the people who were influential in 1968, the voices captured between 2006 and 2007 differ, at times dramatically, from the voices of 1968.

Perhaps the most dramatic change comes from González de Alba, who in *Los días y los años* paints a powerful and abject portrait of life in prison with a tenor and rhetoric that is in full support of the student movement of 1968. And while that support is still there in 2006, González de Alba nonetheless expresses a series of views that are, at times, not in line with his position almost 40 years earlier and, during others, completely at odds with that position. While his *testimonio* from 2006 does not delegitimize the plight of the student movement, it does nonetheless question many of the established "truths" that have become part of the Tlatelolco ethos. The most important of these has to do with the involvement of the army as an agent of a conspiracy masterminded by the then President Díaz Ordaz. González de Alba argues that the true mastermind was most likely Luis Echeverría, who succeeded Díaz Ordaz. What is more, González de Alba claims that, due to a lack of communication between the regular army and the *Batallón Olimpia*, the army was just as much a victim of the events as were the students. He questions what he considers an inflated figure in relation to the number of deaths both before and during the Tlatelolco massacre. All of these claims would seem to destabilize a narrative that had been largely intact during the previous 40 years. Asked why he or anyone else did not, or why anyone did not or could not relate this history before, he answers that it was because

> one was a traitor. Look, when the version that he army had attacked the crowd with fixed bayonet immediately ensued, and if you see the photos, no photo or film, none show any soldiers with a bayonet, shooting indiscriminately on the crowd and charging with fixed bayonets. It didn't happen like that. Not at all. It didn't happen like that. Several of my friends were rescued by soldiers. I tell you that they were told: "Get down stupid, can't you see that they're shooting?" "And who is shooting?" "Your friends. Go that way, but take cover on this low wall" so they could escape. Others, who they thought were old enough to be leaders or who knows what, they detained. That's how they took many people away. Then came that version and with that version there had to have been thousands of deaths and then on top of that came Oriana Fallaci's declaration (the Italian journalist who had come to Mexico to cover the Olympics), who was there on the third

> floor of the Chihuahua building and got shot. She said she had seen the *Plaza de Tlatelolco* covered with dead bodies. I can tell you that I saw it covered with people lying on the ground, but were they dead? Were they wounded? Or were they simply on the ground by order of the soldiers, (like they ordered us)?

González de Alba's 2006 *testimonio* removes the culpability from the army and instead casts it elsewhere. What it does not do, however, as one might conclude by having him change his story, or question the foundation of the rhetoric of 1968, is question the validity of the tragedy itself:

> Any family who had someone die in Tlatelolco, knows it. They come and tell you. Let's say there were 38, or 50, or let's say there were 100. It's a crime, yes, of course. But what is the difference? The difference is that you see that it is an operation where someone had a dirty hand in it.

Thus, while I have maintained throughout this study that the student movement, as was articulated in its infancy, provided for a simple us/them binary, and that slowly others began to question the simplicity of the students' discourse, González de Alba also questions the apparent simplicity of the "them" element in that same paradigm. In other words, González de Alba establishes that "both" sides of the dialog must be questioned in order to reach a more nuanced understanding of the events of 1968. Given that the constitution of students' discourse was and is much more complex than had been originally thought, there is no reason to believe that the Government's position was not equally complex and polyphonic. Sergio Aguayo, for example, concludes that the events of October 2 were not the work of a single entity. He writes that, contrary to the widely held belief that the army was primarily responsible for the massacre, "The evidence found so far shows a distinct behavior that would confirm that the uniformed army was drawn into a trap" (298). In other words, even if the army were responsible for the bloodshed, he argues that the evidence suggests that soldiers were used as pawns by yet another element, much like González de Alba attests. He further uses his own experience to illustrate the manner in which elements of the army seemed just as perplexed by the events of October 2, 1968 as he recalls the night of his arrest:

> They kept asking me about it, while the two of them did this with their hands [he strikes his fist against his open palm]. They were beating me for the benefit of the one listening outside. They didn't hit me one time, not a

> one … When I said all of this that I just told you, they said: "Look, look, you are going to go out right now and you're going to tell the public prosecutor exactly what you told us. Don't change anything." "Why would I change it? That's how it happened." And I went out there very calmly, "so it was this way and that way." "Don't write that." Still around the third or fourth time, I half whispered "well, that's my statement." "Don't write that", said the man who was there … It wasn't recorded. It's not in my statement. It's in the statements of those who were wounded from the *Batallón Olimpia* who weren't being watched and it is just like mine, so I understand, and that doesn't mean it wasn't a state sponsored crime, mass murder.

It is worth noting that in *Los días y los años*, González de Alba recalls this event as a physical beating from which he does, in fact, come out bloodied and bruised. Still, the voice captured in the *Memorial* recalls a different set of events that question the accuracy of his *testimonio* from 1968 (and by extension, questions others' recollections of the events), while nonetheless maintaining the position that what happened was a crime perpetuated by the state, and, as such, must still be probed, albeit within a wider framework that includes a reexamination of both the state's discourse and the dogmatically held positions of the student movement. What begins to dissolve through his recollection is the notion that the state could and can be reduced to a single position, and that single position could and can be applied equally to all its agents.

In addition to questioning the apparent simplicity of the Government's position, González de Alba also directs his critical gaze toward the students. Specifically, he recalls the level of repression he felt while in prison, not from the guards or the state, but from the very students that were his comrades. He recalls:

> we were very, very repressive. I personally, the main repression I experienced was from my own *compañeros*. We were together in C block and, well, if I went into a cell that wasn't mine, was leaving early in the morning, I had to be careful that *El Pino* or *El Búho* didn't see me. It wasn't something that you could do openly, at three in the morning. "What are you doing in so and so's cell?" We weren't against that, so it's not because of the leadership from 68. It has to do with the pell-mell of 68, all of that that people already had in them and the leadership, the CNH, didn't address.

The assertion that the movement itself was repressive goes against the grain of the perception that it was a progressive and inclusive entity. It does not,

however, strike as a fallacy. González de Alba's identity as a gay man does not appear in *Los días y los años*. As can be seen in his recollection, however, that does not mean that it was unknown or that it was not an issue during the movement. In fact, much like Tita's text, González de Alba's recollection speaks to the gendering of the student leadership's discourse. And even though he stresses that this repression against homosexual behavior was not part of the student's articulated position, he does state that these were attitudes ingrained in the general populace that the leadership failed to address. In this regard, the gendering of its discourse as a hetero-normative male position falls in a blind spot of the student leadership, much in the same manner as in Tita's text.

In the same vein, one of the added perspectives in the *Memorial* deals with women's experience during the movement of 1968. While this would be the central theme in *De la libertad y el encierro*, in fact, that work examines the role of women in 1968 as a whole, while dedicating a relatively small space to the political participation of women in the movement. The women's voices at the *Memorial*, on the other hand, differ on two important levels. The most striking is that there are many women's voices contained in the archive. While their perspectives during the 1968 movement can be reduced to a handful (Poniatowska, Nacha Rodriguez, and La Tita, for example), not including the many who are quoted in *La noche de Tlatelolco*, the number of women represented at the memorial are many more. Beyond Poniatowska and Nacha (La Tita died in 1999 and could not be included in the collection of *testimonios*), the *Memorial* includes thirteen extensive contributions from women connected to the student movement in several fashions. That in itself is significant when one considers the scope of women's contributions to the movement and the manner in which those contributions had been underrepresented in the students' discourse.

In addition to the number of women represented, they offer a more political recollection of their activities during the movement. Nacha Rodriguez, for example, argues against the notion that women's roles were largely ancillary, as had been suggested. But unlike Tita, whose tone tends to be more conciliatory, Nacha is steadfast about her role:

> Women from 68 were active and participant women, who formed brigades, even brigades composed only of women, and mixed as well and the importance of women's participation in the movement has never been really acknowledged because there had been movements before and then it was only about providing food, making food, building solidarity. But in 68 we

> began to organize ourselves as brigades, we went to public rallies, we went to factories, we went to the *mercados* and collected money, and the people supported us, and in fact, that's how we survived for a long time, from collecting money and from the food that the *mercados* gave us.

It is important to note that Nacha stresses the manner in which women have been largely ignored as political contributors, much like Cohen and Frazier have argued. What is even more interesting, however, is the avenue of support she acknowledges in passing: that the students were supported by merchants at *mercados* who gave them food. And it is this type of seemingly unguarded reflection that begins to give body to one of the guiding imperatives that Sergio Raúl Arroyo and Alejandro García Aguinaco outline in "Memory and the Ashes": "Not to focus on one aspect of political discourse, but to develop a real praxis of collective memory, where diverse views and perspectives in regards to one experience will show the complexity of the historical plot" (15). Rather than falling back on established tropes, Nacha begins to flesh out a complex support network by which the student movement was able to survive and then flourish. Furthermore, she points out the space to which women were largely relegated (the brigades), their importance to the whole of the movement, and her role in the medium:

> What I remember most is that main form of dissemination was word of mouth, we would get on buses to collect donations and we began to tell them everything that was happening and for them it was very important because everyone knows that at that moment the press was in someone's pocket, it said nothing in our favor, and everything was against us. So we would take it upon ourselves to let everybody know, in the buses, where we got on or where we were, outside of the factories, or the *mercados*, what was happening every day.

Nacha signals the manner in which her role in the brigades was fundamental to the ability of students to disseminate their message when faced with a compromised press. But what is more telling is the manner in which the interview closes. The majority of the interviews for the *Memorial* have a similar format: there is an interviewer who asks a series of questions of the person giving the *testimonio*. The first one tends to ask him or her to identify himself or herself and the role they played in the movement, and other common questions deal with their political background as well as their recollection of key events in 1968. The interview

then continues and, as the interviewer nears what he considers the end, he asks one of several questions that are meant to signal the conclusion. At that point, the interviewer thanks the other person and the interview is concluded. In Nacha's case, she is asked how the movement changed her. She responds poignantly and tells of how the movement changed her profoundly. She tells the interviewer that after 1968, she no longer wanted to be a lawyer and never wanted to marry, and after she concludes her answer, he says "Gracias" signaling the conclusion of the interview. Nacha responds:

> Not at all. What for? Thank you, ah, could I make one last, I would like to say one thing, for this memorial, and I am strictly opposed to us being used for a museum, as people who ended up there, poor things, they did this to you, they stopped you, you didn't have justice. No. I would want it to be a living memorial where the youth really find out what it was like and especially that women's participation is highlighted, because it never has been, and because I think it is definitive, that if women have now achieved what they have achieved, it is thanks to the women of 68. We continue to be victims of violence, just look at Atenco. You have many *compañeras* who are imprisoned for standing up for their rights. So I would want this to be well highlighted. That from that point, from the struggle of our anonymous *compañeras*, from the fight we gave, and from all the women who have fallen and that their names are unknown, because we only know a few of them, that it is something that is really highlighted with that divinity that women fighters have always had. If not, I don't think that this memorial will be complete. That's very important. I am willing to donate, to lend or whatever you call it, my materials that I have. From prison, I have unpublished photos. I am willing to help with the material and my participation, but please take that into account. Women's participation was fundamental in 68.

Nacha references the anonymous women who were deeply involved in the student movement yet never received the credit they deserved. In addition, she establishes the legacy of 1968 for women and the manner in which women continue to suffer both violence and lack of representation. Lastly, it is important to note the sense of desperation that comes across as she offers a bargaining chip: that she is willing to donate some of her materials so long as women are accurately portrayed in the *Memorial* as political actors. It is indeed a testament to what she perceives to be a lack of representation that she feels it necessary to offer something in

order to have women properly articulated. After Nacha concludes, the interviewer replies:

> I have the impression that we skipped over a few small things. I would like, Nacha, for you to tell us a few more anecdotes about the *compañeros*. I have the impression that the youth from that time was a different youth, and taking into account what you just said (and I completely agree with you) that this has to be a testimony for today's youth, I would really like it if you could try to portray what the young people were like at the time, even regardless of the political issue, what was the mood, really.

At this point, the interview continues for roughly 10 minutes more. Nonetheless, there are elements that are worth pointing about the interviewer's response that validate Nacha's fear that women will not be adequately portrayed. Whether he realizes or not, the interviewer deflects Nacha's most salient point about women's participation and the legacy that the women of 1968 left for modern women. Instead, he characterizes her concerns as "*cositas*" using the diminutive, thus, minimizing their validity in the greater context. Furthermore, his request that she share more anecdotes further reduces the importance of women's contributions to the anecdotal rather than the general. In other words, his request for anecdotes reflects the attitude that while women were certainly present in 1968, their contributions could and can be easily counted and reduced to specific instances as drops in the proverbial bucket of the student movement of 1968. Finally, his focus on a small part of what she mentions (that the museum ought to be for Mexico's youth) illustrates the very blind spots Nacha is trying to illuminate. While Nacha does in fact bring this point up, it is certainly not at the center of her plea.

Nacha's *testimonio* is not the only one that asks that certain constituencies be better represented or that express a certain sense of injustice toward the manner in which the discourse of 1968 has been constructed. Margarita Suzan, for example, recalls:

> Well, at first when we went with the brigade, I had to do things like "OK, you're going to go with that brigade and you are the only woman so go get food" until a moment when I said, "No. Why should I have to get food? This idea of connecting women-kitchen-food, no, nor am I going to go to the kitchen because I don't know how to cook and I am not going to do anything in the kitchen. Sometimes I can go to market and bring the food, but that is not my role." My role was to go with the brigades just like everyone else.

Suzan's *testimonio* identifies the inherent gendering of, not only the discourse, but of the realities of the student movement that saw a woman's place in the brigades, and within the brigades, performing traditional gender-specific roles. She does, however, also establish that such a discourse did not go unchallenged in 1968. That is to say, that she underscores that her *testimonio* is not meant to establish a revised historical record, but that it is, instead, meant to uncover and reclaim the role she and other women played. Still, what becomes abundantly clear is that Suzan, her sense of injustice notwithstanding, is proud of her participation in the brigades and the movement as a whole. This is also true of Lucy Castillo, who recalls her participation with a great deal of idealistic nostalgia:

> Yes. Look, it was such an idealistic, such an honest movement. Look, in my school there were three of us women who participated in the movement. We participated in the morning, the entire day, in other words. But around eight at night you would say, "Well, I'll see you tomorrow" because you had to be home. You couldn't imagine sleeping at school. "What do you mean you are spending the night over there? What's going on here?" That part coming from home. They wouldn't let you stay, right? The *compañeros*, it was such a strong solidarity, it was so … the movement made us brothers and sisters, right? So that when the brigades were formed and we agreed on where we were going, we determined things like "The women don't go to that factory because it's riskier for women. Better that they go on the buses or to the *mercados*." No? In other words, it was a form of protection, not paternalistic or negative, but from comrades. That bond grew and that word took on a very very strong dimension.

What emerges is the presence of a conflicted sense of self in which there is a sense of pride over what was accomplished and a type of resentment over the way these women were represented in the years that followed.

It should be stressed, however, that in reading these *testimonios*, especially of those who had already articulated different positions in years prior, the reader should resist the urge to take them as overwriting previous memories. To do so would undermine the work and agency of the student-actors and activists from the 1960s. As I have already stated, these newer recollections come from subjects whose formation included events that were unthinkable in the aftermath of the Tlatelolco massacre. Few, if any, could have then imagined a Mexico with a non-PRI presidency, a reality to those that gave their *testimonios* in 2006–2007. In that regard, these memories should not be taken

as corrections to the historical record but, instead, should be taken as additional perspectives. Furthermore, it should be noted that the source of these *testimonios* is memory, an element that the passage of time does not generally strengthen.

Finally, while most of the *testimonios* at the *Memorial* come from those who either participated as members of the student movement or were sympathetic to their cause, it is nonetheless important to mention that it also contains two *testimonios* from the negotiators for the state: Jorge de la Vega and Andrés Caso Lombardo. Their *testimonios* add a perspective to the movement that, if not unarticulated, at the very least has gone without careful consideration. Precisely, the construction of the student discourse for years relied on the erection of an easily identifiable and monolithic discourse that emanated from a single source and represented the whole of the state. While both negotiators have, at times, slightly different takes on the events that preceded the Tlatelolco massacre, both point to a complex set of actors and interests within the state. According to Caso Lombardo and de la Vega, each set of interests was competing to try to bring to a close the crisis in 1968. Caso Lombardo, for example, states that

> I don't think monolithic governments exist. I was telling you this the other day. Neither Stalin nor Hitler had monolithic governments and least of all Mexico. So there were many loose forces. There were, as the President would say, *loose devils* and everyone wanted to do what was right for them. It was a delicate situation.

And while he references Díaz Ordaz's idiom of *diablos sueltos*, with which the President alluded to foreign influences in the student movement, Caso Lombardo uses it to reference the domestic competing interests with a stake in the outcome and resolution of the student protests in 1968. De la Vega is a bit more precise when he says, "Remember that 68 was a pre-election year. Let us remember that there were very important names mentioned publicly to succeed President Diaz Ordaz." In other words, both men see the run-up to the election of 1969 as key in determining the atmosphere under which the government operated. De la Vega articulates it as "the context of political pre-struggle that was taking place in 68" and under which several well-positioned politicians were jockeying for a better position to become the next President of the Republic.

Both negotiators provide a perspective that has been absent in the construction of the student discourse that for years aligned itself against

Díaz Ordaz, Echeverria, the *Granaderos*, the PRI, and *the* state. What both Caso Lombardo and de la Vega try to make clear is that *the* state did not exist as such, echoing Aguayo's conclusion regarding the October 2 massacre. Rather, it was as much an intersection of interests as the student movement was an intersection of discourses, constituencies, and, yes, interests. Still, they see this discourse as an important part of the discourse of 1968 in the same manner that they see themselves as participants in the student movement. When asked how he perceives the movement after 40 years, Caso Lombardo responds, "It happens that when one is immersed in a social movement, one can't see. One is in the forest, but can't see. One sees the trees but not the forest. That happened to many of us who were, to some extent, involved in the movement of 68." Caso Lombardo's self-inclusion in the movement signals the belief that the discourse of 1968 ought to include a more complete and problematic set of discourses. In fact, that is precisely the pattern that has slowly become evident since 1968 and that the *Memorial* tries to capture through structure and content.

In a gesture to this complexity of voices, there are several computer terminals that invite visitors to leave their own *testimonios* that then become part of the exhibit. As one might imagine, a great number of them range from the banal and juvenile ("it's all cool I liked it a lot, the halls r cool and well the tour is not as boring w the parts of the halls that have videos There wasn't a problem in the visit, all good") to the resigned ("Well that president pays for his crimes only with house arrest seriously it's not right he murders students and he is only punished by not going out of his house oh wow what anguish don't you think"), to the thoughtful and reflective:

> Actually, I only came to see the exhibition of Josef Koudelka and came across a pleasant surprise when I saw the 68 exhibit. While it's not a movement I lived, I am the daughter of a sociology student from that era and from a young age I knew what was going on. I am surprised to see the organization and the value of this place, not only privileged but historically relevant. Now everything is clearer to me. But the question is obvious to anyone; Now what? What with those responsible for such retrograde, intolerant, and absurd act? What with the commission tasked with resolving past issues? More than 40 years have passed and the experience of those who came before us has meant very little.

Indeed, the question this young woman asks is very much at the heart of the *Memorial*. What happens next? The *Memorial del 68* ultimately tries to partially answer that question by providing a space in which the conversation

can continue by both political actors and observers. In other words, while the exhibit and *testimonios* come from the very actors who were part of the movement, the inclusion of those whose perspectives are problematic allows us to examine a more complete version of the discourse of 1968. Returning to Ruisánchez Serra's point that the museum limits interpretive possibilities, I would argue that this is not the case at all. Instead, I would argue that while conceding that the subset of voices to which one has access in the museum is indeed limited to those who played an active role in the movement, the definition of "active" has expanded to include a wider array of participants, and this shift as well as the space afforded to each actor to provide a deeper reflection about the events themselves and their role in those events makes the museum a dynamic space in which the discourse of 1968 continues to evolve.

Indeed, at the crux of this museum is that very definition of "active participant." What was to be an active participant in the 1968 student movement and its aftermath? Ultimately, the *Memorial del 68* is just another step in the evolution of this discourse and the manner in which "active participant" is defined. This step will inevitably be problematized by others as both the discourse of 1968 and its study continue to evolve. And indeed the *Memorial*'s mission would seem to signal a move toward a continuing conversation as illustrated by an invitation taken from its website:

> One of the main objectives of the *Memorial del 68* is to collect testimonies about the student movement, in order to form an archive that will contribute to a deeper understanding of the events, and update the *Memorial*'s very contents at the same time. We therefore invite anyone who might have lived the movement and wants to tell their story to contact us.

Still, it is unlikely that many more substantive *testimonios* or other contributions will surface here. That is not to say that there is not material here to further the study about the discourse of 1968. On the contrary, the material housed at the *Memorial del 68* is a proverbial gold mine that will undoubtedly make a significant impact on the way in which we study both the student movement of 1968 and its aftermath. Ultimately, its greatest contribution so far has been to give those who told their story in or shortly after 1968 the ability to retell it. Doing so, does not supplant previous versions of the story, as I have illustrated here. Instead, in retelling 1968, previously omitted stories are highlighted, previously constructed discourses are problematized, and a clearer picture begins to unfold.

7

Conclusion

In preparing this study, I have strived to include a wide variety of materials that are representative of a number of different voices and perspectives. It should also be understood, however, that the works at the center of this reflection are very much a fraction of the cultural production that needs to be studied in order to better understand the articulation of the student movement. Likewise, the approach I take is not meant to be seen as exhaustive. While González de Alba's text, for example, is very much a metahistory of the student movement as articulated by the CNH, it would be tremendously enlightening to examine the manner in which gender and sexuality shape and guide it. Likewise, even though Tita's text allows the reader a glimpse into the experience of one woman in 1968, it is nonetheless just that: one woman's recollection of her unique experience. Undoubtedly, women's experience in 1968 was much more multifaceted and complex, but until more *testimonios*, novels, essays, films, and other forms of cultural products that examine women's contributions in 1968 are produced that perspective will remain highly limited. Similarly, more nuanced and multifaceted studies are needed about the posters of 1968, which, for many, continue to be illustrative pieces rather than subjects of serious study. In regards to film, while *El grito* and *Rojo amanecer* have received praise from audiences and critics, film production around 1968 in general has garnered little academic attention, particularly because so many of the films are or were, until recently, difficult to find. Similarly, reaction to the *Memorial del 68* has revolved around what the space represents, but

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DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-55611-0_7

little has been done so far about the material it houses and what *it* contributes to the study of 1968. In all, there remains much work to be done, much material to study, and more material to be produced.

Aside from the yet to be produced materials, there remains the need to further probe and expand on the definition of the student movement in the Tlatelolco canon. Similarly, the definition and construction of the state need to be explored in greater depth so as to determine to what degree its position was fragmented. Indeed, as I briefly touched on in the final chapter, not only were there a number of different government agencies involved in the events of 1968, but each had a different stake in the manner in which the events would unfold. In that regard, a study of the student movement of 1968 is only partially complete without examining the state's machinations with the same rigor. Given the scope, the documents that would need to be examined, and the training required to do so, this type of undertaking may fall outside the purview of a literary and cultural critic. Additionally, given the manner in which, even after the archives concerning Tlatelolco were made public, some materials remained classified or simply unavailable, as Kate Doyle has shown, this type of study might well be impossible for some time.

The student movement of 1968 has long been defined as a struggle between two entities: the students and the state. Indeed, such an articulation served both sides well in that it allowed for an easily constructed opponent that each could point to in order to simplify a series of arguments constructed around a highly complex struggle. There is no question that the events of 1968 were tragic and one can certainly understand how, in the polyphony and chaos of the time, certain constituencies went unrepresented, thus leaving a skewed and incomplete vision of the student movement for the public to process. That many of these remained so after almost 40 years is an issue that needs to be addressed so that social actors involved in other struggles, and by extension, the struggles themselves, are more adequately represented in the future.

What is clear, particularly in light of the recent events of Ayotzinapa, is that the Mexican state continues to brutally repress social movements and, undoubtedly, these events will continue to influence the literary and cultural production for years to come. The challenge for literary and cultural critics will be in deciding how to address this production in the proper context and finding our role in the social, cultural, and political landscape. Must cultural critics respond to tragic events or must they respond to the cultural production resulting from them? Or is the line separating both

approaches less dramatic than it would appear? In fact, it is this ambiguity in roles that has helped define some of the key moments in Mexico's twentieth century, as it was intellectuals and critics who ultimately reported on events such as the Tlatelolco Massacre, the 1985 earthquake, and the Zapatista uprising.

In this study, I have primarily focused on questioning, stretching, and rearticulating notions of representation and articulation of "other" constituencies as they pertain to the students' discourse. Each of the texts examined here expands the definition of the student movement and the limits beset on it by previous or other definitions. It ought to be understood that, even though my approach is largely chronological, publication dates are a somewhat artificially determined element rather than a signifier of lived experience. In other words, the experience of those involved in the movement was a chaotic and ever shifting series of events that were then filtered and ordered into a narrative that, depending on the subject articulating it, was limited by ideology, culture, gender, and, ultimately, by humanity itself. These representations were further narrowed by the editors and presses that chose which perspectives to publish, thus contributing to the construction of a particular narrative. It should be underscored, however, that what I propose here is not what might otherwise be characterized as a series of Russian nesting dolls in which one work encompasses the other. In fact, that is precisely the idea I have tried to eliminate and why Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome is so important to understanding the cultural production after 1968. The works studied here are representative of a series of shifting intersections between lines of argument and planes of existence. It is precisely in these points of contact, friction, and impact that embody the rhizomatic construct through which meaning is created and that evidences an evolution beyond the isolated articulations that have defined much of the 1968 discourse.

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