

**REVOLUTION'S EFFECT ON MOVIE TITLE SEQUENCES:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIE TITLE SEQUENCES CREATED BEFORE AND
AFTER
THE REVOLUTIONS OF
CUBA (1959), IRAN (1979), AND VENEZUELA (1999)**

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DEDICATION

To my mom and dad,
for a lifetime of devotion ...

ABSTRACT

This study investigated opening title sequences of movies in relation to revolution as a sociopolitical event. The cinema industry has historically been manipulated by governments and their political ideologies. Conversely, cinematic productions, as part of public entertainment, have had remarkable cultural influence. Title sequences, by transporting audiences into a movie's story, play a part in these influences. A revolution is a defining point in time that ushers changes. This study considered three case studies, the revolutions of Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela. Six movies representing pre- and post-revolutionary cinema from each nation were examined from an aesthetic and narrative point of view. The results show that revolutions have had significant effects on movie title sequences as long as the act of making a movie is ideologically tied to the precepts of the revolution. Title sequences are responsive to technology, and advancements help filmmakers and graphic designers to make creative title sequences.

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Mahsa Miri

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

Beginning and ending have always been one of the main concerns of the human being; such as eternal, the beginning of creation, time, and inception of any phenomena. This has been the same in different forms of art such as literature, drama, performance, music, architecture, and cinema. That is to say, the concept of beginning and the way to begin have always been important matters because opening an artwork, and the method of leading the audience into that world play an important role in achievement, durability, and more tendency toward that artwork.

Cinema, as one of the important arts that includes all the other forms of arts from literature to music and fine arts, has been benefited different artists' skills in creation of an artwork. One of these areas is movie title sequences made by graphic designers. Cinema and graphic design are from the same era and both of them have had their high impacts on people's lifestyle. However, title sequences as part of the graphic design field, have not always been a main concern for the filmmakers and often marginalized by them. Despite this, a movie title sequence is as important as the cover or beginning part of a book. Movie title sequences not only introduce the cast and crew of the film but also act as windows toward the world inside the movies and transition stages from outside to inside the movies. These few minutes are the first impressions of the movie on the audience, and they decide whether they would like to watch the rest of the movie.

In this study, cinema and social events as the two intertwined concepts will be analyzed in order to discover the possible influences of revolutions on movie title sequences, as the two important parts of social events and cinema industry. For this purpose, three significant revolutions of the last century are picked as the historical marker for the analysis. These revolutions are different in their ideologies, but similar in the receiving end of American cultural imperialism and seeing some form of decolonization. The analysis shows whether the revolutions

had influenced the movie title sequences and to what extent? Also, this study seeks to determine the variations in form, narrative, and in the representation of context in movie title sequences before and after revolution.

Stanitzek (2009), in his book “Reading the Title Sequence”, describes the title sequence as part of the introduction of a film and yet at the same level as the movie announcements, commercials, chatting with neighbours in theatre, and even the popcorn: “it’s only the title sequence, the film doesn’t start yet” (Stanitzek, 2009, p.44). Perhaps, this argument has been heard many times in the movie theatres among the audience, which shows the level of public attention toward this cinematic aspect. In reality, the title sequences offer much more than this and one of the goals of this research is to highlight the importance of the title sequence and to help changing the current position of the title sequence from the marginal side of the cinema to the spotlight. This study aims to look at the title sequences from a different point of view and as a part of propaganda productions of the governments.

1.1 Defining the Concept of Movie Title Sequence

In some cases, title sequences can do as little as introduce those involved in a film’s production. However, a title sequence usually does more than either of this basic job. A title sequence is the part of a film that makes the first impression on an audience and, consequently, if successful, that audience will be predisposed to appreciate and understand the rest of the movie. One can see that there are multiple purposes for title sequences, and, as such, various approaches to their construction. From this perspective, title sequences can establish different feelings, expectations, knowledge, and information that are based on the structures of the film. Khullar (2008) states that:

Film title sequences constitute a distinct art form; one that aims to introduce the film with a strong excerpted narrative for a clear depiction of its subject. This form of visual communication involves studying the concept behind the theme, characters, storyline and

time period of a film, and the compression of this content into a fast-paced graphical encapsulation of the film in order to tease the viewer's imagination. (Khullar, 2008, p. 22)

In this research, unless otherwise specified, references to a 'title sequence' will apply only to the beginning part of a movie. The opening title sequences of the movies are an important part of films because of their functionality as a bridge between the outside and inside the movie, which prepares the audience for the content of the movie. Walter Murch states that:

The head scene of a movie is like the frame around a painting. It should keep the audience in suspense as to what the movie has and should elevate the audience's curiosity, should address the audience's emotional style, should inform the audience about the story, and should make the audience comment on the visual style of the movie to be found by the audience themselves. (Murch cit. by Krasner, 2004, p. 36)

Typically, a title sequence starts with a studio trademark logo or that of the distributor, and ends with the director's credit, however, this measurement is, perhaps, an overstatement because this cinematic paratext is not a set of events which can be parsed like grammatical syntax (Stanitzek, 2009, p. 45). Jack Post defines a title sequence as a tool that "assists the spectator to enter the fictional universe of the film while also functioning as a matrix of narrative developments to come" (Post, 2015, p. 558). Steven Spielberg's *Catch Me If You Can* (2002), with the title sequence by Kuntzel and Deygas, is a great example of this functionality of the title sequence.

The opening title on this film is a dramatic summary of the film's narrative, which includes all the elements for the audience to anticipate certain events throughout the story, preparing them for the type of the story they will experience and what might happen within the film (Figure 1.1).

Similarly, David Fincher's *Se7en* (1995), with a dark, bleak and dreadful title sequence by Kyle Copper, is an accurate reflection of the film's story, a mysterious thriller of murder, crime, and psychosis (Figure 1.2).

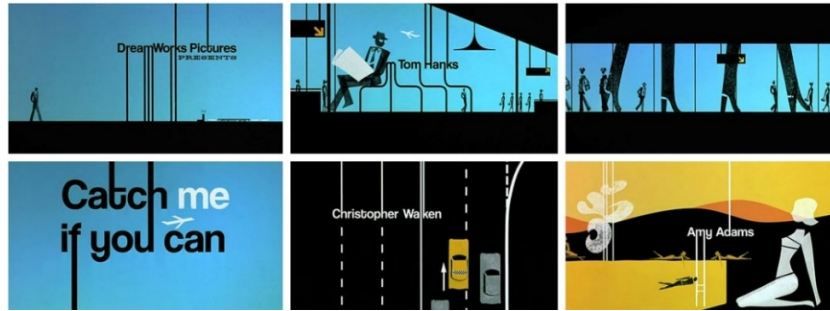


Figure 1.1. *Catch me if You Can* (Steven Spielberg, 2002) – Designed by Olivier Kuntzel and Florence Deygas.

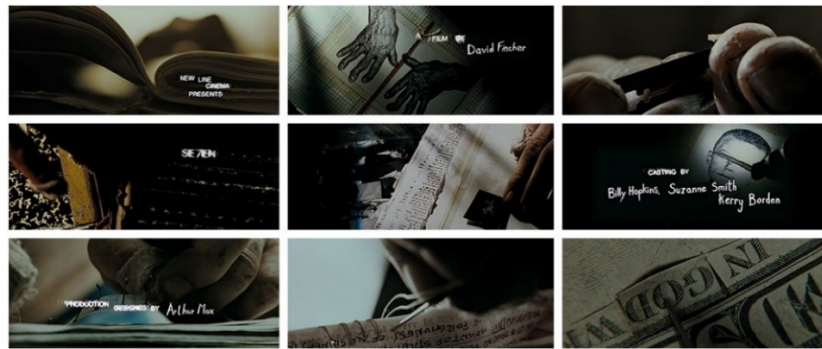


Figure 1.2. *Se7en* (David Fincher, 1995) – Designed by Kyle Cooper.

A proper title sequence, following the movie theme and sometimes the challenges of the main characters in the movie, stimulates the audience to watch and pay attention to the movie. Sometimes it is for making predictions about the movie story, sometimes for showing the aspects of different characteristics in the film; and sometimes the designer is aiming to pose questions in the audience’s mind that will be answered during the movie. A successful title sequence can affect the viewers’ intensity by pointing at what should be expected for the rest of the movie “The title sequence does not necessarily compel you to pay attention. However, it focuses on the situation of distractedness and diverging expectations, namely, in providing a focus that allows for a transition into the movie” (Stanitzek, 2009, p. 44). It often involves a combination of several elements: image, graphics, motion, and sound, and the composition of these film elements can be compared to cover of a book and first impressions on the audience and first influences of the movie start from these moments.

1.1.1 Visual Context of the Title Sequences

Historically, dramatic improvement of the cinema industry has resulted in the need for professional and skilled filmmakers and crew in different cinematic aspects. In other words, in the first few years of cinema evolution, some filmmakers such as Charlie Chaplin were able to be a writer, director, designer, actor and even musician for their movies, at the same time. However, in our current era, the enhancement of the cinema industry has made the different aspects of cinematography into more complicated jobs, which require specialized knowledge and skills. Filmmakers need a diverse experiences, education, and knowledge to be able to handle the technical and practical levels of the moviemaking. In this way, in the past, the director and editors were able to make a title sequence on the margin of the filmmaking. Nowadays, title sequence design needs significant knowledge, skill, and expertise, and it is considered as an independent task.

There are two different points of view about title sequences: in the last few decades, it was known as the identification of a movie, which introduces the movie title, casts, and crew using a combination of the texts and pictures. The modern understanding treats the title sequence as an opportunity to mentally and emotionally prepare the audiences to proceed through the movie. As a result, the primary objective of a title sequence is to tell the movie title and introduce the cast and crew of the film; and beyond that, it conveys the meaning of the story. Also, title sequences, as a piece of artwork, can be the signature of their creators. For instance, all of Woody Allen title sequences, are simple serif fonts on a black background (Figure 1.3); or Christopher Nolan's, which are all similar in terms of their colour, simplicity, and composition (Figure 1.4). This kind of integrity in a set of title sequences acts as an identity for the title sequences and signature for the creator.



Figure 1.3. Woody Allen's movie title sequences.



Figure 1.4. Christopher Nolan's movie title sequences.

In many ways a title sequence functions as a book cover which not only gives the information about the title and relevant authorship; it also attracts the curiosity of the viewers and encourage them to open up the book and start reading (Braha & Byrne, 2011, p. 1). A title sequence is a beginning of a movie that connects the viewer to the world inside the movie. This is the same functionality as Said's definition: "a 'beginning' is designated in order to indicate, clarify, or define a *later* time, place, or action. [...] *The beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning*" (Said, 1975, p. 5). The title sequence is a vital part of a movie because it catches the audience's attention at the beginning and notifies them about the content of the film. A title sequence does not necessarily depend on the movie title, however, on some occasions, the title appearance is an important part of the title sequences. For example, selecting the right typeface, a set of characters of the same design, in title sequences can make the general appearance of the title sequence relevant to the movie genre. For comedies, usually the typeface

in the title sequence is informal, comic, absurd, and sometimes illustrated with funny shapes (Figure 1.5). It is notable that dark comedies have different approaches (Figure 1.6). In any case, the motion graphic plays an important role in comic title sequences in order to improve the existing sense of humour in the sequence.



Figure 1.5. Some typefaces of comedy movies.



Figure 1.6. Black Comedies follow different approaches in their typefaces.

Usually, in documentaries, title sequences are simpler, classic, and more serious (Figure 1.7). Accordingly, various genres require different approaches in their title sequences which agree with the thematic elements of the main story.

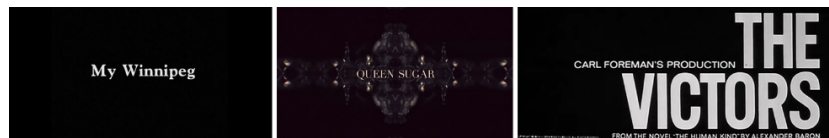


Figure 1.7. Some typefaces of documentaries.

After the Second World War, wide availability of TV sets resulted in competition between cinema and TV productions. However, cinematic productions were able to remain the

more popular type of public entertainment. This brought more attention to the quality of the cinematic productions and resulted in their improvement. Consequently, the evolution of the movie title sequences also became part of these cinematic improvements. Title sequences, as reflections of the graphic design, became a visual language shared between the designers and filmmakers. In the early years of the evolution of cinema, title sequences often were based on simple white typeface on a black background, which introduced the movie title, cast and crew of the film. These title sequences were not visually in harmony with the movie genre and theme, and often merely introduced the information about the film and the producers.

Cinema in the 20th Century, as an art-industry, attracted all different types of artists, and graphic designers were especially beneficial in the advancement and progress of this industry (Haskin & Bass, 1996). They played essential roles in formation of the cinematic productions with their participation in different areas such as visual effect design, scenic design, animation, title sequence design, poster design and advertisement. While musical and gangster movies were growing in popularity and number, filmmakers paid attention to the harmony of the typefaces in title sequences with the content of the movies, to give a vague feeling about the movie to the audience. As a result, the background and typeface in the title sequences changed based on the movie content. For instance, the typefaces in the title sequences of the musical genre have changed to the fancy and fine typefaces (Figure 1.8). In comedies, title sequences usually contained the comic typefaces, sometimes handwritten, or illustrated (Figure 1.9). The western genre contains more title sequences with bold, capital letters, and usually yellow typefaces (Figure 1.10). These changes also existed in other movie genres, such as horror, action, crime, and science fiction.



Figure 1.8. Some typefaces in musical movies



Figure 1.9. Some typefaces of comedy movies



Figure 1.10. Some typefaces of Western movie genre

As mentioned, movie title sequences are not just an introduction or advertisement for the movies, but they also convey general information about the movie to the audiences. Therefore, title sequences play a significant role in the compatibility of the film context and the audiences and act as a bridge between them. For instance, there are many movies in cinema history for which title sequences form a key part, such as *Touch of Evil* (1958, Orson Welles) or *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992, Francis Ford Coppola), which in their title sequences contain vague, and sometimes unsettling, information about the movie story and make the audiences' minds ready to go into the story. Figure 1.11 shows some images of the movie title sequence and the harmony between the movie story of murder, kidnapping, and police corruption, and dark frightful atmosphere of the title's scenes.



Figure 1.11. The image and layout composition in *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958) – Designed by Orson Welles

In some cases, title sequences became a specified component of the movies or even the best part, in terms of creativity and visual ideas, like the outstanding title sequence for *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956) by Saul Bass which is widely admired by audiences (Halas cit. in Bass & Kirkham, 2011, p. 166) (Figure 1.12).



Figure 1.12. *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Michael Anderson, 1956) – Designed by Saul Bass

Ideally, a title sequence designer works with the movie director step by step to make the title sequence in harmony with the style, story, and concept of the movie. As an example, in *Salvador* (1986, Oliver Stone), Robert Dawson uses a documentary style as the opening credit of the movie, while in *Edward Scissorhands* (1990, Tim Burton), creates a cluttered and strange title sequence, which is in harmony with the whole movie.

Sometimes, the title sequence designer cooperates with the movie composer. In *Nine Hours to Rama* (1963, Mark Robson), Saul Bass used a title sequence which shows the inside

mechanical features of a watch, and in the background, we hear a bell ring, the same bell as in the movie (Figure 1.13). The magical title sequence transforms the ordinary into extraordinary, regarding the nine hours leading up to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi (Bass & Kirkham, 2011, p. 208). Also, Bass stated

The entire title consisted of a series of close-up images of a clock face and its interior. By concentrating on these images, two things happen... we establish the intensity of the passage of each moment of time, but also the contradictory nature of time, the inexorability of the passage of each moment [...] and yet so elastic that a single moment can feel like an eternity. (Bass & Kirkham, 2011, p. 208)

Saul Bass' tendency to make extraordinary from ordinaries has resulted in many creative title sequences that could remain on top of the list of the best movie title sequences throughout the history.



Figure 1.13. *Nine Hours to Rama* (Mark Robson, 1963) – Designed by Saul Bass and Elaine Bass

1.1.2 Historical Context of the Title Sequences

Regarding the historical context of the title sequence, the early title sequences of the cinema history were made by primitive technology that simply introduced the cast and crews of the movie. *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924, Raoul Walsh) is an early example of the first title sequences in cinema which only aimed to show the movie title and the actor's name (Figure 1.14)



Figure 1.14. *The Thief of Bagdad* (1942)

In this kind of title sequence of the white texts on black backgrounds, because of the small cast and crews of the silent movies, title sequences are typically very short. However, with technology improvements in cinema, and with increases in movie lengths and size of the cast and crews, title sequences became longer and more detailed. At this time, filmmakers began to pay more attention to the title sequences and value them more than before.

In the 1930s and 1940s, plain black backgrounds of the title sequences changed to the textural backgrounds or still images related to the movie, and, simple typefaces changed to the more creative and designed ones. *Duck Soup* (1933, Leo McCarey) is a successful more complicated example of these changes: four ducks in a pot is the title sequence background of the movie, while there is nothing about the duck soup in the movie. This is Marx Brothers' typical attribute of messing with the rules and standards of the filmmaking; even about naming the movie, *Duck Soup*, which is only in the movie title and not in the story. This name and titling are not visually related to the movie or the concept. Instead, it gives the audience a sense of the humour and surrealism world of the film. Another feature of this title sequence is use of cartoon illustrations of the movie characters (Figure 1.15).



Figure 1.15. *Duck Soup* (Leo McCarey, 1933) – Unknown title sequence designer

Citizen Kane (1941, Orson Welles) is another example of a film which changed the regular trends in title sequence design. The opening title sequence is a large outlined typeface on a black background which reminds us of the news programs of that time. The main difference between this and the last title sequences is about the list of the cast and crew of the movie which appeared at the end of the film (Figure 1.16).



Figure 1.16. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) –
The first row: the opening title sequence,
the next three rows: the ending title sequences of the movie by Orson Welles

In the 1950s, when Saul Bass produced his first few title sequences, the art of title sequence design became an independent profession (Bass & Kirkham, 2011, pp. 106-111). Some title sequences like *Carmen Jones* (1954, Otto Preminger) and *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955, Otto Preminger) (Figure 1.17) by Saul Bass were the turning point in the title sequence design to change from a minor, supporting job to a true profession. Haskin believes that Bass as a graphic designer launched his film career after designing the print graphics of *The Man with the Golden Arm* (Haskin & Bass, 1996, p. 11).



Figure 1.17. *The Man with the Golden Arm* (Otto Preminger, 1955) – Designed by Saul Bass

Today, title sequences are categorized into few groups:

- The simplest types of title sequences with the texts on solid backgrounds.
- Title sequences that besides introducing the cast and crew of a movie, using picture, colour, animation and graphics techniques, give the information about the movie context and draw the viewers into the story.
- Title sequences that appear in the first sequence of the movies along with the laid-out texts on top. This is called ‘Casting title onto film’ which has been the easiest for many years (Solana & Boneu, 2007, p. 30).
- In another approach which is a new trend in today’s cinema especially Hollywood movies, the opening title sequence only shows the movie title, and all the other

information about the cast and crew appear in the ending title sequence. This was a trend after *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles) in 1941.

- Sometimes movies start without any title sequence, and everything in the title sequence comes at the end of the film. Two examples are *Apocalypse Now* (1979, Francis Ford Coppola) and *Europa* (1990, Lars von Trier).
- Another type is a title sequence without any written text and instead, a narrator narrates the title and information. *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) by Orson Welles was another start for a new trend.

In American cinema, title sequences differ depending on the movie location. The movies made in Midwestern United States had the square Serif Western typefaces; those in the Rocky Mountains, had typographies with the local typefaces and wooden patterns, and the movies from the southern deserts, usually had typography of painted typefaces on whitewashed walls. If the movie was a story about the past, the typefaces would differ with a contemporary story. Also, horror, classic, comedy, musical, and all other genres had their unique and characteristic types of typography and typeface.

1.2 Revolution as a Social Marker

Another substantial factor in this research is revolution as one of the most significant social concepts and to help to fill the gap between the concept of movie title sequence as an important part of cinematic productions and revolutions as one of the important social events in this study. Kamenka (as cited in Rajai, 1973) defines a revolution as “a sharp, sudden change in the social location of political power, expressing itself in the radical transformation of the process of government, of the official foundations of sovereignty or legitimacy and the concertation of the social order” (Rajai, 1973, p. 2). In the same book, Schrecker defines a political revolution as “an illegal change of the constitution, or indeed, since the constitution *is* the system of norms which establishes the conditions of legality, as *an illegal change of the conditions of legality*” (p. 2).

Subsequently, revolutions with all their effects that change different aspects of the society may ruin the future of the economy of a country or develop it, promote the culture of a society or abuse it for its own benefits, improve the level and speed of development in that country or decrease it. For instance, the main consequence of Islamic revolution of Iran was the rise of religion as a significant political force and the main concept behind it was not to reverse Iran's policies but to "purify" them (Stempel, 1981, pp. 311-315). This resulted in the Islamic fundamentalists get into power and reject the "westernization" of Iranian society and abandon all the efforts to modernize the country (p. 315). Rejecting modernization had significant effect on economy of the country and the Islamic Republic Party reversed the cultural policies to the religious strategies (Stempel, 1981, p. 315).

Also, scholars argue that there is a direct link between revolution and violence. In their view, the revolutionary leaders even after the revolutions and in new regimes, tend to be aggressive because they maintained their position through the violence and are biased to respond violently to the future domestic challenges even though it is not necessary (Colgan, 2012, p. 447). Overholt explains that revolutions are unlimited struggles and battle between political organizations, the government organization, and the other insurgent organizations for control of the society (Overholt, 1977, p. 494). For whatever purpose this control may be, people are the ones suffering from the revolutionary struggles because this is society that must adopt itself instantly to the most divert and rapidly changing conditions of struggle (Lenin, 1943, p. 162).

There are thousands of people all around the world whose lives have changed forever because of this social phenomenon; people who have been part of the revolutions and making the changes, or the next generations of the revolutionaries who are experiencing the post-revolutionary circumstances. As Kimmel indicates, "we live in a world in which over half of the inhabitants of the planet live in a country that has undergone a revolution in this century" (Van

Inwegen, 2011, p. 3). These features make revolutions as one of the most important social events in the world, worth considering when investigating choices of art and style.

1.3 Overview of the Thesis Chapters

This study includes five chapters: the first chapter will place the project within the broader field of film studies and describe the objectives and methodology of this research. In the next three chapters, Cuban, Iranian, and Venezuelan cinemas will be studied within their historical contexts. To do so, a list of six movies from pre- and post-revolutionary cinemas of Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela were selected to be analyzed through the two different approaches of aesthetical analysis and narrative analysis. In the first approach, all the title sequences of the six movies in each group will be examined in relation to their movie theme from the aesthetical point of view to show the connection between the aesthetical elements of the title sequences with the existent elements in the stories. In the second approach, the narratives of the title sequences will be analyzed in relation with their movie narratives to see to what extent a title sequence is a representation of the related movie narrative.

Finally, the last chapter will show the results of this analysis and try to make a coherent conclusion from theoretical and aesthetic analyses of the films made in Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela, in relation to their revolutions.

2. Chapter 2: Theoretical and Cultural Context

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Title Sequence

The title sequence of a film is like a frame around a painting; it should enhance and comment on what is ‘inside,’ alerting and sensitizing the viewer to emotional tones, the story ideas, and the visual style which will be found in the work itself.

—Walter Murch, *Motion Graphic Design*, 2008

Movie title sequences are the progressive display of texts and images that introduce the movie to the audiences (Turgut, 2012, pp. 383-384). This functionality of the title sequence might overlap with some features of film trailers as the presenters of movies. However, as Saul Bass mentions, unlike the movie trailers, which are made for marketing objectives in order to increase the movie profits in the box office, title sequences are not under commercial constraints. They are addressed to people who already bought their tickets and who are about to watch the movie (Bass cit. in Heller, Vienne, & Credo, 2012). In fact, the evolution of the film title sequence design was to represent a form of experimental filmmaking within the world of commercial motion pictures (Krasner, 2008, p. 18).

Heller defines the title sequences as the extensions of title captions and indicates that their only difference is that the design information in the title sequence can be build up in a longer time rather than appearing all at once on the screen (Heller et al., 2012, p. 89). However, a title sequence is more than that. In 1970s, title sequences were divided into two parts, the opening and ending titles. The opening title sequences were responsible for attracting the viewers’ attention, or as a musical key to set the narrative tone of the movies (Solana & Boneu, 2007, p. 16). They engage and enhance the audience by showing parts of the movie contexts, theme, and topics and with providing some information about the movie, arouse the anticipation of the events that will unfold (Braha & Byrne, 2011 and Krasner, 2004). While the ending title sequences were informative and made in order to give ditalled information about the film and producers to the

viewers. They usually included lists of names and information as simple texts on plain backgrounds rolling up or down the screen. However, nowadays, ending title sequences contain more visual and aesthetical elements and backstage videos, animated story of the film, or images of the movie characters are some of visual aspects that are added to the ending title sequences.

During the 1950s, American graphic designer Saul Bass became the leading title sequence designer of the movie industry and after his revolutionary title sequences, artists have jumped into the opportunity to integrate their ideas with the concept of the films in the opening titles (Krasner, 2004, pp. 36-37). In 1958, Alfred Hitchcock hired Saul Bass to design a title sequence for his new movie *Vertigo* (1958). With this title sequence, Saul Bass marks a turning point and forever changed the world of the title sequence design (Solana & Boneu, 2007, p. 140). Apparently, Bass' publicity designs were so dramatic that the movie director, Otto Preminger asked him to design the opening title sequence for his movie (Haskin & Bass, 1996, p. 11). Bass believed that the movies really begin on the first frame. In his interview with Haskin, Bass describes his title sequences as: "My initial thoughts about what a title could do was to set mood and to prime the underlying core of the film's story; to express the story in some metaphorical way. I saw the title as a way of conditioning the audience, so that when the film actually began, viewers would already have an emotional resonance with it" (Haskin & Bass, 1996, pp. 12-13). Bass' designs shaped complicated subjects into simple designs which presented audiences a set of clues and led them to the deeper meanings of the movie (Bass & Kirkham, 2011, p. 107): "Saul brought a Modernist design sensibility to film titles and revolutionized not only what they looked like, but also how they were thought about" (Bass & Kirkham, 2011, p. 106). Before that, the status of title sequences was so low that Saul Bass called it "a time when the film hadn't begun yet." Bass believed that a film was like a symphony that needed a mood-setting overture and he used ambiguity, layering, texture and compact imaginary to reshape the structure of the movie title sequence (p.106). In their biographical book about the legendary works of Saul Bass, Bass

and Kirkham mention his ideas about the structure, concept, and status of title sequence design. According to them, Bass believed in the dramatic role of a title sequence designer in movie production. He said that with each title design the designer is responsible for the whole movie; the concept, the visuals, the tracks, and the entire movie (p.107).

Martin Scorsese described Bass' title sequences as: "not simply unimaginative 'identification tags'—as in many films—rather, they are integral to the film as a whole. When his work comes up on the screen, the movie itself truly begins" (Haskin & Bass, 1996, p. 11). Bass believed in the intensive contribution of the title sequence to the coherence of the narrative in movies: "At one point it occurred to me that the title could make a more significant contribution to the storytelling process. It could act as a prologue. It could deal with the time before" (Academy, 2015). Thus, we can say that a title sequence is a passage that helps an audience transition from the world outside the movie to inside it (Bass & Kirkham, 2011, p. 108).

The second revolution in film title sequence design was in early 1995, when "Kyle Cooper reinvented suspense with a series of cinematic masterpieces that used the opening credits as a ploy to display disturbing collages of ominous images, manipulating, digitizing, coloring, and reengineering original material" (Heller et al., 2012, p. 156). Kyle Cooper was a graphic design student at Yale University and earned his Ph.D. under the supervision of legendary designer Paul Rand. He was interested in title sequence design since his school days and wanted to do his doctoral thesis in this field, but he had to give up this topic as it was not considered important enough at that time (Solana & Boneu, 2007, p. 256). Years later, he established his own design studio and collaborated on the designs of many movie title sequences. One of his most famous title designs belongs to the movie *Se7en* (1995) (Figure 2.2) which was named by *The New York Times Magazine* as "one of the most important innovations of the 1990s," and was, undeniably, a turning point in the history of title sequence design (Braha & Byrne, 2011, p. 57). Kyle Cooper title sequences were influenced by Pablo Ferro and Saul Bass, and he was one of the

first graphic designers who attempted to reshape the conservative motion picture industry during the 1990s by combining traditional trends in graphic design with modern technologies (Krasner, 2008, p. 21).

Se7en's movie title sequence is a good example of the functionality of title sequences in the development of meaning and in moving audiences into a movie's story. Watching sequence, we strongly feel that we are about to experience a piercing, fast, and dark movie (Braha & Byrne, 2011, p. 58). In the very beginning, the audience sees a clue about the killer in the movie and how he will get away: he removes his fingerprints with a razor blade to avoid leaving fingerprints behind (Figure 2.1). Cooper says: *Se7en* title sequence is good "because it came out of the film. I wanted to get across the idea of the killer, to make something that he would have made. That's how you want it to be. The form should be born out of the content" (Krasner, 2008, p. 58).

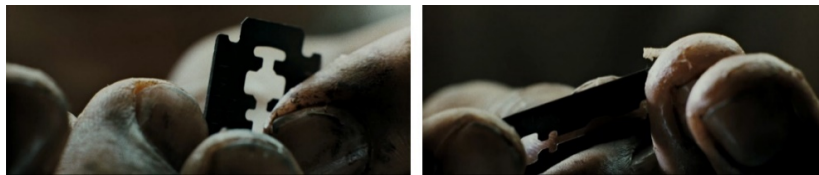


Figure 2.1. The first scene of *Se7en*'s title sequence, the murderer removes his fingerprints with a blade.

Kyle Cooper, with his knowledge in design and cinema, could combine movie direction, extensive underground culture and new prevailing typographic techniques to create some of the most important title sequences in the history of cinema (Solana & Boneu, 2007). He differentiated the concept of 'type' as a text that simply give the name and information from 'type' as a typography that gives more than that; it is a combination of infographic text and designed objects. Cooper said of his own creative experience with typography: "types are like actors to me. They have their own characteristics" (Solana & Boneu, 2007, p. 257). Kyle Cooper has the same fame and credit that puts him side-by-side with Saul Bass in the history of cinema (p. 264).

In sum, throughout history, there have always been fluctuations in the process of movie title sequences' development, and there have been many factors playing roles in these improvements. But this fact at no time changed that movie title sequences have their ambiguous impacts on the audiences and prepare their mind for what they are going to experience. Thus, what is clear is the connection between title sequences and people as the audience, and this arises the question that if the social events can affect people, can they also influence the movie title sequences as productions of filmmakers who are part of these people?

2.1.2 Revolution

Revolution is a sudden, strong, and usually violent upheaval by internal parties of a society that makes major changes in the government, associations and structures of a country. According to Walt, a revolution is:

the destruction of an existing state by members of its own society, followed by the creation of a new political order. [...] [A] revolution creates a fundamentally new state based on different values, myths, social classes, political institutions, and conceptions of the political community. (Walt, 1996, p. 12)

Huntington defines a revolution as “a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies” (Huntington, 2006, p. 264). Also, Motahari describes a revolution as an expression of rebellion for the people of a country against the existing ruling order for the purpose of establishing another status quo against the existing governmental status quo (Afshar, 1985, p. 201).

In this paper, revolution functions as a defining point in time which ushered in changes to a country. As such, the case studies in this research, Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, have all gone through revolutions, however, all with different values, political institution, and conception. Each

revolution, based on their own ideology and political polarizations, is different from another one, even in terms of political parties, and they of course have different effects on their territories. Green states: “every revolution is somewhat different from those that preceded it and contributes something new to the world revolutionary experience” (Green, 1970, p. 45). Green then cites the example of the Cuban Revolution, stating that it had been supported by the Soviet Union, socialists, national liberation, and peace forces, but the final regime was none of them. In fact, the Cuban Revolution was a communist social revolution which occurred as a result of the Batista regime in Cuba:

The rapacity of the leadership, the corruption of the Government, the brutality of the police, the regime’s indifference to the needs of the people for education, medical care, housing, for social justice and economic opportunity—all these, in Cuba as elsewhere, constituted an open invitation to revolution. (Matthews, 1961, p. 92)

According to Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolution was the first revolution in history that was supported by ninety-five percent of people because the methods were based on respect for individuals and recognition of freedom and human rights which make it a unique revolution (Goldenberg, 1965, pp. 177-178). The Cuban revolution had international, economic, and generational impact in the country. Sweig describes that the Cuban government after the revolution extended its support to different religions, consolidated control over the military, devoted the economy and capitalism, made more freedom for intellectuals and artists, and created a campaign in the island to energize the youngest generation for being part of the revolution (Sweig, 2002, p. 187). The investments of the new Cuban government have supported the cultural investigations in the country and had various impacts on the structure and productions of the Cuban national cinema. There have been many studies on the cultural changes in Cuban revolution and the influences on their national cinema, which will be described in the next

chapter. However, the impacts of this revolution on title sequences of Cuban cinema is a question that has not been raised and is still unanswered.

The revolution in Iran was different. The Iranian Revolution happened in opposition to external pressures that have always been a historic fact in Iran; and against the dependency of the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, on the west (Stempel, 1981, p. 5). Shah started his role as a weak leader in the early 1940s but later he dominated the politics and controlled the country until 1977 with no trouble (p. 6-7). Halliday (1979) attributes the central reason for the political success of the Shah in the decade to the economic strengths of the government (Halliday, 1979, p. 285). However, the economic difficulties in Iran increased in the following years and, gradually, economic disarray expanded; the Shah failed to democratize or institutionalize the political system and therefore he was incapable of coping with the economic and social changes (Stempel, 1981, p. 16). Aside from the political and economic reasons, religion was a significant factor in the Iranian Revolution. The majority of the population of Iran adhered to the Shiite faith, a branch of Islam, however, the ulama (clerics) in Iran believed that the government of Iran was not Islamic. This was the foundation of an alliance between the ulama and the people who would play a significant role in the Iranian Revolution (Stempel, 1981, p. 76).

In 1978, the regime was shaken by a nation-wide protest which revealed the depth of public anger about government policies, their continued failure to build up a stable political base, and against the years of censorship and political rhetoric in the country (Halliday, 1979, p. 288). In her book in response to the question of “the basic nature of the Iranian Revolution”, Afshar (1985) argues that the Iranian Revolution was not just liberalistic, spiritual, or political, but it was also an Islamic revolution. She says that the secret of the success of Khomeini, the Islamic leader of the revolution, was his ability among all the other party leaders, to take responsibility and fight against oppression, he expounded the fight against oppression using Islamic criteria (Afshar, 1985, pp. 201-219). Stempel (1981) believes that the creation of the mosque network allowed the

clergy society to dominate and control the revolutionary movement, and, consequently, the most important outcome of the Iranian Revolution became the rise of religion as a significant political force (Stempel, 1981, pp. 309-312). As a result, the future of the Iranian revolution was changed to an Islamic revolution by the fundamental measures taken by Khomeini who stood against the separation of religion and politics and an Islamic Republic of Iran has been established (p.209). This ideology of Khomeini about Shi'ism is a clear explanation that identifies the problems in Iranian society after its revolution (Rosen, 1985).

In Venezuela, for about 40 years, there was a political system dominated by two highly institutionalized parties until the Bolivarian Revolution, which is in many ways an extraordinary phenomenon in Venezuelan history (Hawkins, 2003, p. 1137). The Bolivarian Revolutionary Front, Chavismo, and the Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement are the terms that are used when describing the Venezuelan revolution. Ellner (1999) in Hawkin's article argues that "Chavismo has a strong leftist, anti-globalization flavor and has largely eschewed market-oriented reforms" (p.1138).

In 1983, Hugo Chávez incorporated an organized the arm forces into his political model in order to make the army a loyal supporter of his personal rules and of the Bolivarian Revolution (Kornblith, 2013, p. 58). His coup failed in 1992 and Chávez was arrested. Then, in 1998, Chávez won the presidential election and began the fourteen years of the socialist Bolivarian Revolution. Kornblith argues that the Bolivarian Revolution happened because of the fire-breathing and polarizing rhetoric that Chávez introduced to the Venezuelan public for fourteen years, along with the hegemonic and exclusionary conception of power and politics that Chavismo follows (p.58). Hawkins adds that what broke the previous political system was Chávez's attempts to restructure the national oil company, PDVSA (the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company), which was one of the few government companies that ran efficiently and also known as a pride and national wealth for Venezuela (Hawkins, 2003, p. 1144). This was one of the reasons of

conflictions between the government and the people and part of the upcoming crises and instabilities in Venezuela. Today, on the regional and international stage, Venezuela is one of the forces behind the so-called global democratic recession, and the country experiments with authoritarian and socialist approaches to democracy, political centrism, and market-based economies (Kornblith, 2013, p. 47).

2.2 The Relationship between Cinema Industry and Social Events

Through history, cinema has been an essential part of the social and cultural enrichment of society. Higgins, Ungar, and Krauss (2011) explain that the power of cinema is undeniable because it can be used constructively to highlight social issues and even to reach out to those who don't understand our culture and social norms (A. Higgins, Ungar, & Krauss, 2011). The attraction and power of influence are the main characteristics of both cinema and politics, which have spread their sphere of influence to the other areas. The need to attract people's attention provides the context for connecting governments and cinema industries; this is because the cinema depends on audiences, who are the people that politicians rule. Since the back and forth connection between cinema and politics is so strong, and there seems to be no clear boundary between these two areas, treating the two sections of 'importance of social events in the cinema industry' and 'manipulation of the cinema industry in social events' together as intertwined topics makes more sense than separating the two.

Banani argues that the role of mass media in the process of social change is to form or influence public opinion. He describes the three successive stages of mass media evolution as: preliterate, literate, and postliterate (Yar-Shater, 1971, pp. 321-322). He continues that whatever the channels of communication may have been in the preliterate stage, the press maximizes its influence in the literate stage. This revolutionizing ability of the press, in many cases, has been accompanied by political revolutions in which the press changed from a limited channel of communication to an absolute mass medium of extreme influence. This is while in the twenty-

first century, there are many phenomena happening all around the world, but not all the people are able understand the truth of these events. Few people really understand why countries are fighting and why there are racial tensions, or why millions of people die of disease and why terrorism has been created. On the other hand, artists have always been involved in various aspects of these phenomena and have been challenging different perspectives in human society with their interpretations of social issues. This participation of the artists and particularly filmmakers for informing people about the incidents all around the world can be combined by political ideologies and results in shaping a cinema industry which produces based on needs, not the realities.

Cinema and politics influence various aspects of one another, as well as other social and cultural aspects of people's lives. The political tendency of some of film producers, making movies about political parties and social events, and the manipulation of cinema in favour of certain political beliefs are some of the reasons for the interaction between film and politics. Consequently, throughout history, the cinema industry has always been affected by political and social changes in society. As Baumbach (2018) describes Walter Benjamin ideas about the relationship between the cinema industry and social events and how they cannot be separated from politics (Baumbach, 2018, p. 2). This can be seen in the United States, where propaganda films have always been a part of war and the effort to inspire people for war against an unrelenting and vicious enemy (Tzioumakis, Molloy, & ebrary, 2016, p. 151).

Cinema, as a transition tool between reality and people's perception about events, can help people better understand reality and events in order to remind them of what they can do in circumstances similar to those depicted in films. Thus, cinema can help educate and improve a society, or, it can *change* people's perception of reality. In other words, cinema, as one of the most popular and effective mass mediums, has always been used in political and ideological movements. For example, before the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Islamic forces accused the Shah of constantly spreading corruption, prostitution and abandonment, often by referring to pre-

revolutionary cinema as symbols of corruption in that community. Therefore, after the revolution, any artist, at first, was required to acquire permission from the government in order to be allowed to publish their artwork legally. This shows the importance and power of the arts for politicians in society. Consequently, it is true to say that cinema and politics, as important players in social events, affect each other and are tightly related and social events have been able to affect the cinema industry throughout history.

In this study, as a subset of the two intertwined topics of cinema and social events, I will investigate the possible changes that revolutions have on title sequences of movies. To do so, the effects of the Cuban, Iranian and Venezuelan revolutions on title sequences will be analyzed. However, these revolutions are considered as a historical marker and will not be studied as social events. The revolutions of Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela coincide on certain levels against US imperialism. Therefore, considering the effects of a revolution in art and culture, how did the process of revolution affect this other form of narrative? To what extent did these changes affect film title sequences? Did post-revolutionary titles remain the same, like their pre-revolutionary counterparts, or did they change, and if so, to what extent did they change? How do narratives of title sequences relate to their movie's narrative? How can aesthetic parts of the title sequence represent the narrative of the movie? What aesthetic elements in title sequence are able to stand for existing components of the story?

Based on the literature review and the relationship between cinema and politics, which has been there since the evolution of the cinema industry, it may be expected that to see similar changes in form, narrative, and in the representation of context in movie title sequences before and after revolution.

2.3 Methodology

As outstanding point in the history of Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela is their opposition to American Imperialism. First of all, as Foner indicates the United States' claimed its motivation to

intervene in colonial Cuba to be fundamentally humanitarian; “Spain has been until now [1898] an evil one, while the United States at this time is fulfilling for Cuba a duty for humanity and civilization” (Foner, 1972, pp.277-279). He adds later that the 1899 failed Cuban revolution against Spain happened because of the problems that the US caused for Cuba in the war, thus the revolutionaries realized that they made a mistake about the US’s goodwill. Because the United States was expanding its influence in Latin America, even this war was not an obstacle for American Imperialism. This shows that US started its search for dominance towards the end of the eighteenth and has always tried to establish its power by pretending to have a benevolence and supporting role for the governments and people. Accordingly, Hollywood, with all of its power and influences on people, was another implement for the US to expand its sphere of control. In this regard, Anderson (2007) argues that Hollywood movies deliver a mood of empire. He argues that they contribute to the advancement of the mood of American Imperialism in their stories by resonating closely the mythical frontier narrative (Anderson, 2007).

In this study, three groups of six movies from pre- and post-revolutionary cinema from of Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela were selected. Accordingly, three of the movies in each group were made before the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and the Venezuelan Revolution of 1999; the other three movies were made after those dates. The movies were selected based on their popularity, significance or aesthetic values. Also, the films were selected from a roughly thirty-year period before and after each revolution. The movies are:

Cuba (Revolution: 1959)

- 1- *El romance del Palmar* (1938). Dir. Ramón Peón
- 2- *Cuando las mujeres mandan* (1951). Dir. Joseph G. Prieto
- 3- *El megáno* (1956). Dir. Julio García Espinosa, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea
- 4- *Soy Cuba* (1964). Dir. Mikhail Kalatozov
- 5- *Lucía* (1968). Dir. Humberto Solás

6- *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968). Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

Iran (Revolution: 1979)

- 1- *Qeisar* (1969). Dir. Masoud Kimiai
- 2- *Gaav* (1969). Dir. Dariush Mehrjui
- 3- *Aghaye Halou* (1970). Dir. Dariush Mehrjui
- 4- *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz* (1986). Dir. Mohammad Motevaselani
- 5- *Bashu, Gharibeye Koochak* (1989). Dir. Bahram Beizai
- 6- *Khanei Ruye Ab* (2002). Dir. Bahman Farmanara

Venezuela (Revolution: 1999)

- 1- *Oriana* (1985). Dir. Fina Torres
- 2- *Sicario* (1994). Dir. José Novoa
- 3- *Amaneció de golpe* (1995). Dir. Carlos Azpúrua
- 4- *Maroa* (2005). Dir. Solveig Hoogesteijn
- 5- *La hora cero* (2010). Dir. Diego Velasco
- 6- *Pelo malo* (2013). Dir. Mariana Rondón

To answer the research questions, I will use two different but complementary:

1. Aesthetical analysis of the title sequence as an independent form of art.
2. Narrative analysis of the title sequence as a small form of art within a bigger narrative structure of the film.

In the first approach, different aesthetic elements in the title sequences are analyzed. These analyses show how the application of different styles help the transition to the rest of the film.

Key aspects include the *mise-en-scène*, design and composition, lighting, colouring, editing,

sound, and acting. For a better understanding of the terms using in this part of analysis, it would be beneficial to have a quick look into the general definitions:

- **Mise-en-scène:** “Includes those aspects of film that overlap with the art of theatre. Setting, lighting, costume, and the behavior of the figures. In controlling the *mise-en-scène*, the director *stages the event* for the camera” (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 1997, p. 118).
- **Cinematography:** Cinematography is the science behind the techniques involved in creating a motion picture, as well as the practical application of those techniques. However, it is not is not about the physical tools of filmmaking like the camera, dolly, the lights, cranes, and camera mounts, instead, it is about the conceptual tools of the trade. Cinematography makes use of the relationships between quickly moving images to produce a narrative arc and is based on an illusion caused by the interplay between technology and human perception (Brown, 2016, p. 3; Lee, 2012, p. 305).
- **Typography:** Typography is a visual language which documents, preserves, and replicates word-based knowledge as part of the core of modern communication design (Baines & Haslam, 2005). It is also described as “painting with words—typography as an expensive art in which the emotional content of ideas is reflected in the manipulation of the form” (p.7) (Figure 2.2).



Figure 2.2. Different typographies for movie titles in title sequences.

- Typeface and font:** Rial Costas defines that a ‘typeface’ is a set of characters with the same style while a ‘font’ is the realization of a particular typeface in a specific size. Therefore, a character of a particular font is not a character of a typeface (Rial Costas, 2016, p. 389). Figure 2.3 shows the difference between a typeface and fonts; in the left column there are two typefaces of Arial and Times, and in the right column we can see different fonts of these typefaces. Also, Serif and Sans Serif are two other parts of the typefaces. A ‘serif’ is a small line at the end of the characters and a ‘Sans Serif’ font does not include those small lines. These lines can simply change the characteristic of the typeface to a formal type (Figure 2.4).

Typeface	Font
Arial	Arial Narrow <i>Arial Narrow Italic</i> Arial Narrow Bold Arial Regular <i>Arial Italic</i> Arial Bold <i>Arial Bold Italic</i> Arial Black
Times	Times Regular <i>Times Italic</i> Times Bold <i>Times Bold Italic</i>

Figure 2.3. Typeface and font differentiation

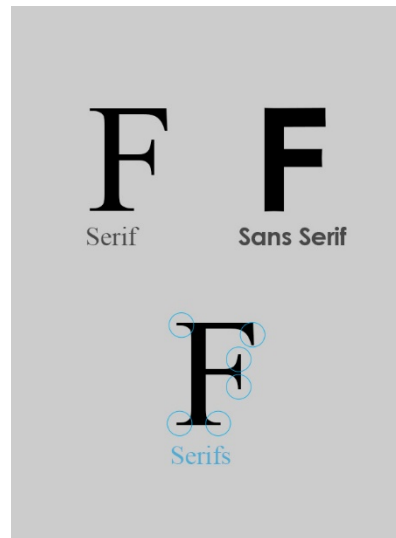


Figure 2.4. Serif and Sans Serif definition

Each of these elements in filmmaking is responsible for working in favour of the explicit and implicit meanings of film and the cooperation of these elements helps the audience better perceive the meaning. In order to analyze these aspects of the title sequences, the cinematic elements of each aspect are contextually examined. To do so, I analyse different aesthetic elements in the title sequence and examine their relevance with the movie narrative. For instance, lighting and colour, as main elements of the cinematography, are often used to imply a particular meaning based on the context of the film. Barsam and Monahan (2015) point out that the lighting of each scene suggests a direction for our emotions and helps to create a context for what we are going to experience in the film (R. Barsam & Monahan, 2015, p. 185). Thus, an effective title sequence contains lighting and colour which are the representation of the theme and feeling of the movie. The title sequence of a tragic movie is expected not to be a sharp and energetic as one in the title sequence of a comedy movie, or if a movie is historical, the lighting and colour in the title sequence is expected to reflect its period.

Typography and logotype are two fundamentals in graphic design and because of their accuracy and value, they add to the artwork as a whole. Typography and logotypes play important

roles in succedent and prominence a brand name and making interest about their products. Since typographies and logotypes are always designed after defining their target and topic, they are always relevant to the concept. Therefore, typographies and logotypes in title sequences show the attention of filmmakers toward those title sequences. It indicates that the filmmaker decided to take extra time and spend extra money to hire a graphic designer to create a special text for their movie, rather than use the already designed typefaces that are easily accessible at no cost.

Typeface can also show the theme of movies by their appearance. In other words, the typeface's characteristics are in a direct relation to the movie genre and general character. For instance, the typeface used in a comedy title sequence is different than that of a Western. A comedy needs more informal, San Serif, funny, and even comically handwriting typefaces, while Western movies can have their special typeface which is formal, Serif, Strong, and usually in yellow.

Mise-en-scène is an important factor in defining the coherence of a title sequence in relation to the movie theme. Barsam (2004) says "while cinematography initially might seem to exist solely to please our eyes with beautiful images, it is in fact an indicate language that can [...] contribute to, enhance or detract from a movie's overall meaning as much as the story, mise-en-scene, and acting do" (R. M. Barsam, 2004). In cinema productions *mise-en-scène* of the movies are based on the concepts behind the story. Setting, costume and makeup, lighting, and staging of a horror movie is expected to be different from a comedy. For instance, in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) composition of the candles setting a dark lighting resulted in a frightening and overwhelming atmosphere which fits the theme of the movie. This is also true about movie title sequences; a title sequence for a science fiction movie is usually different than a historical genre and a crime movie title sequence is usually different than a fantasy.

This is the same about the shot and cinematography that are as important as the *mise-en-scène* in movie productions and following to that, in title sequence designs. Barsam (2004) states that a

comprehensive account of cinema cannot stop with simply what is put in front of camera, but it is also about the *cinematographic quantities*. He explains that a film is not only about *what* is filmed, but *how* it is filmed.

In the analysis of each movie title sequences, I explored how each of these terms play an implicit or even direct role in representing the movie narrative.

The second part of this analysis looked at the narrative structure and the role of spectators as the final target of this process:

- **Spectator:** Or viewer or audience, according to Bordwell is not a particular person but “a hypothetical entity executing the operations relevant to constructing a story out of the film’s representation” (Bordwell, 2013, p. 30).
- **Narrative:** According to Genette “one will define narrative without difficulty as the representation of an event or sequence of events” (Genette, 1982, p. 127). Fludernik’s definition of narrative comprises argument, instructive, conversational, and reflective discourse (Ryan, 2007), and some believe that “what we get in a narrative text are not events as such, but signs, the representations of events [...] narrative is a semiotic representation of a series of events (Onega & Landa, 2014, pp. 5-6). These definitions are somewhat similar in cinematic terms. Bordwell and Thompson (1997) define narrative as “*a chain of the event linked by cause and effect and according in time and space. A narrative is what we usually mean by the term story*” (Bordwell et al., 1997, p. 79).

In title sequences, the narrative could be linked to the narrative of the film. That is, a title sequence is often illustrative of the film’s upcoming narrative but uses different conventions than the movie to narrate the movie concept, without spoiling the story. In other words, a movie and its title sequence are both pointing to the same conceptual meaning in the story, but by different aesthetical and narrative approaches. My analysis explores the connection between the narratives of the three groups of movies and their title sequences and examines to what extent the structure,

characters, time, and themes of the films exist in the title sequences. For instance, some of the title sequences introduce some characteristics of main movie characters to the audience, by the end of the opening title the viewer, consciously or not, has an idea about the character. These examinations also identify different approaches in the narration of title sequences; they show whether a title sequence adds additional information to the film, foreshadows the theme of the film, or offers details about the story to its audience. The movie list in this research is not exhaustive, nor do all title sequences necessarily include all of the points noted above; nevertheless, all existing aspects in the title sequences are examined to show that to what extent a title sequence helps a spectator move from outside the story to inside the film.

3. Chapter 3: Pre- & Post-Revolutionary Cuban Cinema

In this chapter, six movies of the pre- and post-revolutionary Cuban cinema will be analyzed. The movies were chosen based on their influence and importance in Cuban cinema history, their popularity, or critical era of their production.

In 1959, after the Cuban revolution, the Cuban regime learned from the previous totalitarian regimes that film is a powerful propaganda instrument and made a major effort to instruct the Cuban audiences in the ways of the revolution (González Echevarría, 2010, p. 243). As a result, the cinema industry has had fundamental and important influence on socio-political events in Cuba. The Cuban cinema industry enabled the politicians to lead the audiences through their ideologies of the revolution, and to introduce the social changes to the public throughout the cinema productions.

Cinema has historically been a multi-purpose tool for cultures, societies, and politics: a medium for people's entertainment, an apparatus for commercial purposes, a station for religious advertisements, and a device for children's education. A look into the history of Cuba and their cinema industry shows the influences of political and social movements on Latin American cinema. Cuban history proves the fact that political ideologies have always played a significant role in forming the characteristics of a national cinema, one which has been a powerful tool in socio-political movements (Chanan, 2004). Cuba, as a revolutionary island in the Latin American continent, has been not only influenced by cultures of other regions, such as African countries, but also by the Hollywood film industry. Hollywood introduced imperialism to Cuban cinema and led their amateur filmmakers into the commercial cinema. In other words, cinema as an ideological institution became both an aesthetic and political tool, and recognized by the market and hegemonic ideologies (Chanan, 2004).

U.S. isolated Cuba after the revolution from the rest of the world after its revolution, by imposing economic and cultural barriers, which resulted in the assertion of the creativity of social of Cuban cinema. However, the support and leadership of ICAIC (The Cuban Film Institute of Film Art and Industry) have a significant role in the evolution and development of an oppositional cinema in Cuba (Burton, 1997). The ICAIC was established in 1959 by the revolutionary government to take control of the movie business and become responsible for film production and distribution. Very soon, the ICAIC became the most successful enterprise of its kind anywhere in the South America, a model of invention in the film industry (Chanan, 1996).

The ICAIC succeeded in both economic and artistic terms. In economic terms, it was a studio with 1000 staff, producing half a dozen features per year, and a regular newsreel, all for an annual production budget of less than half the price of a single Hollywood blockbuster. In artistic terms, the vast popularity of cinema in Cuba shows that the ICAIC was rapidly catapulted to the very center of Cuban cultural politics (Chanan, 1996, p. 743). Also, the ICAIC gave priority to the documentary productions over fictional subjects because they believed that in such a Marxism-Leninism society, the creative activities would be based on confrontation with material realities (Burton, 1997). Cuban documentary production can be divided into five thematic categories: domestic politics, historical, cultural, international relations, and didactic documentaries. Consequently, the influences of the two central themes in Cuban cinema (fictional and documentary production, and history and underdevelopment) despite their limitations, resulted in a freedom for filmmakers which can be referred as an ‘advantage of disadvantage’ (p. 128).

When discussing Cuban cinema, it is important to consider the argument of the ‘imperfect cinema’, which is a claim against capitalization and its further issues. At the end of 1960s, Julio García Espinosa began the argument for a committed form of filmmaking entitled ‘imperfect cinema’, which made a strength of its economic limitations (Chanan, 1996, p. 744). In different articles, Espinosa defined this concept of ‘imperfect’ and stated that although art is essentially a

disinterested activity, when it is necessary it has to express interests, and this makes it an imperfect art. In fact, “the ‘imperfections’ García Espinosa was urging be put into practice went well beyond the technical aspect. Instead, he advocated the creation of a new form of filmmaking which would offer an alternative to the dominant or ‘perfect’ cinema from Hollywood” (O. Rodríguez, 2012, p. 175). Rodríguez explains that in García Espinosa’s model, Hollywood productions create an illusion of reality by masking the reality with cinematographic language and “the first point of departure from ‘perfect’ cinema is to be found in cinematic language” (p. 175). In García Espinosa’s opinion there are three critical problems in the Latin American Cinema:

1. Addressee: Films have almost always been made for the public, which means the people who are not participating in the social movements but for those who are expected to become aware and participate in these movements. García Espinosa refuses this strategy and believes that making movies for aware audiences “who are indeed in the course of producing changes” is far more effective.
2. Quality: The quality of cinema in relation to contemporaneity and authenticity is to produce an image without make up; this attitude of showing the reality is what produces modernity and contemporarily in the cinema.
3. The economy of waste: The influence of capitalist countries can incite Latin American filmmakers to unnecessary consumption. They are capitalists and consume what is produced by the capitalist world, but don’t let the underdeveloped countries produce for themselves effectively, which results in great waste of resources and labour power (García Espinosa, 1985, pp. 84-85).

Espinosa indicates that changing this situation and aspiring to being on the same level as developed countries requires a new cultural order to help people to understand what the new economic order means precisely. In other words, he believes that we can see the traces of

capitalism and colonialization of the developed countries in the problems in Latin American countries. In another article, he defines imperfect cinema, as a new trend which differs from the traditional beliefs of the cinema. Its concern is the member of the audience who struggles for life and fights for changes: people who make a revolution (García Espinosa, 1997). It is a cinema that shows the process, as opposed to the result, by using various genres and styles, from documentary to the fictional, and its only measure of judgment is to what extent a filmmaker could overcome the barrier of the cultured elite audience. Therefore, revolutionary movies are not as “beautifully illustrated” as films from other cinemas like Hollywood. Imperfect cinema’s main concern is to show the process of a problem such as a revolution. Although dark and pessimistic, this is the primary objective of such movies: show the reality in a right way to the audiences who are in fact, producers of these performances (García Espinosa, 1997, pp. 71-81). However, the values of Latin American imperfect cinema became superficial as a result of engagement with commercial goals which tends to lead the audience to passive consumption (Chanan, 2004). This sense of incompleteness without the audience is what Espinosa means by imperfection (Chanan, 2004, p. 305).

The historical analysis of Cuban cinema shows the devastating effects of foreign interference in formation and evolution of a national cinema. The influences of Hollywood on the cinema industry of underdeveloped countries such as Cuba, resulted in years of delay in establishment a national cinema. With the coming of sound, a new development strongly influenced the pre-revolutionary Cuban cinema, and when Hollywood began making films in Spanish in order to keep the Spanish language market for itself, and Cuban cinema seemed to be one of the best targets (Chanan, 2004). At that point, Cuban cinema seemed to need a “white horse” to save it (‘white horse’ in Latin America has the same meaning as ‘angel’ in English) (pp. 68-89). However, it seems that the national filmmakers’ endeavors have always been the only

“white horses” of cinema who are either in the role of individual filmmakers or non-profit institutions tries to save their national cinema.

3.1 *El romance del palmar (It Happened in Havana)*, 1938

1h 53min | Romance, Comedy

Director: Ramón Peón

Writers: Luana Alcañiz, Juan Torena, Rita Montaner

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

El romance del palmar is one of the first movies after the Cuban silent cinema. Roman Peon, one of the most prolific directors of silent films in Cuba, made the first full-length musical movie *El Romance del Palmar* in 1938. He spent the early 1930s in Hollywood and until the 1960s he worked periodically in the Mexican film industry. Peon became a direct conduit for the international interest for tropical exoticism and Cuban-oriented plots as well as Cuban popular music and dance by hiring Cuban stage performers, writers, composers, and scenographers for his films (S. Thomas, 2016, p. 9). His films helped to popularize not only Cuban performances for Latin American audiences but also the stars of the Cuban stage.

El Romance del Palmar's significance in Cuban cinema is not only because of the cinematic aspects of the movie but because of the popularity of the movie as one of the first sound films in Cuba. After introducing Vitaphone (the first sound system in cinema) in 1926 by Warner Brothers, the owners of movie theaters tended to update their equipment to screen sound films. This technical leap was a turning point and the end of silent era in the Cuban cinema (Henken, Celaya, & Castellanos, 2013, pp. 351-352). In addition, the appearance of actors Carlos Badias and Rita Montaner gave the film tremendous popularity. "Rita Montaner [was] a fabulously famous singer and actress who was a beautiful light mulatta musician with classical training; [...]" In technical terms *El romance del palmar* is an excellent film, with superb photography and sets" (González Echevarría, 2010, p. 222). The movie for many years had the record of the highest-grossing film produced on the island (EcuRed, 2009).

3.1.1 Movie Synopsis

El Romance del Palmar is the story of an innocent girl named Faith who after losing her guardian moves to Havana with a group of women who are looking jobs (Figure 3.1). She falls in love and is seduced by a professional womanizer Alberto, who betrays and abandons her (Figure 3.2). Destitute of her virtue, she ends up becoming a cabaret singer; but when her father who came to the city searching for Faith finds her, she returns home with her father (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.1. Peasant Faith decides to leave the countryside and move to Havana.



Figure 3.2. Faith is in love with Alberto who betrays and abandons her later.



Figure 3.3. Faith becomes a cabaret singer, but her father notices his daughter's hardships and returns her home.

3.1.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

El Romance del Palmar represents the patriotic emblems of Cuba and symbols of the aspirations of the Cuban Republic for social justice, peace and racial harmony. In the movie,

Havana appears as a prosperous city; enormous, with abundant parks, impressive statues of national heroes, the imposing National Theater, the arresting Presidential Palace, the Capitol building (a copy of the one in Washington) and lavish cabarets (González Echevarría, 2010, p. 221).

Aside from the economic and political points of the film, *El romance del palmar* contains local color as the peasants sing their songs, ride their horses, and enjoy the parties. As a classical comedy, there are two couples in the story; one the protagonists and the other one a clumsy Spanish driver and a guajira. All these elements are part of the celebration of Cuban nationality that is the core of the film (González Echevarría, 2010, pp. 210-222). *El Romance del Palmer* “offers a window to the socio-political situation of ethnic citizens in Cuba and the social treatment they received” (Font & Tinajero, 2016, p. 214).

3.1.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The title sequence starts with the production company logo, a full painted artwork (Figure 3.4). Then, the main actress' name in a designed typography appears on an abstract patterned background (Figure 3.5). The movie title is in a script typeface in a fluid stroke. In the opening, a sense of feminine feeling comes out on a painting in the background; the painting shows beautiful Cuba, with swaying palm trees and their reflection in the water (Figure 3.6). Following this, the director's and producer's names appear in a designed frame, a common style of typographies of the 1930s (Figure 3.7). In the next scripts, the *mise-en-scène* of the background and musical elements illustrates a sense of musical concept related to the movie story. For example, typographies and visual elements of one title card includes musical patterns (stave) with the words “Números Musicales” instead of the musical notes (Figure 3.8). The rest of the names of the cast and crew of the movie are written in a milder typeface, still a designed one but not as dramatic as the first few typographies (Figure 3.9).



Figure 3.4. The first screen image of the title sequence.



Figure 3.5. The typography in the title sequence.



Figure 3.6. The designed movie title.



Figure 3.7. A common style of using frames for title sequence design in 1930s.



Figure 3.8. The background and musical elements in the title sequence.

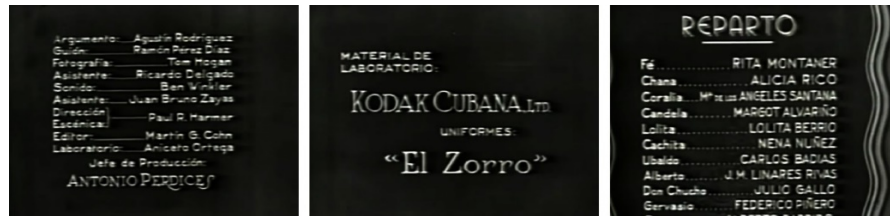


Figure 3.9. Typeface in the title sequence.

3.1.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence:

El Romance del Palmar is a black-and-white sequence of white text on the paintings or black backgrounds. Despite the fact that the movie and title sequence were made in the early years of the cinema evolution, and considering the available technology of the time, the movie title sequence can convey the theme and context of the movie, which is mainly because of the *mise-en-scène* of the frames and use of visual elements related to the movie context. The texts are represented in professional typographies, composition, and elements in the title sequence and in

harmony with the context of the movie. In other words, the typographies are strong enough that the aesthetic part of the title sequence outweighs its inconsistencies like lack of background images related to the movie elements. All the typographies are designed and composed in a stereotypical feminine way that may makes the audience feel and expect the coming story to be related to a woman. Although, there is a lack of cinematographic elements in the title sequence. Compare to the other title sequences of the same era, and considering all the limitations in technology and production, the title sequence seems to be one of the successful efforts in movie title sequence design in 1930s.

3.2 *Cuando las mujeres mandan (When Women Rule)*, 1951

1h 34min | Musical, Comedy

Director: Joseph G. Prieto

Writers: José Fernández, Armando Pérez-Blanco

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Cuando las mujeres mandan is a Cuban comedy that tells the story of women's power and connects it to the concept of revolution. It is one of the few Cuban productions of the 1950s that was popular mainly because of the comic verve of Garrido and Piñero. Alberto Garrido was a Cuban actor, comedian, and dancer who stood out in the first half of the twentieth century. He formed a partnership with Federico Piñero and performed for the national radio and later National Television (The Cuban History, 2018).

1951 was a record year for Cuban films, with fourteen feature-length films shot (Osuna, 2003, p. 34). Jose Gonzalez Prieto shot *Cuando las mujeres mandan*, a comedy starring a few of the most famous Latin American comedians: Garrido and Pinero from Cuban cinema, and two famous Mexican comedians Tin Tan and Marcelo (p. 34). These comedians feature one of the most legendary comedy acts of Cuban cinema.

3.2.1 Movie Synopsis

Cuando las mujeres mandan is the story of two Cuban soldiers (Garrido and Piñero) in the Korean War who escape from the war on a passenger plane (Figure 3.10). The plane crash-lands into an island, but the two soldiers survive. After a while, they realize that they have fallen in a Caribbean island governed by a group of beautiful women. In this female-dominated society, males considered as enemies and the two newcomers are promptly imprisoned (Figure 3.11) Two of the lead women fall in love with the soldiers but after being treated by these women as sex

toys, the men end up managing a revolution for gender equality (Figure 3.12). At the end, their cause succeeds, and the government changes the rules to gender equality.



Figure 3.10. Two soldiers escape from the war by a passenger plane.



Figure 3.11. Their plane crashes in a Caribbean island and they are immediately imprisoned as enemies.

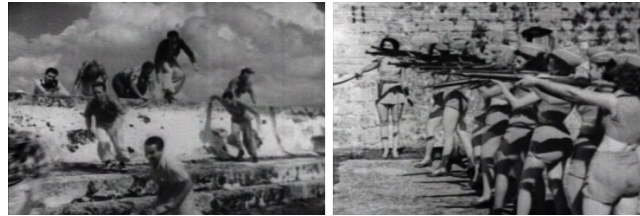


Figure 3.12. The soldiers manage a revolution for equality.

3.2.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Cuando las mujeres mandan deals ironically with the imbalanced results of gender inequality or gender bias in a society. The comedy shows women taking power and men following their rules; so, men do all the housework and chores which in some other places are known as women's tasks. But the men start a revolt to bring back everything to 'normal' (Osuna, 2003, p. 73). The storyline was a response to sociological dialogues of 1950s and it is full of lines

about revolution, counterrevolution, and human rights and this becomes more interesting considering that the movie was made one year before Batista's coup in 1952 (Morales, n.d-a).

3.2.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Cuando las mujeres mandan's title sequence is made of a series of screen images including the texts and illustrations related to the movie. The sequence of all screen images tells the story of the movie in an indirect way. Illustrations are made based on the actual characters of the film, and each screen image shows one part of the whole story (Figure 3.13). Title sequence starts with two men escaping from bombardment and continues by some women dressed in dancing outfits or semi-military uniforms (Figure 3.14). With regards to *mise-en-scène*, the composition of the illustrations and their connection with the text make a title sequence that follows the visual and conceptual elements in the movie.



Figure 3.13. The title sequence is a series of illustrations based on the movie characters and story.



Figure 3.14. The title sequence follows the movie storyline.

All the texts in the title sequence, including the movie title, are designed as comic typeface, Sans Serif, and informal (Figure 3.15). There are different types of fonts (bold, italic, capital) in the typeface in order to emphasize differences between the two genders (Figure 3.16).

In each page, the texts are laid out based on the illustrations and make an appropriate composition in the frame (Figure 3.17).



Figure 3.15. The designed typeface in the title sequence.



Figure 3.16. Different fonts of the typeface.



Figure 3.17. Composition of the texts and illustrations in the page.

3.2.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

In *Cuando las mujeres manda*'s title sequence, the main and most effective parts are the illustrations: The illustrations are based on the actual characters, and their sequence provides a quick look at the whole movie. In terms of *mise-en-scène*, the characters are drawn in an easily identifiable costume and style. Each screen images refers to a story between the movie characters; their love, fights, arguments, and challenges. The whole title sequence depicts the conflictions between men and women in the movie. Many of the pages show them running after each other or fighting and arguing. Some characters have military guns in hand, and some others carry

kitchenware such as a pan and rolling pin (Figure 3.18). These images present some sarcasm about gender differences and general chores and household work, which were previously subjected to women.

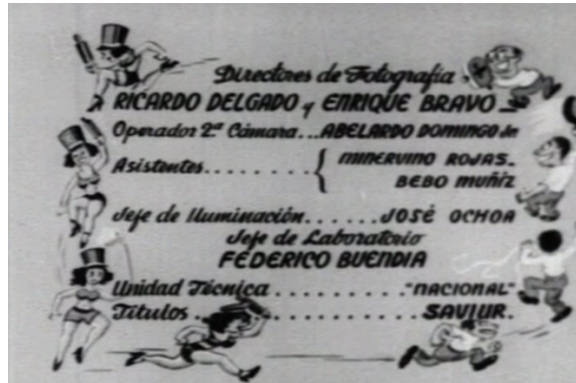


Figure 3.18. The illustrations in the title sequence show sarcasm about gender inequality in the story.

Cuando las mujeres manda's title sequence seems to be successful in showing the main elements of the film and leads the audience into the story. The *mise-en-scène* of the title sequence including the illustrations are strengths of the title sequence, successful in their role in making a transitional stage between outside and inside the story. Also, the comic font and layout design of the whole sequence provides an overview of the whole title sequence. However, considering the type of the title sequence, which includes the title cards and still images, there is a lack of cinematographic elements in the title sequence.

3.3 *El mégano*, 1955

25 min | Documentary, Short movie

Directors: Julio García Espinosa, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

Writers: Alfredo Guevara, José Massip

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

El mégano is one of the precursors of the revolutionary Cuban cinema, and all of those who collaborated in its production, notably Julio García Espinosa and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, became the central core of the ICAIC (A. A. Rodríguez, 2006, p. 1). Gutiérrez Alea and García Espinosa returned to Cuba from Italy inspired by Italian Neo-realism and together they made the short movie *El mégano*. According to Chanan (2004), the movie became an instigator for rebellion when it was seized by Batista's police after the first screening at the University of Havana (Chanan, 2004, p. 110).

El mégano is considered one of the movies that were part of the origin of the New Latin American Cinema Movement (Morales, n.d-b). During the 1940s and 1950s, the main role of Cuban cinema was to provide images and imagination of exotic places, sensual women and a tropical environment, elements dominantly used by producers in the United States and Mexico. The main purpose was propaganda films, commercial films, news and some technical or scientific films for a specific audience. Also, erotic cinema played an important role in these productions (Morales, n.d-b). *El mégano* with a representative view of the realities of the Cuban society at its time and following the realistic structure of the Italian Neo-realism cinema represented a semi-documentary about the economic and social status of part of the Cuban society. The movie is an important document for the Cuban national cinema regarding its artistic merits and the social values portrayed.

3.3.1 Movie Synopsis

El mégano is the story of poverty and struggles of charcoal workers in Cuba. The movie shows inhumane living and working conditions of the coalmen and the exploitation of this peasant labour by their employers (Figure 3.19). The extremely low payment for their hard work results in a conflict between landowners and workers. The movie ends with the resolution of a future solution (Figure 3.20).



Figure 3.19. So-called Charcoal workers but Slavery workers in reality.



Figure 3.20. Charcoal workers get upset after being paid extremely low wages.

3.3.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

El mégano manifested the social problems of manipulation of the cinema as a complementary tool for political purposes and created its own national image to escape from the shadows of commercial cinema (Totaro, 2012, p. 81). Julio García Espinosa expressed years later about *El mégano*: “Today I see it as a naïve film with a very simplistic version of reality... but there is still something good and valid about it; the need to express reality in a critical term not for the pleasure of the repressive bodies” (EcuRed, 2018).

El mégano depicts the unseen layers of the society who became part of the revolution. The underprivileged worker level of the society, neither of intellectuals nor of capitalists who could ‘see’ the problems in the society and establish the ideology of a revolution, but the actual part of the society who really could really ‘feel’ the injustice and corruptions of the system. In the last scene, the charcoal worker’s wife who always waved her hand for the tourists and looked welcoming to them, stopped waving her hand for them, (Figure 3.21) and the charcoal worker squeezes his payment bill in his fist (Figure 3.22). This scene interprets the concept of an ongoing conflict resulting in a future cause.



Figure 3.21. Top: The charcoal worker's wife greets the tourists - Bottom: She is not welcoming to the tourists anymore.



Figure 3.22. Charcoal worker next to his wife. He is angry at being paid unfairly.

3.3.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

In *El mégano*, the title sequence starts with a scene of an old man sitting in the water. When the second man joins him and starts working with the woods in the water, we realize that they are workers in the river (Figure 3.23). Then, the movie title “*El mégano*” appears in a designed font with wood texture (Figure 3.24), and following that, we see the scenes of the river, villages, and the small huts. There are not any people around the village but the smoke coming out from the huts shows that life is going on in the area (Figure 3.25). Then a person working in the village and a man riding a gondola appear. The camera follows the gondola into the river and passes through the riparian plants (Figure 3.26).

With reference to cinematography, title sequence includes the longshots of the river and village and medium long shots (a shot framed between a medium and long shot) of the charcoal workers. Regarding the *Mise-en-scène*, setting and costume of the title sequence demonstrate a general sense of the movie environment about the charcoal workers and their issues.



Figure 3.23. *El mégano* title sequence; Charcoal workers in the river.



Figure 3.24. The designed movie title in wood texture.



Figure 3.25. Scenes of the river, village, and huts.



Figure 3.26. The ending scene of the title sequence.

The typeface in the title sequence is an informal Sans Serif typeface in white color and in the Bold font. The first group of the texts are nicely laid out based on the river line in the background image and the rest of them are left aligned in the frame (Figure 3.27).



Figure 3.27. The font and layout of the texts in the title sequence.

3.3.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The components of *El mégano*'s title sequence components represent the main elements of the movie story: charcoal workers and poverty. The first scene of the title sequence shows a charcoal worker sitting in the river, his body is under the water and he is calmly smoking. He is sitting still in the river without any movement as if he is living there (Figure 3.28). Then we see the second worker join him and start working with wood. Following that, there are scenes of the small huts in the village that visibly indicate poverty. This sequence of differently aged people doing hard work in the river, and the small disadvantaged huts, give a sense of injustice and slavery work from the beginning and take us through the main story (Figure 3.29). In the very first image of the Figure 3.27, we see the text is laid out based on the river route; this can imply that to what extent this river is important for the workers and they work, move, decide, and live based on that; in other words, as if their whole life depends on that.

All the scenes of the river are with the gondola ridden by a man. So, we know that the story will happen in this village, and it is about the workers and the gondola rider, who is the landowner (Figure 3.30). Later, when we go through the story, we realize that the gondola riders are the tourists or landowners, who are in general privileged.



Figure 3.28. Charcoal worker sitting immobile in the water.



Figure 3.29. Differently aged workers doing hard work in the river.



Figure 3.30. The landowner on the gondola.

The movie title also visibly represents the context of the movie (Figure 3.24). The designed logo “El megano” with wood texture incorporates the meaning of the title “the charcoal worker”.

In *El mégano*, the actual charcoal workers and their families from the Zapata swamps play their own lives on screen (Rist, 2005). Although *El mégano* has a narrative structure of a fiction film, the neo-realistic elements of the movie contribute a documentary flavor to the work. The aesthetic elements such as *mise-en-scène* include such attributes; for example, setting and costume including location shooting, dramatized episodes of diversion, such as children playing, non-sync sound. Also, grainy film stock plays an important role in adding a documentary sense to the title sequence and movie.

3.4 *Soy Cuba (I am Cuba)*, 1964

1h 48min | Drama, History, War

Director: Mikhail Kalatozov

Writers: Enrique Pineda Barnet, Evgeniy Evtushenko

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Soy Cuba is an anti-American propaganda movie now regarded as one of the most important productions of Cuban cinema. The movie was a collaborative Soviet-Cuban production made in 1965, but one which flopped both commercially and critically, and was largely unknown until the 1990s, when it came to the attention of Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola (Thakkar, 2014, p. 83). The movie includes four unrelated stories of ordinary Cubans and class conflict that, at the end, lead them all to support the revolution (Iordanova, 1997, p. 125). The stories are told in beautiful sequences of typical luxuriant landscapes, with a female voiceover discoursing the rape of her land and the suffering of the people. This female voice is also the connection between the four episodes of the film.

“*I am Cuba* was nothing less than a complete popular and critical failure [...], and in Cuba, it came to be dubbed ‘*I am not Cuba*’ dismissed as both aesthetically pretentious and culturally distant” (Oukaderova, 2014, p. 4). The movie continued to be isolated until it was re-released in an international event organized by Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola and the movie finally achieved the critical success as “one of the most stylistically vigorous films of all time” (Oukaderova, 2014, p. 4). As Iordanova (1997) states in her article, the most extraordinary significance about this film is the cinematography, which is one of the most innovative and resourceful in the history of cinematography (Iordanova, 1997, p. 125). *Soy Cuba* also follows anti-realist techniques; the extraordinary cameraman in the movie, Sergei Urusevsky, created

some of the most spectacular sequences shots of cinema history (Nagib, 2007, p. 85) (Figure 3.31).



Figure 3.31. Some of the outstanding shots by Sergi Urusevsky.

According to Ferraz,

For Urusevsky the photography had to embody Cuba, and each photogram had to sparkle like sugar giving the palm trees and cane fields an almost silvery tone. To capture the Caribbean light, he used an infra-red negative, which at the time was used exclusively by the Soviet army. (Thakkar, 2014, p. 98)

Also, the movie director and cinematographer were among the most celebrated figures of contemporary Soviet cinema, and the screenwriter of the movie was one of the most famous Soviet Poets of his generation.

3.4.1 Movie Synopsis

Soy Cuba contains four different short stories of Cuban people and their suffering. The first episode is the story of a girl named Maria who is in love with Pedro and wants to marry him, but she is forced to prostitute herself to American tourists because of poverty (Figure 3.32). The second episode is the story of an old farmer who is working hard in a sugarcane plantation, but when the landowners sell the field, he is outraged and set fire to the land (Figure 3.33).



Figure 3.32. Episode 1; Maria is in love with Pedro but she becomes a prostitute because of poverty.



Figure 3.33. Episode 2; The old farmer burns the sugarcane field after he realises that the field is sold to the others.

The next story is about revolutionary students and their protest at Havana University. One of the students becomes stuck in a situation that could lead to a decision to kill a police guard. He decides not to kill him, but he is killed by that guard instead (Figure 3.34). The last episode is a story of Cuban soldiers climbing up the Sierra Maestra. On their way, they meet a farmer and his family and ask the farmer to join them in the war. He rejects their request at first, but when the government's planes destroy his home and kill his son by bombing his land, he decides to join the revolution (Figure 3.35).



Figure 3.34. Episode 3; Revolutionary students and their protests in Havana University.



Figure 3.35. Episode 4; A farmer joins the revolutionary forces after his child is killed in aerial bombing.

3.4.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

The first episode depicts the gratification of the wealthy American tourists in the luxury hotels, casinos and clubs of Havana (capital city of Cuba) (Figure 3.36). In addition, that shows the devastation and misery of the Cubans which lead them to the trap of corruption and prostitution (Figure 3.37). The first episode portrays the wealthy Americans who look at Cuba just as a brothel. The second episode shows the domination of the American companies, their greed to take over more and more of the sugarcane fields, and to persecute the Cuban farmers who resist American ownership. In the third episode, we see the significant role of the revolutionary students and Fidel Castro in the Cuban revolution. The last episode is the story of a pacifist Cuban, who does not believe in the revolution, but after he loses his child in the air bombing by the Batista army forces, he joins the Castro's revolutionary forces. This episode shows that everyone in a revolutionary country is involved in the revolution, not by choice, but by circumstances or by force.



Figure 3.36. American tourists in luxurious hotels.



Figure 3.37. Poverty and devastation of Cubans.

3.4.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

In *Soy Cuba*'s title sequence cinematography is the prominent aspect of the aesthetic aspect. It is framed in an aerial view of the lands and natural features of Cuba and the camera, using a wide shot, floats over the oceans, islands, beaches, trees, and hills and shows the peaceful nature of Cuba, much of it with no human existence, and no civilization (Figure 3.38). The camera movement and framing help the viewers to have the best observation of the Cuban lands. Also, in terms of *mise-en-scène*, the sharp transition between the setting of the title sequence of the nature of Cuba and the beginning sequence of the movie of the wealthy civilized foreigners draws viewers' attention to a contrast that is the concept behind the movie. The title sequence ends before a white wooden cross at the seashore, an inscription which shows Christopher Columbus' visit to the island (Nagib, 2007, p. 81) (Figure 3.39).



Figure 3.38. Camera movement and framing in *Soy Cuba* title sequence.



Figure 3.39. Title sequence ends on the white wooden cross that shows Christopher Columbus' visit to the island.

The typeface used in the movie title sequence is an informal Sans Serif, and semi-handwritten font which appears to conflict with the serious tone of the movie. Considering the styled layout of the texts in the frame and superimposed over the background images, this ‘error’ in choosing the typeface in the title sequence, might be either as a result of the common trends in the graphic designs of that time or because of the mandatory decisions by the producers (Figure 3.40).



Figure 3.40. The using typeface in the title sequence.

On the other hand, the movie title is a designed logotype and different from the rest of the texts (Figure 3.41). It appears as a very revolutionary looking style similar to common styles of the Soviet propaganda posters. The strong, bold, and sharp logotype and even the angle of the logo follow the style of logotypes in the Russian posters (Figure 3.42).



Figure 3.41. Movie title in the style of Soviet revolutionary posters.



Figure 3.42. Some examples of the Soviet propaganda posters.

3.4.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

In the opening title sequence, we see a view of a peaceful and splendid land. Using an aerial shot, the camera shows the beauty of a land as it represents the origin of the country, while we will next face the truth of the country when it comes to the cities and people. In this case, the title sequence does not act as a starter for the movie which would make the audience mentally ready to watch the rest of the movie; instead, it shows a view that is far different from the reality. Thus, right after the title sequence and when the beginning sequence starts, the audience feel the contrast between the reality and truth of Cuba which makes it a profitable country for those in power, and the truth of that which is the grandeur and beauty of its land. Oukaderova (2014) describes *Soy Cuba*'s title sequence as:

[It] focuses on space as an unfolding agency with its first establishing shot [...]; the camera glides over the ocean, approaches the island, and moves into its depths, flowing effortlessly over beaches, trees, rivers, hills, and valleys. This four-minute opening sequence announces the film as a tale above all of spaces and movements, and of human protagonists as they exist within and through these. (Oukaderova, 2014, p. 5)

In addition, the designed logotype of the movie title, in a different typeface, strong, sharp, and large, is in opposition with the text typeface, which is in harmony with the context of the movie.

The movie's title sequence plays a vital role in showing the contrasts and oppositions in

movie context. The combination of cinematography and *mise-en-scène* make an effective transition between the peaceful title sequence and the hectic movie beginning sequence, which acts as a turning point in the story that shocks the audience and attracts their attention. This uncommon function of the title sequence meaningfully helps the audience to better understand and feel the tragedy of domination by showing the differences of a peaceful land and dominated country. “In *I Am Cuba* colonial domination is presented from the outset as the invasion of a virgin land. The camera seems to be constantly diving into and penetrating this woman-country from above or outside, and investigating its interior with a foreign, fascinated gaze” (Nagib, 2007, p. 87) which is the same story about the title sequence.

Soy Cuba's title sequence by representation the dominant view over Cuba as a profitable beautiful country, and also by showing the contrast between reality and truth in the country, is an example of a post-revolutionary cinema production that is influenced by the social changes. However, it might not be an illustrative example of the changes in the post-revolutionary Cuban cinema, since the movie is a co-production of Cuban and Russian filmmakers. Also, the revolutionary movie title is another strength point in the title sequence that could successfully convey the feeling of the combat and opposition. Although, the Russian style of it proves that the title sequence is designed by a Russian designer.

3.5 *Lucía*, 1968

2h 40min | Drama 68 (Cuba)

Director: Humberto Solás

Writers: Julio García Espinosa, Nelson Rodríguez

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Lucía is one of the outstanding productions of the ICAIC. It was a successful production which defined and supported the ideas of Cuban revolution and represents the birth of the Golden Age of the Cuban Cinema (Martin & Paddington, 2001, p. 3). The movie was beloved both in Cuba and in the other countries and won the Gold Medal at the Moscow Film Festival in 1969.

“Spanning nearly 70 years of Cuban history, this extraordinary movie focuses on three generations of women whose lives reflect the society around them” (Sayre, 1974). However, Solas in an interview stated that “*Lucía* is not a film about women; it's a film about society. But within that society, I chose the most vulnerable character, the one who is most transparently affected at any given moment by contradictions and changes” (P. A. Rodríguez, 2008, p. 129). He thinks that after 40 years of the Cuban revolution that there are more women than men in technical occupations, education, and medicine, and they have their stable and strong status in the society, it does not make any longer sense to make a movie about the of women in Cuban society to support them; so his movies are not women films (Martin & Paddington, 2001, p. 12).

Due to the restrictions against Cuba the films was not released in the USA until 1974 (Hoberman, 2018). Nora Sayre wrote in *The New York Times* that “‘Lucia, 196 . . .’ might be seen by all the sexes: it's the best discussion of equality (and inequality) I've seen on screen” (Sayre, 1974). For Aisemberg (2012), *Lucía* is another way to experiment with the exchanges and articulate the subjectivity of the revolution, through a documentary style. The three stories in the movie represent the tensions and relations between the intimacy of feelings and revolutionary

events. The film is also important because of the representation of Cuban women from different classes (Aisemberg, 2012, pp. 14-15).

While ICAIC sought reconstruction of the Cuban identity as part of the neo-colonization, the American film companies in Cuba were more interested in the commercial aspects and stereotypical images of the country. Amidst this juncture, the most important film of the decade regarding female representation was *Lucía*, which also adhered to the memorial spirit of that moment (Suárez et al., 2016, p. 123). The post-revolutionary Cuban cinema was an effort to represent a new image of women, as more than just objects of pleasure in the male gaze, and following this pattern, Solás produces *Lucía*, a film that shows three women in three historical stages of Cuba, but all characterized by a strength and prominence that did not have precedents in Cuban cinematography (Hernández, p. 31).

3.5.1 Movie Synopsis

The movie tells the story of three women named Lucia in three different time periods of Cuban wars. The first story is set in the 1890s' war of independence. Lucia, a wealthy aristocrat, falls in love with a Spanish stranger who claims to be apolitical, but in fact, he is a spy of the Spanish government. He uses Lucia to reveal the location of the Cuban revolutionaries, including Lucia's brother who is one of them (Figure 3.43).



Figure 3.43. *The Lucía of 1895, an aristocrat who falls in love with a Spanish spy.*

The second Lucia, a delicate and educated daughter of a middle-class family in Cuba in the early 1930s, lives during the uprising against the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. Lucia is in

love with Aldo, a young revolutionary who involves her in revolutionary meetings. When Lucia and Aldo realize that the new regime is as corrupt as the last one, they attempt one last attack against the new regime before they die (Figure 3.44).



Figure 3.44. *The Lucia of 1932*, the daughter of a middle-class family who falls in love with Aldo, a revolutionary.

The last story takes place in the post-revolution 1960s and is about a young field worker. She marries a cruel man named Tomas who does not let her work or be seen by people. This Lucia is locked at home and her only connection with the outside world is a young local revolutionary who teaches her reading as part of Castor's Cuban Literacy Campaign. He informs Lucia that her husband is abusing her, and she is not a slave and should be treated appropriately. In the end, Lucia escapes and goes back to the fields, but her husband finds her and convinces her to return home (Figure 3.45).



Figure 3.45. *The Lucia of 1960s*, a field worker who marries Tomas, a traditional Cuban.

3.5.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Lucía is a historical epic that tried to reaffirm a national culture and a search for originality, and Solás chose the woman as the protagonist of his stories in Lucia because women culturally have been the first victims in all the transformations in societies (Hernández, 2006, p. 31). In *Lucía*, each story has its own style and, each Lucia represents a different social class. The

first part is a story of love and betrayal set against the war between the Spanish empire and Cuban guerrillas; the second Lucia, unlike the first one, tries to engage in the revolution rather than escape; and the third Lucia trades labour for servitude and tries to assert herself against a traditional macho husband who tells her “I’m the Revolution” (Hoberman, 2018). In fact, in *Lucía*, Solás establishes a parallelism between the struggles of each one of Las Lucías and the crises of different periods in Cuban history. These three women belonged to different social classes: the first belongs to the upper class, the second to the middle class and the third to the working class (Hernández, 2006). *Lucía* focuses on class struggles in Cuba by portraying the experiences of three different women living through three political upheavals of Cuban history (Hood, 2018). The movie could professionally depict the violence and intensity of revolutionary periods through the feminine tone of the story.

3.5.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Lucía’s title sequence follows the primary examples of title cards in cinema: black-and-white title sequences including the simple texts on a plain background. The title sequence starts with the movie title and ends with a dedication note: “a Mercedes” (to Mercedes) (Figure 3.46).



Figure 3.46. The first and last scene of the title sequence.

All the texts including the movie title are a basic Serif typeface and all are in black on the white background and center aligned (Figure 3.47) except the last word of the title sequence (a Mercedes) which is handwritten.

Regarding the cinematography, title sequence lacks the aesthetical elements to represent the movie storyline, concept, or characters.

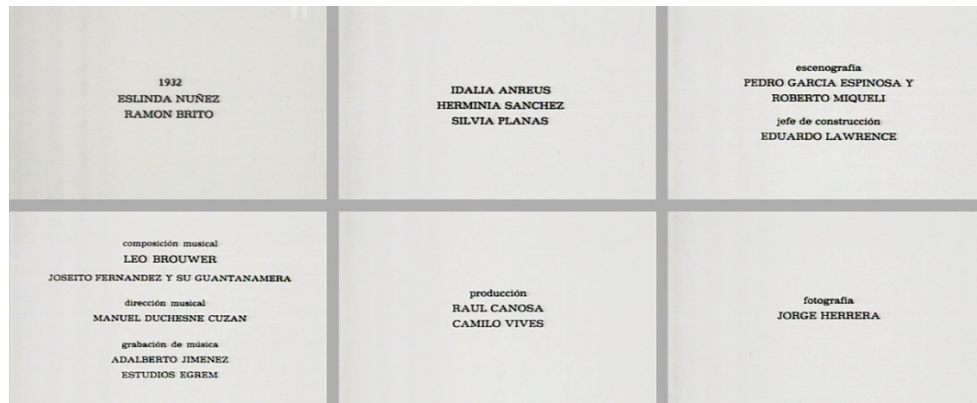


Figure 3.47. The typeface used in the title sequence.

3.5.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The movie title sequence plays its primary role of introducing the cast and crew of the movie. Although, considering the lack of cinematographic elements, it does not have the other features common in title sequences such as introducing the story and character and dragging the audiences' attention into the story. Its simplicity and minimalistic style fit the main concept of the movie which is to show the purity of many women's souls who have been suffering during the social movements.

Regarding the *mise-en-scène*, choosing the white background instead of the regular black backgrounds of this kind of title sequence adds a more feminine sense (in color psychology, is the symbol of purity, innocence, and feminine). This difference between the norm of this style of title sequences of *Lucia*'s title sequence can signal the variances in the movie storyline. Last but not least, the word "to Mercedes" at the end of the title sequence, in an elaborate hand-written typeface, is a fine transition from the title sequence to the story. This is because the typeface of the text, is in a delicate, playful, and fantasy typeface, which are specifications of the feminine typefaces in graphic design.

The *Lucía*'s title sequence implies the movie information in a simple way in order to show the innocence and purity of the women characters of the story. *Lucía*'s three segments of the movie reflect the scars that history impresses on the female soul (Fuentes, p. 125) and the plain minimal style of the title sequence can convey the sense of purity and pureness of those souls in the story.

3.6 *Memorias del subdesarrollo (Memories of Underdevelopment)*, 1968

1h 37min | Drama

Director: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

Writers: Edmundo Desnoes (novel), Edmundo Desnoes (screenplay)

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Memorias del subdesarrollo had great success in theatres in the US after the first release in 1973 (Burton, 1977, p. 187). The movie is categorized as drama, semi-documentary because of some of its documentary elements: camera shots (including tracking and handheld shots), sound (environmental sounds of the streets and public), and real images and scenes of revolutionary events. As Alea in an interview indicated, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* as a post-revolution movie of Cuban cinema, is profoundly affected by Italian Neo-Realism cinema and presents changes in the Cuban society, including poverty, domination, injustice, and desperation. He believes that the movie “can lead us to a conscious grasp of what underdevelopment means in economic, cultural, and ideological terms” (Alea's interview in Burton, 1977, p. 210)

Memorias del subdesarrollo is one of the most successful movies of the post-revolution Cuban cinema. The movie was well-understood both in Cuba and the US and it was one of the first and foremost Cuban movies that could also connect to the Cuban audiences rather than only with the audiences in other countries (Burton, 1977). The movie is unique in terms of being admired from the both Cuban and American audiences. Burton in his interview with the movie director, Tomas Gutiérrez Alea, also states that although it is quite regular that feature films be produced based on a novel, the particular adaption of the *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is unique. Gutiérrez Alea, in response to this statement claims that some sequences of the movie did not even exist in the original novel and he added them to the story because he felt the need to replace some parts of the novels with the more relevant things (Burton, 1977, p. 189). *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is one of those movies in which the problems initially described in the movie are

not resolved at the end of the film, instead, they are extended beyond the movie theaters and allow the audiences' minds to develop the final conclusion of the movie in their consciousness and reflect on them by the film (Alea, Chanan, & Desnoes, 1990, p. 211).

3.6.1 Movie Synopsis

Memorias del subdesarrollo is the story of Sergio, an apolitical writer who lives in Cuba after the revolution. He decides to stay in Cuba even after his wife Carla and his family and friends left the country to relocate to the US (Figure 3.48). During the movie, he recalls his memories of Carla and their arguments, his friend Pablo and their journey through the brothels, and his first love Hanna (Figure 3.49). He also meets Elena, a fifteen-year-old aspiring actress and makes love to her but when he realizes that she is under-aged, stays away from her. However, he gets in trouble because of this illegal relationship but he eventually survives it (Figure 3.50). At the conclusion of the movie we do not see what happens to Sergio and the movie has an open end.



Figure 3.48. Sergio's family and friends leave the country.



Figure 3.49. Sergio remembers his memories of his wife, his friend, and his first love.

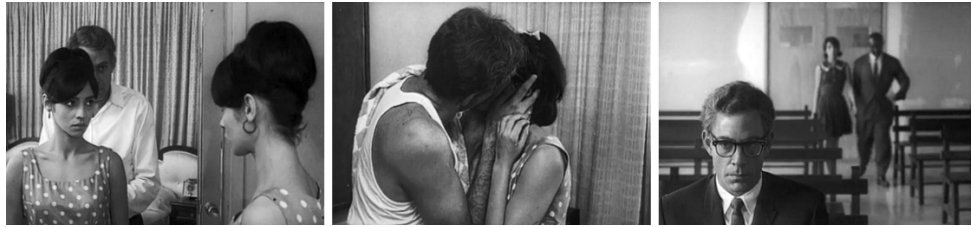


Figure 3.50. Sergio gets in trouble because of his illegal relationship with underage Elena.

3.6.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Memorias del subdesarrollo amalgamates two different genres; one is a drama about Sergio's existential alienation, and the other one is a background documentary about Cuban society changing through the revolution and history. The movie presents an elaborate way of narration using the spoken discourse, moving in time through Sergio's memories.

Sergio is a wealthy man who challenges a new reality after his wife left and seems not to have any concern about current struggles of his society. He is an apolitical bourgeois living in a Marxist society and spends his time in observing from his apartment balcony with a telescope or by walking in the streets of Havana. The telescope becomes a symbol of his alienation from his environment (Figure 3.51). The scene in which Sergio comes across a group of people marching in the opposite direction of their way (Figure 3.52) shows him as a person who is always heading in a different direction from the others (Burton, 1977, p. 189). This personal courageous confrontation of the director with the Cuban revolution is what struck audiences favourably about the movie.



Figure 3.51. Sergio observes the city from his apartment balcony with a telescope.



Figure 3.52. Sergio walks in opposite direction of a group of people marching in street.

Burton indicates that:

Sergio is a bourgeois who has nothing in common with the man in the streets, the worker, the peasant, the revolutionary intellectuals. Yet we discover that not only the revolutionary intellectual but also the ordinary employee find reason enough to identify with him. (Burton, 1977, p. 209)

He is both ‘with’ and ‘separated from’ the people and society and this is implied in the sequences in which he is walking among dark-skinned people (the skin colour can be an index of class in Latin American societies) and his appearance is different from the others. Sergio believes that revolution is responsible for all complications and it is an unprofitable action. He lives in a revolutionary country but is not part of the revolution. As he said: ‘In underdevelopment, things are forgotten, people are inconsistent. But you remember too many things, too much... you’re nothing, you’re dead’. One could say, “the very goal of the film is to question the survival of the values of bourgeois ideology in midst of the revolution” (Alea et al., 1990, p. 210).

3.6.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The movie title sequence starts with a scene of the *happy Cuba*: medium and close-up shots of people dancing, singing, and laughing in the street; they look happy and without concern until a gun is fired (Figure 3.53). A crowd disperses and frightened people are running around; but the music is still playing, and singers are singing. Among the crowd, someone is shot and has fallen on the ground. People stay still and look at him for a moment (Figure 3.54). A few

policemen come into the crowd and carry away the dead body. The scared people are now back to their previous relaxed condition; they continue dancing and singing as if nothing happened, as if all of them were hypnotized and now awake. The camera stops on a dancer's face, a close-up of a woman looking into camera with her impassive face, but fearful eyes (Figure 3.55).



Figure 3.53. People are dancing and singing in the street.



Figure 3.54. Someone is shot among the crowd.



Figure 3.55. People continue dancing after he is carried away by policemen.

The typeface used in the title sequence is Sans Serif in Regular font that compare to the common fonts of that era, it is more professional-looking and novel. All the texts included in the movie title are in the same typeface and in white color. The multiple lines are left-aligned and in a nice composition with the background image (Figure 3.56).



Figure 3.56. The typeface and layout in the title sequence.

3.6.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The *Memorias del subdesarrollo*'s title sequence depicts the story of passive people living within a revolution. These are people who are the targets of the revolution, merely because of being part of the revolutionary society, but they are not part of the revolutionary activities. These people stay aside from the protesters, and watch their struggles, challenges, fights, and deaths. This is apparent in the scene in which one of the revolutionaries among the crowd is shot by the police and falls to the ground. No one helps him, and instead, they are surrounding and watching his dead body. Later, in a similar scene in the movie we see that Sergio was one of these people. This interrupts their happiness for few moments, but they are back to the party immediately after the dead body is carried away as if nothing has happened or they do not care about it. However, the ending scene of the title sequence implies a conflict. This scene features unemotional face of one of the dancers with the fear in her eyes in contradiction with her cheering dance. This fearful look conveys the fact that a revolution involves all the people in the society; either they want to be part of the revolution or not, or they may have ideologies similar to the revolutionaries or not. It is impossible for a country to go through a revolution without suffering in some parts or the whole society; may it is the worker levels or the bourgeois. As Gutiérrez Alea

states about his movie, “the very goal of the movie is to question the survival of the bourgeois ideology in the midst of the revolution” (Alea et al., 1990, p. 210).

On the other hand, the movie title sequence appears to be narratively and aesthetically separated from the movie story. The movie story begins with Sergio saying goodbye to his family whereas in the title sequence, we see a party that will happen in the future. In other words, the movie does not begin where the story begins but starts in the future. This placement of the future in the beginning of the movie makes a time circulation between the past and future in the story, which considering the common feature of the title sequence for preparing the audience for the movie story, this is an unusual way to start the movie.

In terms of narrative, title sequence shows a scene of dancing, happiness, craziness, crowded, and music, which are in opposition with Sergio’s organized, proper, and restrained character who does not connect to the people dancing and singing; according to what he says in the movie, they are what make Cuba backward and underdeveloped. He chooses to stay, so, he does not identify himself with people leaving nor with Cuban and this is why he cannot find a place for him. This is the reason for many scenes in the movie showing his alienation and separation from people.

Aesthetically, the title sequence is disconnected to the movie as the visual theme of the movie is not related to dancing nor crimes that happen in the title sequence. Correspondingly, we do not see any party, crowded, dancing, and music in Sergio’s life. Also, the cinematography in the title sequence is separated from the whole movie as we do not see any of the extreme close-up shots of the title sequence during the movie. Also, considering the concept behind the movie, a close-up shot fits a thriller movie title sequence that unfolds over many faceted points of view and wants to convey this feeling (Braha & Byrne, 2011, p. 238), while *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is not a thriller movie, nor any of the people in the title sequence are the main actors, just Sergio, who is not clearly shown in the title sequence. In the title sequence, the camera does not make any

effort to frame Sergio in a way that the audience identifies the characters clearly. He just passes by and camera follows him from the back. There is no effort to fix the characters and no identification of them, instead, it fixes on the music, crowd, and the woman at the end. The title sequence, not in terms of cinematography and *mise-en-scène*, nor the narrative, does not seem to prepare the audience for the movie story, and it appears irrelevant to the ideological backwardness on which the movie is built. The audience has to watch the entire movie to understand and connect the title sequence to the movie. This distinguishes this title sequence from the common norm of the title sequence

The title sequence of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* implies the very primary goal of the movie, to question how people of one level of the society live *within* the revolution but do not consider themselves *with* the people. The title sequence strongly shows the differences between ideologies of people who are living in one society, but mentally far different from each other. The scene of a man being shot among the crowd and being surrounded by passive people, shows that to what extent people's social ideologies and their concerns can be different to the extent that they do not care about each other's lives.

Memorias del subdesarrollo's title sequence is a complex intellectual experience for the audience to understand the form of the movie. The narrative structure and the form of title sequence does not seem to prepare the audience for the story. The main plot presents the struggles of Sergio, an affluent storeowner who is not committed to the changes in Cuba but cannot decide to leave the island either. Title sequence does not show any element related to this plot or the main character, and the story of the party in the title sequence does not have a chronological continuation with the movie's storyline. These differences separate this title sequence from the standard norm since it does not prepare the viewer for what is going to happen. However, even though the elements in the title sequences seem irrelevant to the movie story, they connect to the general theme developed in the movie, such as the idea of underdevelopment and backwardness.

The title sequence symbolically is relevant to the movie content; from the people parting in the streets to the native black woman in the last scene who are the symbols of Cuba in the foreign point of view.

3.7 Conclusion

Looking at the history of Cuba, the Cuban film industry before the revolution was not producing significant indigenous films (González Echevarría, 2010, p. 221). Before the Cuban revolution and the establishment of the ICAIC, the majority of films in Cuba had been either productions of the cinema industries of the other countries or advertisements by western interests to show the commercial opportunities of Cuba as a beautiful and exotic island.

After the revolution the tendency to amalgamate arts, including cinema, among the Cuban audiences was increased because the cinema industry was strictly directed by the ICAIC (González Echevarría, 2010). Although the ICAIC was the institution responding to the political demands of the regime, at the same time, it played a major role in the improvement and creation of a national cinema. The ICAIC main effort was to counter the influences of Hollywood on Cuban cinema and audience and often referred to it as the enemy (p. 243). These efforts have affected the classic way of movie narration in pre-revolutionary Cuban cinema. Title sequences were not separated, and they have changed in terms of narrative. The analysis of the six movies made before and after the Cuban revolution shows that the title sequences of the pre-revolution Cuban cinema follow a common function that seems not to be the same as the post-revolutionary title sequences. Among the case studies of this research, the two title sequences of *Soy Cuba* (1964) and *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) do not follow the common and standard ways of the pre-revolutionary title sequences. This change might be an indirect link to the Cuban revolution and because of the ICAIC, which was the only institution created by the Cuban government. The ICAIC was not just a site for production the films, but an institution, which was actively involved in the pursuit of a new aesthetics. They aimed for making movies that are both revolutionary and Cuban, and as a result, they did not put much emphasis on fiction for many years as documentaries are ideologically closer to reality and therefore to struggle that is the base of revolutions. Although, they eventually realized the significant influence of the fiction and

started their investigations on the “Cuban and revolutionary” movies, which might be the reason that title sequences have been changed in Cuban cinema.

Soy Cuba is a co-production of the Russian and Cuban cinema, and this is significant that one of the two title sequences that show a hint of revolutionary tendencies involves Russians in its production. Also, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is often called the most important movie in Cuban cinema history made by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, one of the leading directors of the ICAIC. This suggests that as the ICAIC was involved in creating a new aesthetic, and their directors could create very distinctive films, these efforts overflowed and affected the title sequences of the post-revolution cinema. Cuban movie title sequences, along with the movie industry have been growing since the evolution of their cinema industry and Cuban filmmakers, despite all the barriers and variations in the country as a result of political and social instabilities, have been committed to the title sequence design of their movies and paid their especial attention toward this feature.

4. Chapter 4: Pre- & Post-Revolutionary Iranian Cinema

Cinema in Iran is an imported industry in Iran in which all the strategies and structures of filmmaking have come from the other countries, mostly from the west. Therefore, the western cinema as the first influencer for Iranian cinema has been the primary source of inspiration for the movie makers, and title sequence design was part of this benchmark (Saeedi Pour, 2010, p. 11). In 1900, the fifth Qajar king of Iran, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar, imported a cinematograph machine to the country for his own curiosity and entertainment, but this became a beginning for the Iranian cinema industry (Sadr, 2006, p. 9). At that time, cinema was under the supervision of the government and it mostly filmed everyday life of the royal family (Sadr, 2006, p. 10). As a result, Iranian cinemagoers did not have the opportunity to experience movies until 1912 when public cinemas were in place (Saeedi Pour, 2010, p. 99). The first Iranian feature-length movie *Abi and Rabi* was made in 1930. The opening title of this movie with a set of paintings by Fredrick Thalberg in the background was the first title sequence in Iranian cinema (Saeedi Pour, 2010, p. 99). In the early years of the Iranian cinema, title sequences were often simple handwritten scripts on white sheets introducing the name of filmmakers and technical assistants. They paid little attention to the concept of the movie story. This trend continued until 1957 when *A Party in Hell (Shabneshini dar Jahanam)* deconstructed the traditional methods of the title sequences and brought the attention to the craft form of the movie by making a title sequence based on the main theme and elements of the movie story (Saeedi Pour, 2010, p. 100).

The new wave of Iranian cinema started in 1969, which resulted in the cooperation of graphic designers and directors in making a new type of title sequence in terms of technique and expression. From the late 1950s some of the intellectuals including the writers and poets who had already been involved in establishment of the New Poetry era in Iran, produced some socially conscious films including documentaries and fiction. These efforts resulted in the foundation of the Alternative Cinema in Iran, known as a Iranian New Wave Cinema to the rest of the world

(Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010, p. 32). The New Wave of Iranian cinema made a radical shift by releasing three movies: *The Cow* by Dariush Mehrjuyee, *Qeysar* by Masoud Kimiai and *Calm in Front of Others* by Naser Taqvaie. These three movies set off a new trend distant from *film-e farsi*, the commercial films made under the Pahlavi regime. *Film-e farsi* is a “pejorative term of reference for the popular melodramatic cinema which often featured song and dance routines in imitation of Indian cinema” (Golestan cit. in Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010, p. 32). These three filmmakers contributed to the growth and creation of an artistic and cultural cinema and “were often critical of the cultural/social predicaments of the country. They underscored the social/economic problems that the regime attempted to gloss over veneer of modernization” (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010, p. 33). It is notable that *film-e farsi* or “tough-guy genre” (Atwood, 2016, p. 137) has not disappeared even after the revolution. It still exists and is going on in specific forms and different conditions.

During this period of the New Wave, Masoud Kimiai’s *Qeysar*, with a new type of opening title sequence by Abbas Kiarostami, was one of the movies that changed title sequence designing in Iranian cinema. The movie title sequence demonstrated a distinct titling method, using the paintings of Farshid Mesghali and led the way to the recognition of the critical role of graphic designers in the cinema industry. Some others such as the *Mr. Gulible* title sequence by Mehrjoui, imply the central concept of the story by using the main visual elements of the movie and an impressive graphical method involving time-based imagery of the main character. Other professional graphic designers, such as Morteza Momayez, assisted in establishing the conventions of titling in Iranian cinema before the revolution. These efforts for improving titling in Iranian cinema were concurrent with the professionalization of title sequence design in the world cinema by experienced graphic designers.

However, much of the creative and exploratory ideas for improving the cinema industry in Iran changed as a result of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The strict censorships by the leaders or empowered groups of the Islamic Revolution proved that politics reduces the scope for

creativity and results in the fact that Iranian filmmakers can only work in certain genres because some ideas are off limits. For many years, the government imposed strict political restrictions on the artists. The censorship restrictions forbid almost all physical gestures of romanticism, limited the movie subjects to government's preferences, and banned women's singing or dancing on screen (Naficy, 2011, p. 162). This idea was generated from the impression that pre-revolutionary Iranian and imported films were a threat to the public morals (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010, p. 34).

Despite many limitations from the government for filmmakers, after-revolution New Wave was the extension of the pre-Revolutionary New Wave in a logical manner. The particular value of the New Wave cinema in Iran was its artistic tendencies which had its delayed effects on titling. They were not copying any other titles and drew their structure from the film subject. It especially happened after 1985 with *Bashu*, *The Little Stranger* by Beyzaie, *Mirza Nowrooz's Shoes* by Motevaselani in 1986, and *Cold Roads* by Jozani in 1986; all movies had title sequences made by professional graphic designers such as Ebrahim Haghighi and Abbas Kiarostami. They were new and unique in the Iranian cinema in terms of subject and form.

4.1 *Qeysar*, 1969

1h 40m | Crime, Drama

Director: Masud Kimiai

Writer: Masud Kimiai

Title Sequence designer: Abbas KiaRostami

Qeysar tells a story of people in underprivileged Tehran. The film was the top seller in box office at the time and became a cultural wave and caught the attention of the Iranian audience. The film was very popular with critics and popular audiences: whether it was because of its anarchic, revolutionary, and defiant concept, its realistic portrait of ordinary lives, or its naturalistic look at characters' habits, audiences seemed to feel sympathy for the main character and his hardships and challenges. Thanks to the movie's popularity among Iranian youngsters the main character (*Qeysar*) became a role model for the youths for many years and a source of inspiration for many of the *film-e farsi* made after. *Qeysar* was admired by both the public and filmmakers' society, even the *film-e-farsi* producers. This is why the movie was named by the critics as "the rebirth of Iranian cinema" (Amini Najafi, 2010).

Qeysar is an important movie in the history of Iranian cinema not only because of its role in the Iranian New Wave of Cinema, but also in terms of its influence on the exploding revolutionary society of Iran. *Qeysar* was the first sharp criticism about the sociopolitical situation in Iran; the situation that resulted in a revolution ten years later. One of the main implicit meanings of the movie is the spontaneity of the actions among the people who were against the anomalies of the system. This is the status of the Iranian people at that time who were going through the revolution gradually. *Qeysar* had a significant impact on the role of newcomer filmmakers and increased the reliance of the industry on young filmmakers. *Qeysar* did not remain as a typical cinematic production. Instead, it became known as a significant example of

cult movie in Iranian cinema, and also as an outstanding symbol of the tense condition of the Iranian society at the time.

4.1.1 Movie Synopsis

Fati, the young daughter of an Iranian traditional family, commits suicide to protect her family's honor after being raped by Mansour. When her family realizes the reason behind her suicide, Fardoon, Fati's older brother, decides to get revenge for his sister's death (Figure 4.1). However, he is killed during a fight with Mansour's brothers. Qeysar, the younger brother of Fati and Fardoon, comes back to the city and finds out about his siblings' deaths. He decides to take vengeance by himself and does not rely on the police. His mother and uncle try to stop him to save his life, but they fail because Qeysar does not trust the corrupt police forces. At the end, Qeysar kills Mansour and his two brothers one after another and is then arrested by the police (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.1. *Qeysar* (1969), Masoud Kimiai.



Figure 4.2. *Qeysar* decides to take vengeance.

4.1.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Qeysar is Kimiai's "most famous tough-guy film" (Atwood, 2016, p. 137). It was one of the first few pre-revolutionary movies with a bitter ending. *Qeysar*'s tragic death at the end, while he is smiling, shows his satisfaction about the revenge and resistance against the law. This scene can be seen as a reference to the anger and armed rebellion of Iranian youngsters who were fighting in the streets. Mir Ehsan, a cinema critic, says: *Qeysar*'s knife has the same application for him as the youths and intellectuals in that period who were seeking their problem solutions in the streets and by fights (Mir Ehsan cit. in Jahed, 2015).

The concept of *Qeysar*'s rebellion against the law and injustice referred to the heroic story of *Shahnameh*, a series of national epic-heroic poems written by Ferdowsi, known as "the Homer of Persia" and considered the most brilliant Persian epic poet. "*Shahnameh* or The Epic of Kings is [still after about 1,000 years] one of the definite classics of the world" (Iran Chamber Society, n.d; Lewis, 2015, p. 315). The enduring popularity of text is in part due to Ferdowsi's decision to create a book of poems based on the epic national stories in 'pure' Persian language. 'Pure' in this case means that despite the massive influence of the Arabic language on Persian, Ferdowsi created a book with no admixture of the Arabic language.

4.1.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Qeysar is exceptional in that it is one of the few title sequences of pre-revolutionary movies that aids in the development of the story and better understanding for the viewer. Abbas KiaRostami, the title sequence designer manipulated a naked male body with folkloric tattoos on it. The title sequence starts with the close-up frames of the tattoos of a motionless naked body on a black background. The tattoos consist of various paintings of the heroic characters in *Shahnameh*, upon all parts of the body (Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3. *Qeysar's* title sequence by Abbas KiaRostami.

The typeface is the *Zar* bold. *Zar* is a formal typeface in Persian typography with a relatively official character compared to the other type of the Persian typefaces. Looking at the atmosphere of the movie, which is a serious social criminal movie, a formal typeface such as *Zar* seems a right choice (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4. *Qeysar's* Title, and official *Zar* typeface.

4.1.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

An epic musical score accompanies *Qeysar's* title sequence, which underlines the heroic sense of the sequence. At the end, an image of a bell tattooed on a body fades into an ambulance siren and the epic music fades into an alarm sound that announces an accident after a fight, similar to the folkloric tattoos of the fighting men in the title sequence (Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5. Last Scene of the *Qeysar's* Title Sequence.

The cinematography and *mise-en-scène* in the titling imply the hidden aspects of the story using close-up shots of a naked body standing motionless in front of the camera showing different views of all sides of the body. The body has many tattoos with the subject of “the story of *Rostam* and *Sohrab* [which] is one of the top tragedies of the Persian literature described by Ferdowsi (in Moghadasi’s article). This is the story of a son killed by his father who was the mightiest of Iranian paladins” (Moghadasi, 2014, p. 1157). The killing of *Sohrab* by his father *Rostam* is the most famous and tragic story in the *Shahnameh*, as Shahbazi states “the ‘unripe fruit’ is of course the young and immature Sohrāb, soon to be struck down by the unwitting hand of his father *Rostam*, the quintessential ‘wild man’ for whom a storm is the perfect metaphor” (Cross, 2015, p. 396).

Bearing in mind the criminal and tragic story of the movie, these tattoos serve as an effective *mise-en-scène* element of the epic concepts of the story. In *Qeysar*, there are several references to the *Shahnameh* and its tragic story. In one scene, when Qeysar blames his uncle for not being brave enough to exceed the boundaries of tradition, the uncle gets upset and angrily closes the *Shahnameh* in his hands. Several referral scenes to the *Shahnameh* in the movie, along with the epic elements of the *Shahnameh* about the fight of Rostam and Sohrab in the movie title sequence, make the audience to look at Qeysar and his uncle as representing Rostam and Sohrab. In this case, the movie’s main battle is not between Qeysar and his brother Mansour, but between him and his uncle. This struggle can imply the confrontation between tradition and modernism, in particular in the more traditional countries such as Iran. In fact, in Qeysar and his uncle’s argument, when the uncle closes the *Shahnameh*, this represents the closing or ending of the myth era in the country (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6. Tattoos inspired by epic elements of *Shahnameh* in *Qeysar's* Title Sequence

In *Qeysar*, the death of *Farmoon* is the death of a legend, but the death of *Qeysar* is a rebirth of the human. The movie title sequence, with its well-designed *mise-en-scène* showing the most epic elements of the Persian literature with the concept of rebellion and cause, made a strong and direct connection between the title sequence narrative and movie context. Also, men having tattoos is a traditional part of Persian culture, and the design of choosing tattoos as a platform for the representation of the heroic elements of *Shahnameh* in the title sequence creates a route between the title sequence and movie narrative into Iranian traditions. The extreme close-up shots of cinematography in the title sequence demonstrates this connection stronger.

4.2 *Gaav (The Cow)*, 1969

1h 45m | Drama

Director: Dariush Mehrjui

Writers: Dariush Mehrjui, Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi

Title Sequence designer: Farshid Mesghali

Gaav is a movie on the border between commercialism and intellectualism. It is based on classic Iranian literary text that is changed into a philosophical narrative by the director. The story is about a person's metamorphosis into an animal. In other words, we can say although *Gaav* does not have a modern narrative, it contains the sense of modernism and intellectualism (GholamAli & SheykhMahdi, 2013).

Gaav is a movie that was part of the Iranian Cinema New Wave before the Islamic revolution in Iran. It is based on a story by Gholam-Hossein Saedi. It was one of the first Iranian movies to be admired by European festivals and western audiences. It was among the very first project that received Iranian State funding. It was smuggled to the 1971 Venice Film Festival and became the event of the festival that year (Persian International Film Festival, 2013). It was also shown at other international festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Moscow, London, and Los Angeles. "In Iran's cinema critics' polls in 1351, 1367 and 1378 [1972, 1988, 1999; Iranian calendar is in Solar Hijri system, which is based on the Earth's movements around the Sun], *Gaav* was selected as the best film in the Iranian cinema history" (Ghahresheykhloo & Vafaei, 2007). *Gaav* was an avant-garde movie for that era, which could establish boundaries between commercial and non-commercial and conventional and non-conventional cinema, and it was the first time that the whole Iranian cinema society agreed that the movie was truly prizeworthy (GholamAli & SheykhMahdi, 2013, p. 28).

4.2.1 Movie Synopsis

Mash Hasan is deeply in love with his cow. The cow is the only source of income for his family and the people in the village, which makes them be dependent on the cow (Figure 4.7). When he leaves the village to go to the city for a short trip, his pregnant cow, for unknown reasons, gets sick and dies. The villagers, who know Mash Hasan's dependency and passion about the cow, decide to tell him that his cow ran away and got lost. Mash Hasan doesn't believe them and thinks that the villagers killed his cow (Figure 4.8). After that, he loses his mind and starts to think that he is the cow. Thus, people decide to take him to the city for treatment but, on the way, Mash Hasan runs away, falls into a valley, and dies (Figure 4.9).



Figure 4.7. Mash Hasan and his cow.



Figure 4.8. The cow dies and Mash Hasan notices after his return.



Figure 4.9. The villagers take Mash Hasan to the city for treatment, but he dies on the way.

4.2.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Fear, superstition, and delusion are the main concepts of this movie. The shades of superstition surround the village to the point that most of the villagers suffer from paranoia. They are always prepared to defend themselves against the conspiracy of their so-called enemies. The source and origin of this fear might be in the historical and political background of the society. The movie depicted a society that has a stagnant and gloomy atmosphere that potentiates sadness, disaster, and tragedy. The movie related a story happening in a very small and underprivileged village. As a result, the film music was made mainly with traditional, local Iranian instruments to show the lack of sophistication in villagers. Also, the composer had to choose the most appropriate instrument to be in the best harmony with the story, thus, the music is mostly played with traditional flute, which has a gloomy and blue kind of sound and suites the tragic story of Mash Hasan (Farhat, 2017).

4.2.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Farshid Mesghali, by designing *Gaav*'s title sequence, officially established the role of graphic designers as a profession in this field (Saeidi Pour, 1998, p.100). That is why the *Gaav*'s title sequence is considered as an important example in the field of title sequence and graphic design in Iranian cinema. The *Gaav*'s title sequence starts with blurred shadows of two figures: a cow and a man (Mash Hasan) walking together. Shadows appear in white on the black background and, along with the dark background music, imply a gloomy atmosphere. As the sequence progresses, we realize the connection between the man and the cow. There is a sense of care and kindness from Mash Hasan toward the cow. The title sequence is a combination of the motion and still images of similar scenes of the cow and Mash Hasan in different poses.

4.2.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The title sequence of the movie is inspired by this concept of the story—illusion and ambiguity—and the elusive and ambiguous *mise-en-scène* represents the fear and delusion of the



Figure 4.12: Examples of Persian typefaces; Top: Digital typefaces - Bottom: Handwritings.

The movie demonstrates three key elements in the story. First one is Mash Hasan's alliance from society. He believes that he is a cow, implicating not only him but also extending the belief to all the people surrounding him, who are also cows, yet unaware of it. In addition, none of the characters in the story have an active role except Mash Hasan and his cow and the solo characters in the opening title resonate with this fact. The second element in the movie is the ambiguous location, which is symbolized with bewildered people who are closer to death than life. In the title sequence, the adaptation of the *mise-en-scène* elements could imply this meaning, apart from the dark background, that the vague setting of the scene gives a sense of a location in the middle of nowhere obliterated by darkness. The third element is time. The flow of life is extremely stagnant in the movie story, which can be implied by the cinematography of the title sequence. The whole title sequence is framed in one long take shot with a long camera perspective, and this conveys a sense of dormant life in the movie story.

4.3 *Aghaye Halou (Mr. Gullible)*, 1970

1h 46min | Comedy, Drama

Director: Dariush Mehrjui

Writers: Dariush Mehrjui, Ali Nassirian

Title Sequence Designer: Farshid Mesghali

Aghaye Halou is about a naïve person who moves from a small town to the capital city, but he cannot get along with urban life and returns to his hometown in frustration. The movie illustrates the foolishness of some villagers, deception of some urbanites, and the chaos of cities during a period of time in when most of the people in the villages and small towns were uneducated. *Aghaye Halou* depict the issues of civilization and the challenges of immigration from the small towns to the big cities.

Aghaye Halou is one of the most important movies of Dariush Mehrjui. It participated in the Moscow International Film Festival (Moscow International Film Festival, 1971). Mehrjui simplified for the public audience the complexity of the pressing social issues regarding the confrontation between the traditions and modernity. The movie succeeded with audiences and critics as a different cinema production at that time because most of the Iranian films of that era were either not professional in terms of the storytelling or did not have a meaningful concept to be considered as a valued movie (AghaBabai, Adibi, & Mohammadi, 2010). *Aghaye Halou* states the story of a villager's pain in the capital city, a naïve person who gets stuck in a strange and hostile environment and loses all his belongings, finally losing his dignity and respect. *Aghaye Halou* depicts the ignorance and innocence in rural culture conflicting with the deception of the civilized cities.

4.3.1 Movie Synopsis

Mr. Gullible moves to the capital city in search of a wife for himself and immediately after his arrival, his luggage is stolen, and he becomes a wanderer in city. He visits Mohammadi-Pour, one of his friends, a real estate dealer and who drags him into a troublesome deal. (Figure 4.13) Meanwhile, Mr. Gullible meets a woman named Mehri and shortly after wants to marry her. Mehri's father is supposed to be a café owner and Mr. Gullible goes to him to ask permission to marry his daughter (Figure 4.14). However, Mr. Gullible realizes that this man is not Mehri's father and in fact, she works in his cafe as a prostitute. Mr. Gullible, who is desperately in love with Mehri, insists on this marriage provided that Mehri repents, but she disagrees and makes fun of him. In the end, Mr. Gullible with all his disappointment and dissatisfaction takes the bus and goes back home.



Figure 4.13. Mr. Gullible moves to the capital city.



Figure 4.14. He meets Mehri and falls in love with her.

4.3.2 Concepts Developed in Movie

Aghaye Halou covers the concept of conflict between tradition and civilization of the rural and urban societies. The main character's confrontation with Mehri at a dress boutique represents the personality of a person who falls in love at first sight and immediately dreams about a marriage with a woman he does not even know. As such, Mr. Gullible is a person who does not act logically, or proceeds carefully. When Mehri does not show any interest in him in response to his love, the movie points out the cold relationships in modern civilized societies. These implications from the movie show a bitter reality of the society; a traditional villager from a small town is gullible regarding civilized (meaning city-dwelling) relationships, which are based on self-interests and self-benefits, especially financial benefits (Figure 4.15). Poverty and deprivation were significant problems of pre-revolutionary society in Iran, especially in rural areas and villages; many of the villagers had to immigrate to the big cities and ended in a tragic lifestyles (Toghrangar, 2005).



Figure 4.15. Mr Gullible, a simple villager is lost and overwhelmed in the city.

4.3.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Aghaye Halou's title sequence is an ironic animated sequence designed by Farshid Mesghali. Here, Mr. Gullible stands in an elegant frame on a black background. In the beginning, he is fully dressed but gradually he loses his clothes piece by piece. As soon as he loses his clothes, the background color changes to white and the elegant frame disappears. In the end, a huge fedora hat falls and covers his face and upper body (Figure 4.16). All the shots are framed in long shot in order to show the whole figure of the character.



Figure 4.16. Aghaye Halou's title Sequence by Farshid Mesghali.

4.3.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The first narrative element of the story involves Mr. Gullible moving from his hometown to the capital city. In changing his location, his first impressions are of trouble and confusion. Losing all his belonging when his luggage is stolen, falling in love with the wrong person who does not care about him at all, getting humiliated and losing his pride are devastating and deeply disappointing losses for him. This meaning is implied in the *mise-en-scène* of the title sequence as Mr. Gullible's figure gradually becomes naked. The ending scene of the fedora hat falling on his face and upper body is a symbol of all the deception and dishonesty that he faced in the city. This part is adapted from a famous Persian proverb 'to put a hat on somebody's head' which means 'to get deceived by someone' (Figure 4.17). The frame around Mr. Gullible draws the viewer's attention and lead them into the frame and towards Mr. Gullible.

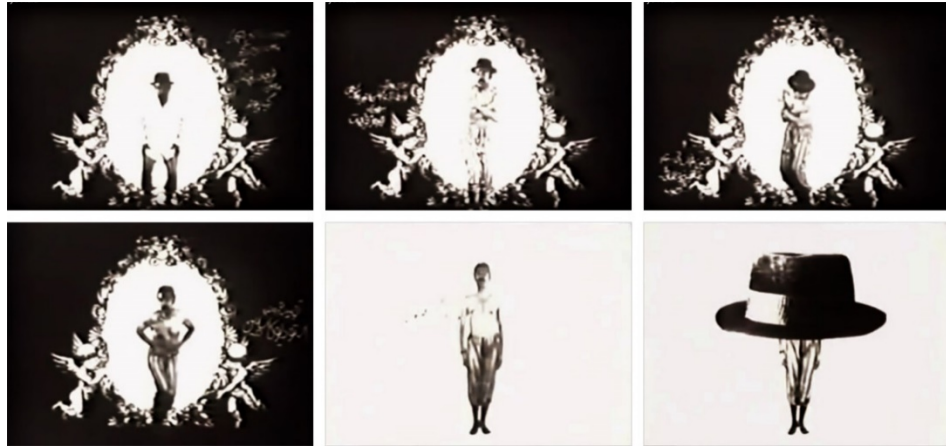


Figure 4.17 Mr. Gullible is losing his clothes.

In addition, the typeface of the title sequence is a comic handwritten type which shows the ironic and humiliating aspect of the movie. This typeface is usually used for comic concepts, which fits the other elements of the title sequence including music, illustration, and animation (Figure 4.18).



Figure 4.18. Comic handwritten typeface in Aghaye Halou's title sequence.

Aghaye Haloo's title sequence shows the plots of the movie but in an indirect way that does not spoil the main story. The title sequence can be an admirable example of the cooperation between the graphic designers and filmmakers in terms of both the cinematography and *mise-en-scène*. The designer creatively avoided animating all actions, and instead, created motion through

the fade in\out transitions. In overall, *Aghaye Halou*'s title sequence is one of the notable title sequences of the pre-revolutionary Iranian cinema in both narrative and aesthetic aspects.

4.4 *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz (Mirza Norooz's Shoes), 1985*

1h 47min | Comedy

Director: Mohammad Motevaselani

Writers: Dariush Farhang, Susan Taslimi

Title Sequence Designer: Mohammad Fijani, Ebrahim Haghighi, Ahmad Arabani

In the 1980s, the first few years of the Iran-Iraq war, some Iranian directors started to make comedies for changing the public mood. The Mirza Norooz character was an Iranian version of the many stingy characters that have appeared in Iranian cinema history. His character was based on the traditional and eastern elements and was successful in connecting with the people.

Dariush Farhang, the writer of *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz*, is one of the best comedy screenwriters of Iranian cinema who would create memorable comedy characters in post-revolutionary cinema. After three decades, *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz* is still popular among Iranian audiences and it is often screened on national TV. Besides the smooth narrative of the film, there are some of the most famous actors of the Iranian cinema performing in the movie, which makes it as one of the memorable movies of Iranian cinema.

4.4.1 Movie Synopsis

Mirza Norooz is a stingy pharmacist living in a non-modern area of Iran. He is famous in the city because of his old worn shoes, and people make fun of him because of that. Although Mirza does not care about them, his wife cannot bear this situation and leaves Mirza. She makes her return conditional on Mirza discarding his worn old shoes and buying a new pair. Greedy Mirza resists this condition at first, but eventually, he agrees to do it (Figure 4.19). After he decides to buy new shoes, he finds it difficult and almost impossible to get rid of the old ones. Every time he tries to throw away the old shoes, it causes trouble for him and for other people to the point that he becomes involved in a crime, is apprehended, and is sentenced to death.

Eventually, with his family's efforts, Mirza proves his innocence, and realizes the importance of his family's love for him. In the end, he asks the judge for help in destroy the old shoes. Mirza and all the other people cooperate to burn the shoes and get rid of them (Figure 4.20).



Figure 4.19. Mirza Norooz agrees to replace his shoes with a new pair.



Figure 4.20. It seems impossible to destroy the shoes.

4.4.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz was a success at a level rarely achieved in Iranian cinema. The director, Mohammad Motevaselani, is a skilled Iranian actor, who has played many roles in comedies. After the Islamic revolution, he focused on filmmaking and *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz* is one of his successful productions. Motevaselani understood that people needed happiness and morale in the disastrous days of the war amid bombings and destruction, and it was his primary intention, as with other filmmakers at the time, to invest their efforts in the comedy movies that were needed (Tasnim News, 2017).

4.4.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The title sequence starts with Mirza standing with bare feet in the middle of nowhere. As it is clear from the movie title, Mirza's shoes are the main narrative element of the story. Bearing this fact in mind, when we see Mirza with no shoes, we anticipate a significant problem about his shoes through the story. Then, Mirza is seen running after a pair of old overused patched shoes, cuddling and adoring them, a clear reference to live-action Mirza's passionate feeling for his

shoes (Figure 4.21). As part of the *mise-en-scène*, the shoes are playing a part in the staging as an important character in the storyline.



Figure 4.21. Mirza Norooz is running after his shoes.

As the title sequence progress, Mirza is seen escaping from his shoes running after him. This scene metaphorically implies Mirza’s incapability in his struggle to get rid of the problems that his old shoes made for him during the story. In the title sequence, Mirza’s shoes have well developed human characteristics, and they seem to play around with Mirza. He cannot handle the problematic situation that his shoes are out of control and he must deal with the people of the city, including the judge, who are suffering from the troubles caused by Mirza’s shoes (Figure 4.22).



Figure 4.22. Mirza Norooz’s struggles to get rid of his old shoes.

4.4.4 Concept of the Title Sequence

The title sequence of *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz* is an animation made by a group of graphic designer and animators. The opening title is based on the movie storyline and gives a summary of the story to the audience. In the title sequence, the designers with a proper design in the *mise-en-scène* tried to anticipate the humor presented in the story by exaggerating Mirza’s problems with the shoes: the shoes run after Mirza and he ends up flying to escape from his shoes.

The setting of the *mise-en-scène* in the title sequence shows the plots of the story in a symbolic way.

Contrary to the typical conventions of the title sequence in comedies, the typeface in the opening title is a formal type which is not in harmony with the humoristic sense of the film. This might be because of lack of technology to use a typeface normally used for serious themes to make a point, rather than use a typical comedic typeface to advance social and cultural issues and perhaps designers wanted the audience to look for underlying concepts (Figure 4.23).



Figure 4.23. *Mirza Norooz and his beloved shoes.*

Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz's title sequence can represent the main elements of the storyline to the audience. The comic style of the animated title sequence fits the comedy genre of the movie. In addition, the animation takes advantage of the technology limitations of that time and using the fade in/out transition instead of the animating the movements, produces a different style of animation for the title sequence. The title sequence uses an advantage of the *mise-en-scène* to show the time and a sense of general environment of the movie. Also, in terms of the cinematography, the title sequence is framed in long shots, and long take shots of the scenes draw the attentions even more to the game between Mirza Norooz and his shoes.

4.5 *Bashu, Gharibeye Koochak (Bashu, The Little Stranger)*,1989

2hr | Drama

Director: Bahram Beizai

Writer: Bahram Beizai

Title Sequence Designer: Abdollah Alimorad

Bashu, gharibeye koochak is one of the most emblematic films of the famous Iranian director, Bahram Beizai. The movie was made in the 1980s and became one of the most influential movies of the time. The film tells the story of a child from a southern city in Iran who escaped from the war affecting the region. He hides in a truck and by accident goes to a northern city where he starts a new life within a northern family.

Bashu, gharibeye koochak is one of the important movies of the Iranian post-revolutionary cinema with a unique point of view towards the war and war refugees. The movie was popular with Iranian and foreign viewers and considered accomplished by international film critics. UCLA Film and Television Archive following the screening *Bashu, gharibeye koochak* stated:

What follows is a powerful, moving story of difference and acceptance in a country largely perceived as ethnically, linguistically and culturally monolithic. Beyzaie's sensitivity to the plight of the displaced and the trauma of war makes this timeless work as relevant now as ever. (UCLA Film & Television Archive, 2018)

Although after Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, there was an opening for negotiations debates, and criticism about the post-revolutionary society but, at the time of the film's release, discussions about the war were taboo and media representation of the war were reflecting conservative views (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010, p. 58). *Bashu, gharibeye koochak* is a movie that looks at war from a social and critical point of view. The filmmakers decided to go beyond the examination of the ideological aspects of war and pay attention to more realistic aspects, including depictions of the disasters, damage, and social and mental consequences. Perhaps for

this reason, and for “the humanist, anti-war and anti-racist sentiments of the film,” the movie was released in 1989 after having been banned for three years in Iran (Sadr, 2006, p. 207). The movie was not released after production because it talked about the devastating truth of the war when no one could talk in opposition to that war. Susan Taslimi (Naijan), years after her immigration from Iran, in an interview with BBC, stated that *Bashu, gharibeye koochak* is a movie about peace and love, in middle of a destructive war called ‘sacred defense’ which was, in their mind, all about religion, martyrdom, and national identity, but in fact, it had more important sides: devastation, family breakdown, and displacement (Taslimi, 2010). *Bashu, gharibeye koochak* is still popular among people and critics not only at the time of the release, but it is still after 30 years one of the most accomplished movies of the war cinema by Iranians.

4.5.1 Movie Synopsis

After a bomb attack that destroys his home in Ahvaz, Bashu, an eleven-year old boy, escapes war by climbing the back of a truck where he falls asleep. (Figure 4.24).



Figure 4.24. *Bashu escapes from the war and falls asleep in a truck.*

When he wakes up, the truck has already moved far from his hometown, and has arrived in one of the northern cities. The boy has been running away from bombing and battles, so when he hears an explosion sound from a road construction site, he panics and runs away into the forest (Figure 4.25).



Figure 4.25. Bashu gets scared and runs into the forest.

On the other side of the forest, he arrives at a farm belonging to a woman named Naijan who is living with her children while her husband is away for work. Naijan feeds Bashu and tries to get close to him and figure out his status. However, since they talk in two different local languages, they cannot understand each other; Bashu speaks Arabic and Naijan speaks Gilaki, and neither of them knows the other language. Bashu, in return for Naijan's kindness and care, helps her with the farm work (Figure 4.26).



Figure 4.26. Bashu takes care of Naijan when she gets sick.

When Naijan becomes ill, Bashu takes care of the farm and her two children. So, Naijan in a letter to her husband says that Bashu is essentially an adopted son now, and she will take care of him like her children. However, her husband disagrees. Eventually he returns home, and since he has lost one of his hands in the war, he now sees how helpful Bashu is and he accepts him as a part of the family (Figure 4.27).



Figure 4.27. Naijan's husband returns home.

4.5.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie:

Although *Bashu, gharibeye koochak* does not directly talk about the war, it shows how innocent children and war-torn people of a country can be affected by war. The main impressions of the movie are empathy and sympathy, and despites various functions of language for expressing human emotions. The fact that in many sequences of the film Bashu speaks Arabic and Najjan and the others do not understand him, since they speak Gilaki, is not just a part of the story to make it more interesting for the audience. It is a concept clear to audiences who do not understand Arabic or Gilaki dialect. The audience tries to understand the meaning of the conversations by only understanding the general feeling in the scene, the actors' feelings, and their body language. The movie talks about the power of a real conversation, which is not through the words, but through the human feelings.

4.5.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The title sequence starts with a warplane silhouette, flying into a solid black background and passing through the movie title. The first few warplanes come in groups of one, two, and three, and with a small gap in between. However, as the title sequence progresses, more warplanes continuously come into the frame until they fill all the space. The warplanes are in red, without any detail (Figure 4.28). There is a combination of a horrific strange noise (close to the wild animal's noise) and gloomy local singing in the background.



Figure 4.28. *Bashu, Gharibeye Koochak's* title sequence.

4.5.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The starting point in the films is a clear statement of what war does to children. As we can see in the title sequence, the first warplane icon comes to the frame, hits the *Bashu, gharibeye koochak* title words, which is the name of a child in the movie. In addition, the other names of the characters in the movie get hit with the warplanes afterward, one by one. This connection between the warplanes and names suggests that the real targets in a war are the people, not the buildings, not the cities, and not the governments.

The first key point in the movie is the movie title: *Bashu, Gharibeye Koochak*. All three words in the title show the alienation, and roving status of Bashu. *Bashu* is a strange and uncommon name; then the words *The Little*, and *Stranger* which both point out that he might suffer twice as much as others. The title sequence sound is also significant because the terrifying noise notifies the entrance of *the others* in the story. *The others* can refer to the enemies and the strangers who attack the country and start a war and also to a fundamental distrust with those that are different from us.

In terms of *mise-en-scène*, the movie title sequence represents the concept of a war. The warplanes' direction in the title sequence, the way that they enter from the left side refers to the attacks from Iraq to Iran during the war (Iraq is on the left side of Iran). This meaning is clearer when we see the first scene of the movie, which is demolition, fire, and damage in Iranian lands. Also, regarding the coloring, the background is colored in dark red, that demonstrates the blood and violence of wars in general. The texts in the title sequence, enter from the right side and move to the left. This portrays the resistance of Iranian armies inside the country against the Iraq's attacks. Furthermore, this can imply Bashu's move from his hometown to somewhere that he did not have any idea about it before the bombing. Thus, the movie insists on the fact that Bashu's migration is compelled and a sort of exile, and he experiences both mental and physical displacement during this movement.

In overall, the symbolic and minimalistic title sequence of the movie is in harmony with the main subject, a child. Children have always been the symbols of simplicity and pureness, and the combination of their innocence and the massive war makes a dramatic story of traumas, tragedies, and catastrophes. This concept is tenderly represented in the title sequence by the *mise-en-scène* which includes movement, colors, composition along with the sound. As Thomas states: "*Bashu, the Little Stranger* is finally a testament to the transforming power of love and its ability to transcend the limits of experience, education, and ethnicity. Although just short of two hours, *Bashu, the Little Stranger* [...] is always brisk and lively; it's as modest as it is flawless" (K. Thomas, 1990). Considering the symbolic animated type of the title sequence, there is a lack of the cinematography elements. However, it can skillfully drag the viewers into this two-hour journey, and from the first scene, introduces them to the tensions and strains in the story.

4.6 *Khanei Ruye Ab (A House Built on Water)*, 2002

1h 48min | Drama, Thriller

Director: Bahman Farmanara

Writers: Bahman Farmanara

Title Sequence Designer: Saed Meshki

Khanei Ruye Ab is the second movie of Bahman Ghobadi after his return to Iran. The movie is about death, but treated from a different point of view, which has been rarely used in Iranian cinema. The movie emphasizes the idea of punishment in this world instead of the other world and tells the story of a person who is spending the last few days of his sinful life.

Bahman Farmanara made the movie to show the social issues of the country at that time. The movie was selected as best movie in the 20th Fajr International Film Festival by judges and also best movie of the year by the audiences (Fajr Film Festival, 2001). Unlike Farmanara's first film, *Booye Kafoor, Are Yas (Smell of Camphor, Scent of Jasmin, 2000)*, religion and belief is added to the story. The film has many symbolic elements and metaphors referring to the concepts of god, heaven, hell, and punishment. The director consciously keeps the film away from the criminal genre and instead, combines the metaphysical (the heavenly world) and social (the common issues of the society) concepts together.

4.6.1 Movie Synopsis

Khanei Ruye Ab tells the story of a man struggling to get out of the problems in his life, but the more he struggles, the more he sinks into them. Dr. Sepidbakht, an aimless and godless gynecologist who is facing various crises in his personal life: his immoral relationships with women, his carelessness about family, his addicted son who recently came back to the country, his conflict with his elderly father, among many more. In the meantime, he meets a child who could save him from his salacious world (Figure 4.29).



Figure 4.29. Dr. Sepidbakht has an aimless life until he meets a child who changes his life.

4.6.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

A quick comparison between the realities in the Iranian society and what is represented in the media shows that making a movie such as *Khaneh Ruye Ab* is a challenging job, as it has to illustrate the vast conflict between reality and falseness. The movie tells the story about an aimless and lost man who is financially wealthy but morally and spiritually destitute. Dr. Sepidbakht is a heartless, callous, godless, distrustful, and corrupt person without any courage in his life. At one point he meets an innocent child who comes into his life as a hero, a savior to protect him from his unethical way of living. Meanwhile, the child is sick and needs Dr. Sepidbakht to help him in return. As a result, Dr. Sepidbakht's rescue is conditional on the child's cure; however, he is not strong enough to save the boy who is the symbol of innocence and chastity in Dr. Sepidbakht's life.

4.6.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The movie title sequence starts with a suspended text in water which points to the concept of floating (Figure 4.30). The movie title is continuously on the centre of the frame but gradually gets smaller as if it is dipping in the water. Meanwhile, the other texts in the title sequence (the names of the cast and crew), like moving objects are passing by the movie title. They enter and exit the frame from the right and left sides and move as they are floating on water. These transient texts suggest different characters in the movie who interact with the main character Dr. Sepidbakht. They come in and go out of his life while he is drowning gradually in his enigmas.

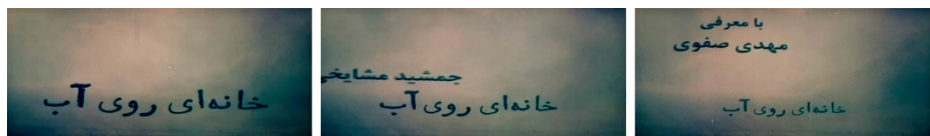


Figure 4.30. *Khanei Ruye Ab* (2003) - Movie Title Sequence by Saed Meshki.

The typeface in the *Khanei Ruye Ab*'s title sequence is a formal typeface in regular font. The typeface is *Zar*, one of the common and most formal typefaces in Iranian typography. Aside from the social and formal style of the movie that matches the character of this typeface, the fine and simple lines of *Zar* are the best choice for the floating movements of the texts in the title sequence.

4.6.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

In the title sequence, the movie title “*Khanei Ruye Ab (A House Built on Water)*” is the symbol of the unstable life of Dr. Sepidbakht. A chaotic and muddled house on water which seems to be sinking at every moment the same as the character is drowning in his problems. There are some dialogues in the movie that explicitly refer to the concept of *Khanei Ruye Ab*:

- *Dr. Sepidbakht*: I'm like a person who's sinking into a swamp, and the more he's struggling, the more he's drowning.

- *Dr. Sepidbakht*: These days I'm like an unbound ship which is left in a stormy sea.

- *Mojgan*: When you don't have a future, it's like you build your house on water... we learned to be good swimmers.

These sentences indicate the mental challenges of a person who is stuck in his materialistic and isolated world. Dr. Sepidbakht's character is designed as a person frustrated at the end of his rope.

Also, in terms of the *mise-en-scène*, the many texts in the title sequence are properly the subjects of the composition of the frames. They seem prominent and sharply imply the feeling of instability and sinking that is the tone directly relevant to the movie concept. The meaning of this instability is not only about the main character, but about the whole society of the people who are sinking in their problems day by day. Along with the long take shot, the moving shapes of the

texts help this feeling of floating and it is a symbol of not just one person, but of a collective with problems of instability and sinking.

4.7 Conclusion

According to the analysis of the three movie title sequences of pre-revolutionary and three of post-revolutionary Iranian cinema, it seems that title sequence design before and after the Islamic revolution has not been affected by the social and political events in a generalized manner between the pre- and post-war designs, but the artistic expression and distillation of each film's thematic texture remains intact. The main differences in the pre- and post-revolutionary movie title sequences are partially due to technological improvement through the history of Iranian cinema, which has been along with the enhancements in the field of title sequence design. As in the course of time, title sequences became more closely tied to the plots of the stories, more subtle, and more accomplished. In a couple of significant examples are the *Bashu*, *Gharibeye Koochak* and *Kafshhaye Mirza Norooz*'s title sequences which creatively echo the films subtle criticism of post-revolutionary life.

In general, despite all the changes in the Iranian cinema industry, both in form and concepts of the movies, title sequences are the part that rescued from all adverse changes because of the restrictions, and besides, they seem to have a significant improvement due to technology advancements. Examining the history of title sequences from the beginning of the Iranian national cinema and those of the film productions of before and after the Islamic revolution shows that the Iranian filmmakers have had consistent attention towards this aspect of their movies.

5. Chapter 5: Pre- & Post-Revolutionary Venezuelan Cinema

Cinema has a significant role in recasting and rewriting different forms of political ideologies in history. In this way, a national cinema, besides all the advantages for a country, can have a devastating effect on the society by changing the history based on influences of political interests. As Alvaray states, this is part of the story of many politically unstable countries in which history has changed based on the political state of the country at that time; and apparently, in the end this appears to be destructive in that it re-creates history rather than allow persistence of true history (Alvaray, 2013, p. 298). In Venezuela, as in other politically unstable countries, re-creation of history occurred, largely driven by the film industry. As Alvaray explains, cinema became a tool to remodel political ideology within historical accounts, and film production studios were manipulated as propaganda tools rather than as objective and unbiased participants in the film industry. Typically, any political party could find a way in the films to justify their fundamental political positions. In this way, the history of cinema has shown that the film industry is a beneficial form of recreation which is supported by politicized public platforms (Alvaray, 2013).

Historically, Latin American countries have used the cinema industry to portray an idealized image of their region to serve as evidence of their national progress (Farrell, 2011). In Venezuela, one of the first nations of the continent to be recognized as a significant film producer, the state quickly became involved in making movies for self-supporting, pragmatic purposes. In 2004 Hugo Chávez, the president of Venezuela, supported Venezuelan cinema and established the National Film Industry with the intention to demonstrate and testify to a level of progress and vision of himself to the whole world through the movies (Farrell, 2011, pp. 33-35). It was clear that these political purposes and preferences resulted in the establishment of a national film platform, allowed and promoted by Chávez, to use culture to support the revolution (pp.35). In

this way, the future of Venezuelan film may have suffered from the need to meet complex political and economic goals and challenges.

Hernan Jabes (2013) explains the hegemonic power in Venezuelan cinema and the effects of different influences on their national cinema for many years: First, “The others,” who took the advantages of the State resources to produce mediocre movies; Second, “State” that cut the resources, resulting in the suffering of the cinema industry within the 1980s, political and social conflicts; Third, *CNAC* financing that purportedly was there to help producers as an accessible financial resource, but in fact, resulted in a counterproductive, more dependent, and less demanding cinema; and finally, the Foundation *Villa del Cine* that neither invested in promotion nor cared about the consequences of the investment (Jabes, 2013). *Villa del Cine*, a state-run studio established in 2006, had a significant effect on Venezuelan cinema and caused a substantial increase in film industry activity, resulting in the highest number of movies to that time produced in Venezuelan cinema history. The institution was established by Chávez for the purpose of the government’s active investment in filmmaking. As a result, Chávez made the largest investment in film and an explicit connection between filmmaking and sovereignty (Farrell, 2016, pp. 371-372). The result was that Venezuelan Cinema was not able to form a coherent and sustainable general cinematic movement and to build such a stable industry.

Jabes also indicates that all of these influencing factors and resulting outcomes happened in a greater context that included other problematic factors and events, such as the Venezuelan small market that began with the Hollywood movies. This resulted in a tendency for the spectator to become accustomed to high-quality Hollywood movies, rather than accepting native cinematography and simply comparing it with the often-higher quality Hollywood movies, regardless of their contents (Jabes, 2013). Also, film distributors in Venezuela believed that the cinema industry was a profitable business and Hollywood movies were the most beneficial ones. Jabes describe that when Venezuelan films could not meet the target returns on investment, they

removed them. In this cycle, the last link for generating income was the producing companies. As a result, it was hard for producers to recover their asset or to make another movie. At the end, there were some defects and challenges in the producing state companies, such as working with the personnel coming from television, having different cinematic language; or producing movies profoundly affected by the political ideology of the current government (Jabes, 2013).

In addition, the Hollywood industry has had the most significant influences on international cinematography. Spectators were influenced by the high-quality filmmaking in Hollywood, regardless of their content, either consciously or unconsciously. This occurrence plays the most critical role in the failure of a national cinema and leads the local spectators not only to compare their indigenous cinema with the Hollywood industry but also to reject their own movies. Jabes calls this “hegemonic power” in the cinema industry and states, “filmmaking must be universal, free, plural, and inclusive. It cannot be used as a political pamphlet” (Jabes, 2013, p. 174).

Consequently, Venezuelan cinema during the 1930s welcomed a new genre, melodrama, that would fulfil the melodramatic imagination in Venezuela in order to preserve the national identity of their cinema. Carlos Monsivais regarding melodrama and national identity in Latin America states: “In the presence of Hollywood’s subjugation, the Latin American film industry vivaciously produces its version of melodrama—unrestrained, tied to excess and to the genealogies of sorrow” (Monsivais cit. in Alvaray, 2009, p. 33). Cinematic melodrama became an important part of Venezuelan cinema through their history; either as a tool within particular ideological behavior, or as an emotional education for social behavior.

Alvaray identifies that the importance of melodrama—as one of the fundamental traits of the Venezuelan national cinema—has caused a collaboration between Mexico and Venezuela and consequently, resulted in the production of many successful movies that usually featured Venezuelans in secondary roles. Venezuelan cinema industry started to import Mexican and

Spanish actors to perform in Venezuelan movies and to produce movies locally. In this way, all the movies were the copies of the general pattern of film production and narrative of the Mexican mode. The objective of these productions, besides making a profit, was to make a connection with local audiences by nationalizing the topic of their movies based on Venezuelan subjects and images. While the foreign filmmakers were in a sense expressing admiration and pride for Venezuela, some local critics were arguing that “Mexican industry was doing what Venezuelans ought to have done” (Alvaray, 2013, p. 37). Although local entrepreneurs in Venezuela started producing films including melodramas, they did not trust the local people to produce highly qualified and profitable movies. Many melodramas were produced and credited for improving Venezuelan cinema by their international achievement; however, critics believed that these movies did not contribute to the formation of national identity. So, using Venezuelan literary works as a foundation, the film industry began not only to follow their valuable folklore but also make the movies that were more connected to their own culture and literature (Alvaray, 2009).

With the rising popularity of television, the cinema industry suffered by failing the private entrepreneurs and initiating the trend of individual filmmakers producing and directing national narratives. Many of these filmmakers continued to make films without official support, up to the point that the new government of Raúl Leoni agreed to support filmmaking in Venezuela, which resulted in creation and involvement of the New Venezuelan Cinema in 1975. After many years, Venezuelan cinema proved the fact that it is not only a consumer and exporter of melodrama in the world but also a profitable business for Venezuelan cinema industry (Alvaray, 2009).

Venezuelan cinema is an example of the struggle between ideology and politics in a country. The political and social situation of the country force intellectuals, including artists and filmmakers, to become political actors to articulate the struggle for political and ideological transformation. In this way, none of the cultural production of the society can be pure and unbiased.

5.1 *Oriana*, 1985

1h 28min | Drama, Mystery, Romance

Director: Fina Torres

Writers: Antoine Lacomblez, Fina Torres

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Oriana, the winner of the 1985 Cannes Film Festival, was made by Fina Torres. Torres, with many significant movies made outside and in Venezuela, is one of the substantial directors in Venezuelan cinema history.

Oriana means a critical break with the outdoor cinema and denunciation that characterized the movement of the 'New Latin American Cinema in its beginnings, opening paths towards a different, intimate and renovator, from the feminine point of view. On the other hand, *Oriana*, from the interior, presents the rupture of the traditional structures of gender, race and social class, assumed by its protagonists. Finally, in its structure narrative, *Oriana* is an important break in the linear way of 'telling history,' assuming the circularity of the reminder process of the protagonist. (Arreaza Camero, 2005)

The movie has a complex romance story with a layered narrative form and is considered as a production of the Venezuelan cinema influenced by the cinematic melodrama. There are three different layers in the story; one is the story of young Maria, who is curious about the secret of an *hacienda*, a large estate or plantation; the second one reveals the mysteries of *Oriana* and her past; and the last one presents the events of the grown Maria coming back to her hometown and recalling her memories.

5.1.1 Movie Synopsis

Oriana is a dark, tragic love story with a languid pace that gives a gothic tone to the movie's atmosphere. In some scenes, it contains a trace of horror, such as the mysterious atmosphere of a *hacienda* set against dark backgrounds of forest and the sea, which is effectively

presented by appropriate coloring and lighting. Like one of the specifications of gothic romances (dark, gloomy, mysterious) (Botting, 2005, p. 1), the story concerns a spirited young woman, young Maria.

Maria is a Venezuelan woman who has been living in France. After she discovers that her aunt Oriana has died and willed her a large estate, she returns to Venezuela to sell the *hacienda* (Figure 5.1). As Maria moves through the rooms in the *hacienda*, she remembers the memories of her visit years before with her aunt. In flashbacks, there is young Maria who is trying to understand the secret of the mysterious atmosphere that she experienced in the *hacienda* (Figure 5.2). As Maria goes around and remembers all the stories of her youth, she realizes the meanings and understands everything differently as an adult (Figure 5.3). Back in the present, Maria knows why her aunt Oriana, a silent, mysterious woman, never left the ranch. Connecting and finding new evidence, she explores an old love story, a first love, and a cruel father, all memories that tell us about young Oriana. After recalling her past, she decides not to sell the *hacienda* and instead decides to keep it because someone lives there, even though that man has never been shown in the film: Oriana's son from her mysterious love (Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.1. Maria returns to hacienda.



Figure 5.2. Flashback shows Maria's visit of hacienda years ago.



Figure 5.3. Maria goes through the hacienda and realizes everything differently as an adult.



Figure 5.4. Maria explores the old love stories of hacienda.

Being a slow-paced movie, *Oriana* has many flashbacks and tracking shots, which along with Maria's exploration in the *hacienda*, make the viewer unconsciously feel as curious and horrified as Maria.

5.1.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Oriana talks about love, innocence, life, cruelty, and interlocking memories, however, the movie and storyline are difficult to follow due to the shift in characters and times. There are many flashbacks to the past in order for the viewer, to understand the storyline, including the flashback of Maria's childhood, the flashbacks of Oriana, and the flashbacks of Oriana's childhood. The play with the story's time is intentional, to cause the story to be puzzling and unclear, and to encourage the audience to follow Maria's exploration of the truth. This is in part what Oriana has

treated Maria; she let her go around and look for the truth, and later when she was mature enough to understand it, Oriana shows her the great mystery of the *hacienda*, her son.

5.1.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The title sequence corresponds with the first sequence of the movie: a family including a man, a woman, and two young girls are set to take a family photo. Right before shooting the photo a girl, Oriana, runs to a boy who is standing next to his family watching the photographing. She takes the boy's hand and drags him into the photo. The next scene is the image of a family in clean white outfits, and the boy, in dirt-poor clothes beside them. The camera zooms into the girl's face and stops as her face fill all the frame. Then, the title of the film appears on the screen, with the big letter 'O' placed on the girl's left eye. The rest of the names of the title sequence appear on a dark interior plot, moving toward the characters in a bed (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5. Oriana movie title sequence.

5.1.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The title sequence shows a privileged family of a small town in Venezuela in the past. As part of the *mise-en-scène* the position of the family members indicates their cold relationship, as they are not close to each other. Also, the demanding look of the father to his daughter shows his disciplined and controlling character, and the way that the girl ignores his look and runs to the boy shows her disobedience and rebellion against her parents. When the girl draws the boy into the photo, it shows her close feeling to the boy and recognition of him as a part of her family, which does not appear to be the view of her parents. The setting shows an aristocratic house and coloring and lighting demonstrate a time in the past. Furthermore, considering the costume design, the style and details of clothing of the girl and her family presents them as a wealthy family that the boy and his family as poor people work for them. As a result of the staging, the *mise-en-scène* shows a general sense of the time and environment of the movie story.

Also, the 'O' letter of the title below the girl's eye, can have different meanings. One to introduce the girl as Oriana, and second, to imply the coming tragedy of the movie to the audience. This can be assumed by the location of the letter O which is below her eye and on the path of her tears; and third might be as a peephole to see through the story. In this scene, the long shots of the cinematography of the title sequence smoothly change to an extreme close-up as the camera zooms on the letter O.

The title sequence plays the role of a beginning sequence of the film. A beginning sequence is the first sequence of a movie that is responsible for connecting a title sequence to the storyline. In *Oriana* the title sequence is replaced by the typical beginning sequence of the movie and is purposely designed to imply a specific meaning which is not conveyable through a general beginning sequence.

5.2 *Sicario*, 1994

1h 47min | Drama, Crime

Director: Joseph Novoa

Writer: David Suárez

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Sicario is Venezuelan movie about youth, childhood, innocence and crime. The movie illustrates how the living atmosphere and society affect the character and future of a child and ruins his innocence. The movie was created as a coproduction between countries and initiated many discussions regarding the disadvantaged life of slum children.

Sicario received much attention from the internal and foreign festivals. The movie was submitted as the Venezuelan entry for the 68st Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film (De Schutter) and was also the finalist at the Goya Award for Best Spanish Language Foreign Film 1995 (Filmaffinity).

5.2.1 Movie Synopsis

The film is the story of Jario, a seventeen-year-old teenager who lives in the slum parts of Medellin in Colombia. Medellin is famous for being the center of crime and drugs, and Jario has grown up in a working-class neighborhood amidst violence. His mother works in a restaurant and has a relationship with her co-worker, and does not seem to care enough about her children. One night when she comes back home with her lover, Jario sees them and leaves home angry. But the street is not welcoming to him; the criminal youth in their neighborhood invite him into their community and encourage him to accept and be involved in robbery and murder (Figure 5.6). Jario, is tired of poverty and the devastating situation that he and his family are living in, and becomes attracted to the criminal world, eventually working as a hired assassin. He earns a lot of money, the proceeds of crime, and helps his mother and girlfriend financially (Figure 5.7), but

when he decides to quit crime, he realizes that there is no way out of it. He kills the criminals to regain his dignity and then escapes with his girlfriend. He gets caught on the way and is murdered by one of those criminals (Figure 5.8).



Figure 5.6. Jario sees his mom and her lover and leaves home angrily and enters into the violent world of the streets.



Figure 5.7. Jario helps his mother and his girlfriend with his income of crime.

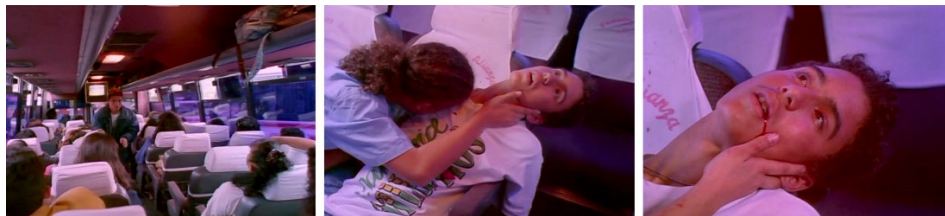


Figure 5.8. Jario decides to quit the crimes but he is murdered at the end.

5.2.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Sicario is a movie about the children who live in a marginalized part of society and grow up with thoughtless families, violence, and crime. The movie explores the challenges that these children face through their life and how their living environment influences their future. The word *sicario*, which means 'hitman' in Spanish, refers to Jario, the boy in the movie who becomes a criminal and murderer because of his situation. *Sicario*, also talks about the corruption in the

police force and injustice in the society which ruins the innocence of the slum children and dirties their hands, in a sense. These children struggle with poverty, marginalization, violence, and injustice, and staying away from crime is not an easy choice when there are not many other options.

5.2.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Sicario's title sequence starts with the beginning sequence of the movie: a slow-motion shot begins with small numbers of boys playing soccer in a muddy field (Figure 5.9). The appearance of some people running into the soccer field to chase a boy causes the sequence to return to the normal speed, and the texts of the introduction stop appearing. The people enter the soccer field capture the boy on muddy ground and start hitting him (Figure 5.10). The long shot changes to medium shots and then close-ups and draw the attention of the viewers to the boy and the people chasing him. They call the boy 'murderer' and blame him for selling drugs and committing robbery in their neighborhood. Then they drag him off the soccer field and kill him with a gun (Figure 5.11). Jario, who is one of the players sees everything and even watches the criminal boy being shot by the people (Figure 5.12).



Figure 5.9. Boys playing soccer in a muddy field.



Figure 5.10. Some people running after a boy into the soccer field and capture him on muddy on ground.



Figure 5.11. They drag the boy off the soccer field and kill him with a gun.



Figure 5.12. Jario and other players are watch the scene.

The next scene is Jario sitting on the bus, and an old woman is begging in the name of “the Virgin Mother” from passengers; the credits begin showing again (Figure 5.13). The setting shows an underprivileged part of a city and passing through that, Jario observes the violence and arguments between the police and suspected criminals in the streets (Figure 5.14). He gets off the bus at a stop and goes to see his mother at the restaurant where she works (Figure 5.15).



Figure 5.13. Jario sitting on the bus, and an old woman is begging.



Figure 5.14. Jario observes the violence in streets.



Figure 5.15. He gets off the bus and goes to see his mother at the restaurant.

The typeface in the title sequence are a basic type of Serif typefaces, all in white color, and similar in all the texts including the movie title (Figure 5.16).



Figure 5.16. The font used in the movie title sequence.

5.2.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

Sicario's title sequence is an effective introduction that smoothly takes the viewers into the movie story. Several aspects of the *mise-en-scène* in the title sequence demonstrate a story about crime and violence. The setting and costume of this sequence including muddy soccer field, people's clothing, neighborhood and slum streets imply the world of poverty, and underdevelopment. The beggar woman in the bus, and her request for money for 'the Virgin

Mother', introduces religion and its function in disadvantaged societies. In many of marginalized and underdeveloped societies, religion and belief become tools for businesses and people to earn money because poverty and injustice make people forget about their desires, reducing their motivations to simply seek to survive. In this situation, children and youth are the first victims of the society, as we see in *Sicario*, in that Jario is a victim where crimes came to him.

The typeface used in the title sequence is chosen based on the theme and genre of the movie. The Serif classic typeface, as a formal type, is serious enough to match with the story of the crime in movie. Also, the plain white color of the texts and their simple composition make it easy to read the texts and draw attention toward the image. This feature is more noticeable in some scenes of the sequence, in particular, when people run into the soccer field, following a criminal and hitting him. This shows the importance of the scene and the title sequence designer's intention to focus the attention of the audience on this scene.

Sicario's title sequence is a simple but practical title sequence that does the general task as an opening for the movie. In terms of narrative, the main elements of the storyline are properly represented in the title sequence, and regarding aesthetics, the *mise-en-scène* and cinematography represented a general sense of the space and environment of the film. The title sequence successfully introduced the main subjects of the movie, which are children in a criminal world. *Sicario* shows that any children, aside from their origin or race, can suffer from poverty and marginalization, and violent criminals often arising from innocent children growing up in an environment of corruption.

5.3 *Amaneció de golpe (Suddenly Dawned)*, 1998

1h 40min | Docu-Drama

Director: Carlos Azpúrua

Writer: José Ignacio Cabrujas

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Amaneció de golpe is a documentary-style movie that includes original scenes of the Venezuelan coup from 1992 and related Latin American news around that time. Also, the cinematography of the movie including POV (point of view) and tracking shots, in addition to the style of editing, helps the movie seem to be a documentary style.

Amaneció de golpe is the story of the first attempt to overthrow the constitutionally elected government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez. Though the coup failed to unseat the civilian authorities, the events indicated underlying social conditions. One of the leaders of the coup, Col. Hugo Chávez would be elected as the president of Venezuela in 1999 (Baburkin, Danopoulos, Giacalone, & Moreno, 1999, p. 141). The events depicted in the movie represent an essential turning point in the history of Venezuela because, until that, Venezuela was one of the most stable democracies in South America with 34 years of uninterrupted civilian government (Baburkin et al., 1999, p. 141).

In addition to the historical importance of the movie, as the director Carlos Azpúrua insists, the movie is also “concerned with the emotions and reactions of a group of people that find themselves involuntarily caught up in a succession of events” (Gutiérrez, 2018). The movie is the second most expensive movie in the history of Venezuelan cinema, and it has sparked controversy by critics about the “clear distinction between fiction and the actual events of the attempted coup.” (Gutiérrez, 2018).

5.3.1 Movie Synopsis

Amaneció de golpe is about the night of the coup of the Venezuelan government in 1992 in Caracas. A rogue group of the military attacks the La Carlota, the president's official residence, in an area in which the upper middle and upper classes live (Figure 5.17). The movie shows the stories of different characters; their social, political, and personal characteristics, and their reactions about the coup. During the crisis, La Carlota's residents are virtual prisoners in their homes, not only struggling to survive, but dealing with their personal issues in their families (Figure 5.18). This unfolds while the media tries to pretend everything is under control, but it is different from what people around La Carlota are seeing: streets are full of protestors and their conflicts with the army (Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.17. Military attacks on the La Carlota.



Figure 5.18. La Carlota's residents are stuck in their houses during the coup.



Figure 5.19. What is happening in the streets is different than what the media shows.

5.3.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Amaneció de golpe starts with small stories of individuals who become involved in the coup. The lives of all the people are influenced by events, from wealthy politicians to the most underprivileged people. The film also shows clear vignettes of class conflict in underdeveloped countries. Poor and rich are living in the same location, but neither cares about the other one; this is shown to be more worrying when even the disadvantaged people do not care about each other and do not make any effort to improve their situation.

3.2.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The movie title sequence starts with a quote:

“May discord end! May the dust of this plaza not be reddened with the blood of its citizens, for many are killing one another to the enduring ruin of the people! Let there be love itself for all hearts. Let the people united say: this is the most beautiful way to heal the innumerable conflicts between innumerable men (Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*, 525 BC).

(Quoted by José Ignacio Cobrujas [...] in an article about the political crisis in Venezuela in 1992)” (figure 5.20).

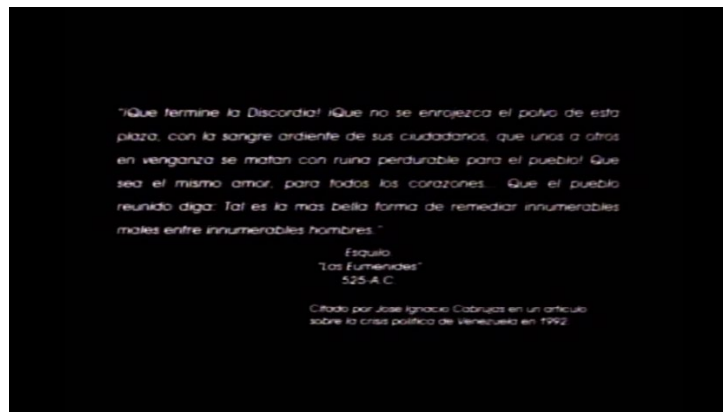


Figure 5.20. Quotation from Aeschylus.

The first shot is an aerial view of Caracas followed by a low angle shot of the fighter jets in the sky; and again, an overhead shot of streets, showing frightened people running away (figure 5.21). The sequence shows a war being initiated and in progress: military tanks, war equipment,

and snipers (Figure 5.22). However, among all of these, are demonstrators and politicians who give speeches depicting the conditions and describe the concept of a coup (Figure 5.23).



Figure 5.21. First scenes of the movie title sequence.



Figure 5.22. A war being initiated and in progress.

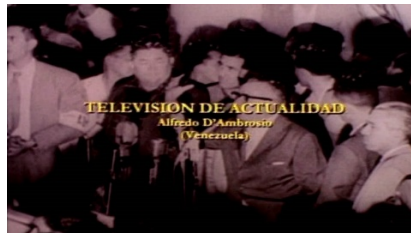


Figure 5.23. Politicians giving speech depicting the conditions.

We see the army against people in the streets, and people fighting with the military. Fear, anger, violence, and unity are shown in the scenes (Figure 5.24). It is followed by scenes of the dead bodies of demonstrators or military personnel being carried by others (Figure 5.25). The title sequence finishes by the first sequence of the movie: a woman is watching the TV news at home, and the military are on a mission in the streets (Figure 5.26).



Figure 5.24. Fights and demonstrations are happening in streets.



Figure 5.25. Many people are killed during the coup.

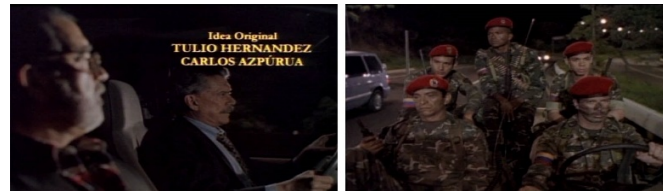


Figure 5.26. The last scene of title sequence and the first scene of the movie.

All the scenes in the title sequence are real images of the coup in Venezuela. The voiceover in the title sequence is a political speech about the coup and fighting against enemies of democracy. Also, the font used in the title sequence is a bold Serif font, all centered or left aligned, and in yellow (Figure 5.27).



Figure 5.27. The typeface used in the title sequence.

5.3.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

The title sequence of *Amenicio de golpe* looks like a documentary about the coup attempt. The designer chose the real images of the event to emphasize reality and the voiceover adds to the documentary realism. The cinematography and camera shots of the frames serve as an effective factor in the documentary flavor of the title sequence. Also, in terms of the *mise-en-scène*, setting, lighting, and colour combine in the title sequence to give the sense of documentary-style with the fear of a war. The simple composition of the texts, their colour, and the bold font of the typeface show that the designer aimed to make the texts easy to read as much as possible and have the main focus on the images in the background. The texts layout and their composition with the background is prominent, but the background definitely demonstrates the frame. Also, there is a majesty to the typeface, the colour, and text placement, which are designed to showcase the large-scale political machinations at play here.

The movie's title sequence, considering the political and historical setting of the movie, and with proper adoption of cinematographic elements and *mise-en-scène*, fits the style of the film and effectively introduces the plots of storyline. The fact that the movie is about the beginnings of Chavismo, the realistic look, political elements, and harsh images of the revolutionaries in the movie's title sequence are admirable decisions for showing the bitter reality of the Bolivarian revolution. The documentary-style title sequence of the movie successfully conveys the main context and shows the key points of the movie to audiences in a transparent way.

5.4 *Maroa*, 2005

1h 42min | Music, Romance

Director: Solveig Hoogesteijn

Writers: Fernando Castets, Solveig Hoogesteijn

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Maroa is a drama in which music becomes the inspiration for life. The movie is about the disadvantaged level of Venezuela: people who are struggling with poverty, crime, and corruption in the judiciary. *Maroa* is one of the important productions of Venezuelan cinema and the official submission of Venezuela to the Academy Awards in 2006 in the Best Foreign Film category.

Maroa focuses on underprivileged children in Venezuela, who suffer from the lack of education, and sometimes receive help and education from supportive independent programs. One of these programs that became popular in Venezuela and later in the whole world was *El Sistema*. “El Sistema is a community music program for underprivileged youth that mainly uses classical music and the orchestral medium as a tool for social development” (Lui, 2012, p. i). This educational program that started in Venezuela, aiming to “rescue” or “save” vulnerable children, attracted lots of national and international attention (Tunstall, in Bull article, 2016, p.122) and there seem to be a thousand *El Sistema*-inspired program in 55 different countries now (Bull, 2016).

The movie was directed by Solveig Hoogesteijn, one of the well-known Venezuelan directors, who directed other successful movies such as *Macu*. *Macu*, an eight-year-old child, must marry a middle-aged policeman to gain the privileges of being a policeman’s wife. Like *Maroa*, *Macu* is based on a true story of a young girl and the challenges of her underprivileged life.

5.4.1 Movie Synopsis

Maroa, an eleven-year-old girl, lives with her grandmother in Venezuela. Her grandmother is morally a questionable parental figure, and Maroa grows up around her and similar friends. After a criminal act, Maroa is arrested and sent to a detention center, a place for felonious minors (Figure 5.28) Maroa is interested in music and is naturally talented. Joaquín, a youth orchestra teacher from Spain notices Maroa's talent and mentors her to join the orchestra as a clarinet player (Dennison, 2013, p. 74) (Figure 5.29). Joaquín, as a caring teacher, gets close to Maroa and tries to help her in her personal life, too. He understands that Maroa has not had proper education in her life as a child, so he makes an effort to take care of her.



Figure 5.28. Maroa get arrested by police and taken to the detention center.



Figure 5.29. Juaquin mentors Maroa to join the orchestra.

Eventually, Maroa is able to achieve her dream of becoming a soloist, but this goal was met only years after she ran away from the orchestra and got back to her grandmother and friends

(Figure 5.30). Later, she lost her sick grandma, her criminal friend, and her caring teacher in the detention center.



Figure 5.30. *Maroa becomes a famous soloist.*

5.4.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Maroa grew up with different types of crimes around her: theft, drug, child abuse, and immoral people. However, as she says, she was looking for a reason to forget her sadness, and finally found it in music. Music inspired her in life and showed her the right track. Maroa was also fortunate to encounter a music teacher, Joaquín, who kindly and truly helped her and cared about her. This teacher-student relationship changed not only Maroa's fate but also changed the life of Joaquín. *Maroa* represents the innocence of children who are in criminal environments and shows that if children are on the right path and in a proper situation, they may shine.

5.4.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

Maroa's title sequence starts with the view of a wall that seems to be part of a favela. The camera, framing a long shot, moves and a young girl appears. She is walking cheerfully, and when a boy calls her 'Maroa', we know that the movie is about her (Figure 5.31). She walks in the streets and sells the cards and magazines to people (Figure 5.32). When she is bored, she kicks a can at the graffiti wall. Then, we see a vendor woman who is counting her money, and Maroa stealthy watches her (Figure 5.33).



Figure 5.31. The movie title and first view of Maroa.



Figure 5.32. Maroa sells cards in streets.



Figure 5.33. Maroa stealthy watches a vendor woman.

5.4.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

Maroa's title sequence is part of the first sequence of the movie and in a simple way introduces the audience to the criminal world inside the movie. The title sequence shows the story about a child labourer living in the slums. Taking the advantages of *mise-en-scène* elements, Maroa's outfit and her surrounding neighborhood depict that she is from a disadvantaged class, and this suggests the main story. As she walks through the crowd and tries to sell small goods, we understand that she works and sells cards and erotic magazines to people in the streets. Then, she kicks a can to a graffiti wall that says: *I'd rather paint than kill* (Figure 5.34). This implies that if the poor criminals are given a chance, they prefer not to commit crime.



Figure 5.34. The Grafitti wall.

The typeface for the movie title is a Serif Regular font that is often used for classic and formal topics. On the other hand, the name of the cast and crew of the movie are written in a different font which is a Sans Serif Bold font in capital letters that looks much more modern than the typeface of the title. Thus, we can see that the typeface used in the title and the one used in the rest of the title sequence are not only from two different styles and usually for different purposes, but also they are not in harmony with each other. Neither the classic typeface of the title, nor the Bold font of the rest of the texts seem to be related to the soft touching concept of the movie about a young girl and her dream of being a musician (Figure 5.35).



Figure 5.35. The typeface in the title sequence.

Maroa's title sequence has a common style of adding the texts on the first scene of the movie. This style is the most convenient way to make an efficient, simple, and practical title sequence. In addition, the cinematography and *mise-en-scène* assist in the normal features of a movie title sequence, such as introducing the aesthetic and narrative elements. In the *Maroa*'s title sequence, the audience can receive enough information, such as the main character and atmosphere of the movie through the setting, costume, and staging to enter the movie story.

5.5 *La hora cero (The Zero Hour)*, 2010

1h 40min | Action, Drama, Thriller

Director: Diego Velasco

Writers: Diego Velasco, Carolina Paiz

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

La hora cero is an action movie acclaimed by Latin American critics. It presents social issues in Venezuela, such as violence and poverty. The film was recognized as the Best Film in the Jackson Crossroads Film Festival and the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival in 2011, and was nominated for the Best Latin-American Film in Ariel Awards, Mexico in 2012.

5.5.1 Movie Synopsis

La hora cero is about a Venezuelan hitman, Parca, whose pregnant girlfriend, Ladydi, is injured and needs medical attention (Figure 5.36). However, the doctors are on a 24-hour strike on that day, so he forces his way with hostage to enter a private hospital and demands that the doctors look after his girlfriend (Figure 5.37). When the police and reporters surround the hospital, Ladydi and her baby critically need blood. Parca announces to the media that he will give up one hostage in the hospital for each new patient who donates blood. This makes Parca look like a hero to many people, but gradually, everything becomes more complicated and out of his control. When Parca realizes that saving Ladydi's life is difficult, he asks for a helicopter to send her out. In the end, Buitre, who was close to Parca, betrays him and gives his weapons to the police. So, Parca kills him, but he also gets shot by the police while Ladydi is flown away.

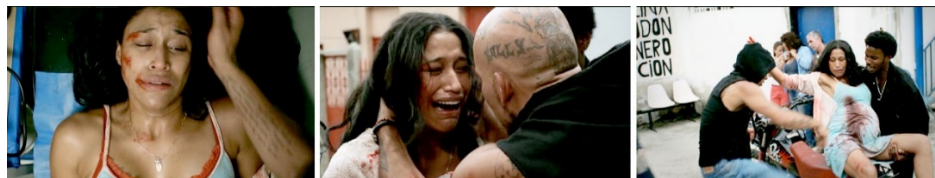


Figure 5.36. Parca takes Ladydi to the hospital.



Figure 5.37. Doctors are on strike and Parca kidnaps staff at the hospital.

5.6.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

La hora cero's drama set against a love story background. The movie is full of metaphoric scenes that are at the same time connected to and separated from each other. As an example, in the opening credits, two dogs are barking and fighting, while in the middle, there are scenes of people struggling with police.

Although *La hora cero* is known as an action/thriller movie, but it has a gentle love story behind the bloody scenes. The story of Parca, a fearsome assassin and simultaneously a lover who would do everything to save the love of his life, can be a symbol of the pure spirit of a human, that becomes darker due to outside forces from the social situation to the personal attributes. Parca, because of Ladydi, in one moment, decides to help poor people in his country. This makes him a champion among his people, but his actions could not save his life. As he said: "When your time's up, it's up... no one is spared, no one is innocent, no one is guilty." This also reminds the viewer of a scene where the police are asking questions to two of the released hostages. They stand next to each other, both of their hands are bloody, but one is a criminal and the other one is innocent. This can be the story of societies struggling with poverty, crime, and political problems; no matter how innocent you are or how you live, you are always involved.

5.5.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The title sequence starts with the bird's eye view shot of a city at night and then changes to daylight in dissolves (Figure 5.38). In the next scene, a starving stray dog is looking for food and is distracted by two people coming to the alley (Figure 5.39). A man is carrying a pregnant woman, both are bloody and panicked, and the woman is continuously screaming from the pain (Figure 5.40). The setting shows a squalid slum neighborhood and a narrator talks in the background. They see a third person at the end of the alley, a friend who helps the man carry the pregnant woman.

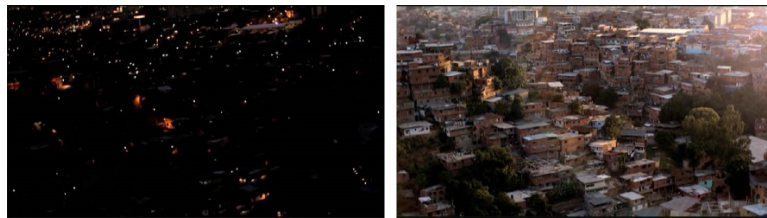


Figure 5.38. A bird's eye view of the city at night and day.



Figure 5.39. A starving dog is looking for food.

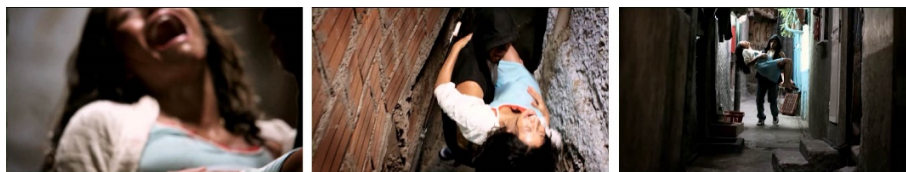


Figure 5.40. A man carries a pregnant woman.

Then, some news reports appear that talk about the doctors being on strike and there are pictures of newspapers with similar news. The cast and crew's names appear on a background of the newspapers with the sound of news on TV or radio (Figure 5.41).



Figure 5.41. Title sequence shows reports and newspapers in background.

The background consists of some illustrations and paintings of the individual police units which appear in smear-like transitions (Figure 5.42). Some parts of the news and reports talk about the ineffectiveness of the government and show devastated people in need of medical care (Figure 5.43).



Figure 5.42. Some illustrations of the individual police units.



Figure 5.43. Reports show devastated people in need of medical care.

The typeface used is usually reserved for titles in newspapers, but there are blood stains and smears on the text. These blood stains are in different parts of the title sequence and one of the principal elements. The last scene has an illustration of the Christian cross above the city, which changes to the real image and the movie starts (Figure 5.44).



Figure 5.44. The type face and last scene of the title sequence.

5.5.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

In the first scene of the title sequence, when we see an aerial shot of Caracas, there are small movements in the picture. This shows that the city is alive, but later, when we see the man carrying a woman and moving in an alley, no one is there to help. Instead, people hide. Thus, this sense of the city being alive implies the feeling that people either do not care about each other, or they are scared. When the second man comes to help and carry the woman, he says: “Watch out! You’re getting blood on my new shoes!”, indicating a lack of empathy as well as commenting on society in a materialistic and selfish manner.

The interviews and real reports in the title sequence illustrate that the movie suggests a true story, and this design increases the intensity by making the audience think about how people suffered during this trauma and by adding documentary flavor to the movie, makes it more impressive. Along with the illustrations of the police special task force, the blood stains and smears in the title sequence are the superlative way to prepare the audience for the violent genre of the film. The last scene of the title sequence, a wooden cross on top of a street, can have a meaning of death.

La hora cero’s title sequence tries to convey the violent sense of the story to the audience, not only in the first sequence of the movie, which is shown before the title sequence and we can count as a part of the opening title, but also the title sequence itself, has a lot of details and hints that prepare the audience for seeing violent trauma. From the skinny stray dog looking for food in the street (that starts licking the woman’s blood in the street later) to the interviews in the title

sequence showing people carrying their beloved ones and seeking medical care, all suggest a violent crime story to follow. In terms of the cinematography, the first shot of the title sequence, the bird's eyes view upon the city in the night and daylight, convey a feeling of ongoing life in the city. In the next scenes, a combination of the frequent long shots and close-ups, makes an effective sense of an accident and fluster. Also, different features of the *mise-en-scène* including the setting, lighting, and costume in this sequence is a representation of the main story elements. Thus, the viewer can expect a movie of violence, crime, murderers, and maybe love. The title sequence includes many of the key elements of the storyline and its manner conveys the theme and context of the movie to audience

5.6 *Pelo malo (Bad Hair)*, 2013

1h 33min | Drama

Director: Mariana Rondón

Writers: Mariana Rondón

Title Sequence Designer: Unknown

Pelo malo is the examination of attitudes towards race and sexuality in the slums of Caracas. The movie won many awards in the national and international festivals, and received recognition across Latin America, the United States, and Europe (Unknown, 2017).

Pelo malo is considered to be an important movie in Venezuelan cinema, not only because the achievements in national and international festivals but also due to the unique concept of the movie about quiet violence. New York Times called *Pelo malo* “a little gem of a film” (Farrell, 2017, p. 190). *Pelo malo* depicts violence, gender, homophobia, race, class, and politics in today’s Venezuelan society (Farrell, 2017, p. 191).

The movie was produced in the Villa del Cine, which normally produces films stressing admiration of national past heroes, rather than an examination of social issues, such as the symbolic violence in *Pelo malo*, or the physical violence going on the society (Farrell, 2017, p. 193). This was produced a devastating increase of violence in Venezuela, making Caracas the second most violent city in the world (Seguridad, 2016) and movie and TV productions had not been effectively active in educating people. This is notable when we see that small children such as Junior and la Niña, the only friend of him, are obsessed with the Miss Venezuela beauty pageant and follow the contestants as their role models. In one scene la Niña talks about her fear of being raped in the street and Junior tells her not to be worried because she is too ‘ugly’ to be

raped. The problematic point in this scene shows the real influence of the lessons of supposedly ‘harmless’ television shows on a person’s mindset.

5.6.1 Movie Synopsis

Junior, a nine-year-old boy, lives in Caracas with his mother, Marta, and baby brother. He has curly hair but is obsessed with straight hair and tries to straighten his hair in different ways (Figure 5.45). His mother sees Junior’s obsession with his appearance and becomes concerned that her son is homosexual. She takes Junior to a doctor who suggests Junior may need a stronger male influence at home. His mother, then brings her boss home to have sex with her while Junior is in his room and can watch them (Figure 5.46).

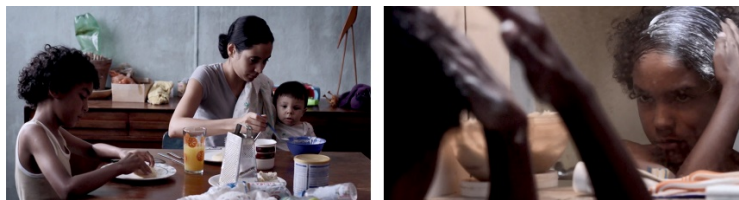


Figure 5.45. Junior lives with his mother and baby brother and is obsessed with straight hair.



Figure 5.46. Marta brings her boss home to have sex together while Junior sees them.

Junior’s only friend, La Nina, is a typical girly girl. They spend a lot of time at La Nina’s home watching the Miss Venezuela beauty pageant (Figure 5.47). At the end, his mother who has fears about Junior’s behaviors, forces him to shave his head and go to school like a normal Venezuelan boy (Figure 5.48).

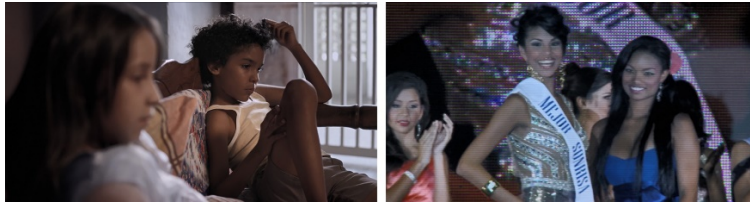


Figure 5.47. El Nina is the only friend of Junior and they play together.



Figure 5.48. Marta forces Junior to shave his head.

5.6.2 Concepts Developed in the Movie

Located in between the public and private sphere, hair is the most potent symbol of individual and group identity (Synnott, 1993, p. 103). So, for most women, “their hair is a site where power and social relations are defined. In the Hispanic Caribbean, where the history of colonization and slavery created a highly racialized yet predominantly mixed-race society, hair is an important bodily signifier” (Robinson, 2011, p. 120). The relativism of colonization and slavery, and the concept of the standard of beauty in the dominant white culture, like straight hair, fair skin, and fine nose or lips, resulted in the fact that women in the colonized society used methods to emulate the dominant model (Hooks cit. in Ortiz-Loyola, 2017, p. 421). In the movie, Junior’s hair becomes the center point between the racially accepted type of beauty and his gender definition. Junior is obsessed with straight hair and tries different methods to adapt himself to the norm of the beauty in his society. In other words, Junior does not want to accept himself with his hair and thinks that he has ‘bad’ hair. However, for his mother, the reason why Junior’s hair is ‘bad’ is because of his obsession. This brings up, in his mother’s mind, the possibility of Junior being homosexual, which for his mother is much worse than living in poverty (Farrell, 2017, p. 197).

Pelo malo demonstrates the hidden violence in private homes and personal interactions.

Bourdieu in Furrell's article indicates that:

gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims', exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition..., recognition, or even feeling...the logic of domination exerted in the name of a symbolic principle known and recognized both by the dominant and by the dominated. (Bourdieu cit. in Farrell, 2017, p. 194)

This concept of 'gentle violence' exists in many scenes of the interactions between Junior and his mother. Her aggressive behavior toward Junior, her suspicious look at Junior and lack of communication in their small family, are all different expressions of quiet violence hidden in her attitude.

5.6.3 Title Sequence Synopsis

The *Pelo malo*'s title sequence is summarized in the movie title in one scene, that is, there is a lack of a title sequence in the movie. The movie starts with the title "*Pelo malo*" and then the first scene of the film in Caracas where Marta and Junior are in a luxurious house climbing the stairs. They are dressed in simple, informal clothing, and we understand that they are not in their own house. Marta asks Junior to clean the bathtub and reminds him not to get his clothes wet, but the way she talks to him is not kind and maternal. Then she goes to the bedroom to make the bed, and Junior ends up lying in the bathtub instead of cleaning (Figure 5.49). He is enjoying the bath until a woman in a wealthy outfit comes to the bathroom and gets shocked by what she sees. This is when we realize that Marta is working in the house as a housekeeper, and the first sequence of the film ends up with her, madly wrapping Junior in a towel (Figure 5.50).



Figure 5.49. Junior and his mother are cleaning a house.



Figure 5.50. Junior lays down in the bathtub.

5.6.4 Concepts of the Title Sequence

Pelo malo is the only movie of the six selected for research that does not have an opening title sequence. Regarding the conceptual story of *Pelo malo*, we can assume that the lack of title sequence in this film is an intentional way of leading the audience directly into the movie. Since the primary role of a title sequence is to help an audience to get mentally and emotionally prepared for the story, there are two explanations that seem likely. First, the director may have decided that the audience does not need to be prepared to go through the story and instead, needs to be thrown into the movie. This can be because of the conceptual style of the movie, or the smooth pace of the film that inevitably takes the audience step by step into the story. Second, the opening sequence of the movie could play the role of the title sequence, with all of the different features of a title sequence, except the credits.

Although *Pelo malo* does not have a common title sequence, the beginning sequence of the movie summarizes the movie story and performs some of the roles of movie title sequence. The sequence demonstrates the general environment and the main characters of the story and with fitting *mise-en-scène* elements, such as costume and setting, gives a sense of the overall story of the film; a story about a worker woman and her son. With regards to the setting of the *mise-en-scène* of the first sequence, the black body on the wall, identified as artwork, along with the winding white bars of the stairs and lattice window, symbolize the rigid definition of both race and gender that have become a type of daily prison for Junior as well as for his mother (Farrell, 2017, p. 196). They find themselves in a prison of fear, race, white beauty norms, and sexuality.

This prison makes Marta ignore Junior’s existence and needs and, instead, focus her concern on his sexuality because of the gender norms in the society. The angle of framing in these scenes helps better demonstration of these feelings.

The typeface for the movie title is a Sans Serif typeface in bold font and in all in uppercase. Each words of the title, “PELO” and “MALO” have different textures and colors (Figure 5.51). The word “pelo” which means “hair” is in pure white color with no texture, and the word “malo” which means “bad” has a gray stone-looking texture. Considering the meaning of the word “pelo” in relation to Junior’s plain innocent character in the movie, there is a matching harmony between the character of Junior and the character of the word in the title. Also, the gray color and dirty look of the word “malo” in the title, provides a sense of the word’s meaning. In general, the combination of the two words with different colors in the title, conveys an existing contrast between the characters of the movie. The characters of the movie can be viewed as good and bad, innocent and guilty, or pure and dirty in the film.



Figure 5.51. The movie title.

The lack of a title sequence in a movie is not a usual procedure in cinema in general. *Pelo malo* is one of the few movies that follows Orson Welles’ style of skipping the title sequence in his movie *Citizen Kane*. This lack of traditional title sequences might be because the filmmakers want all of the attention of their audiences from the first moment. However, this style is still an uncommon method for starting a movie as title sequences are responsible for attracting the

viewers' attention. *Pelo malo*, representing different social challenges of people, points to a root of all these complications, which stem from and end in poverty. The concept behind the movie with its adaptation of the cinematography and *mise-en-scène* elements “captures violence located in the home, in relationships, words, gestures, and everyday messages on the television rooted in a contemporary Venezuelan hyper-politicized context” (Farrell, 2017, p. 207).

5.7 Conclusion

Analyzing the historical process of Venezuelan cinema indicates that the political and social engagement of the state in the film industry was detrimental to the national cinema and put the Venezuelan cinema in danger of losing the interest of local audiences. Although Venezuelan national cinema has suffered the vast influences of the governments, Hollywood, and political resources, there have always been filmmakers whose concern was to enrich the cultural beliefs and the understanding of life for their people. This is in opposition to the politicians whose intention was the manipulation of cinema industry in favor of their own benefit and ideology. These two strata of society increase the importance of cinema as a tool for shaping public opinion.

These challenges in the history of Venezuelan cinema might be a reason for inattention of the Venezuelan filmmakers to the title sequence of their movies. The lack of profound and intangible title sequences in terms of technical and conceptual aspects in the movies shows a distraction from this cinematic essence in movies. The minimization could result from the many obstacles and competing demands in the process of producing films. Obstacles could include lack of needed technology, sufficient budget, or skilled designers, which possibly existed before and after the Venezuelan revolution, and these pressures could result in a lack of dramatic changes in the movie title sequences in pre- and post-revolutionary Venezuelan cinema.

6. Chapter 6: Conclusion

The current study has been made in order to examine possible influences of revolutions on title sequences. Title sequences, although have been marginalized through the history of cinema, are an important part of movies and have an effective influence on the spectators. Title sequences help viewers to better understand the movie context and mentally be prepared to go to the world inside the movie. Thus, they function the same as opening medley of an opera or musical and they are as essential as a warmup for exercising or tune up for playing musical instruments. Cinema and politics have always been an intertwined phenomenon which have been influenced by one another. Revolutions, as one of the most powerful social events, affect all aspects of a society including cinema. Because of the strong efficiency of cinema and movies in educating people, they have frequently been manipulated by governments and politicians in favour of their ideologies. Consequently, the question arises whether these social and political influences on the cinema industry also effect the movie title sequences or not.

This study has examined three groups of six movies from pre and post-revolutionary cinemas of Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela, three important revolutions of the last century. For this purpose, the narrative and aesthetic elements of title sequences in relation to their whole movie were analyzed. The results of this analysis showed that although the revolutions of the three countries have not changed the majority of the films in the three groups, there was a significant change in Cuban title sequences of the post-revolutionary cinema. Among all movies, *Soy Cuba* (1964) and *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) appeared to have different title sequences than the other film in terms of narrative, aesthetics, and with revolutionary tendencies. The movies were produced by the ICAIC, the central cinematic institution of the Cuban post-revolutionary cinema. Cuba is the only country which a specific institution for an active pursuit of a new aesthetic by the government. This was not the case in Iran and different from the Villa del Cine in Venezuela, which functions more like a studio than a centre for developing new ideas. This implies that

revolutions could have an impact on movie title sequences as long as the act of making a movie, ideologically is tied to the precepts of the revolutions.

Based on the analysis of these title sequences from a 30-year period in each group, it appears that technology has a substantial and significant impact on the development of the title sequences. It seems that advancement in technology has improved the use of aesthetic elements such as typography, which include digitalized typefaces, and cinematography, which has different uses of lighting, camera shots. Consequently, we can say that title sequences are responsive to technology. The improvement of technology helped the filmmakers and graphic designers to gradually enhance their abilities in their representation of the world inside the movie, and to make creative title sequences with minimal limitations. However, a lack of technology has not been always an obstacle for many of the legendary graphic designers, such as Saul Bass, and they have succeeded in making ground-breaking title sequences with little technology. The total 18 movies that were analyzed in this study are among the most popular, successful, or important movies in the three countries. Based on this study's criteria, the most common problem in the low-quality title sequences was that they did not follow the aesthetic or narrative elements of their corresponding movies or could not represent a coherent visual continuity based on the style of their movies. Part of these limitations could have been a result of difficulties of using technology, particularly in the early decades of the 20th century, and part of it could have been simply because of the lack of attention from the filmmakers to this field. This analysis suggests that title sequences are globally improving in world cinema. As Abbas Kiarostami stated: "avant d'entrer dans la fiction, nécessité d'un sas, d'un vestibule" (before entering into the world of fiction, one needs a portal, a vestibule) (Solana & Boneu, 2007, pp. 48-49); hope all the filmmakers realize this essence in future.

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