

BAFTA Screenwriters Lecture: Alfonso Cuarón

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[Jeremy Brock] Hi, I'm Jeremy Brock, welcome to our fourth screenwriters lecture in conjunction with Lucy Guard and the JJ Charitable Trust. We are, as you can imagine, hugely honoured to have as our next speaker the four-time BAFTA-winning, two-time Oscar-winning writer and director Alfonso Cuarón. His films include *Y Tu Mamá También*, *Children of Men*, *Gravity* and his latest masterpiece *Roma*. I will be moderating a Q and A followed as always by questions from the floor, but before I do I'd like to give a context to what Alfonso is going to talk to. He became the first Mexican to win the best director award both at the BAFTAs and at the Oscars, two other Mexican filmmakers have since gone on to achieve the same. The Mexican New Wave that swept across our screens in the late 90s and 2000s, made the world acutely aware of the creative talent coming out of that country. The beautiful storytelling that has emerged from Mexico in the last 20 years is testament to Alfonso's pioneering talent, and I'd like to welcome him onstage to talk about the cultural shift that allowed such a wealth of talent to emerge from one place, ladies and gentlemen, Alfonso Cuarón.

[Applause]

[Alfonso Cuarón] Oh! I thought it was going to be a conversation, haha I thought it was going to be a conversation so...

[JB] We are, do you want to just start talking?

[AC] I'm so unprepared to give any speech, but no I'm very happy to be here and uh, as we were talking before, the reason I'm so excited is that rarely a screenplay is given a place in terms of the conversation of filmmaking. There's so much that goes to actors and the director's process, and rarely it's really explored the process of the screenwriter. I consider myself probably a screenwriter before a filmmaker. And that is that, there's a matter of process, there's a whole... it's the process of the thought out of making a film. Even, when I'm a director as well and as a director I'm as free, as strong is that thought out process, and that thought

out process is reflected in that screenplay. I believe that cinema is a language in its own form, in its own right, it's a language, that requires a lot of different tools.

The different tools, you know you have sound, you have performance, and of course, for certain kind of films, the films that I do, the narrative films, the screenplay is kind of the fundamental tool. But those screenplays should be serving, it's very different to write, serving a literary material, meaning something that is going to be, that the purpose of that is to be read in a book. As opposed to something in which the goal and the end of it is to be seen on the screen. So I think as screenwriters we need to recognise that film language, how that this particular art in which narrative is constraining time, and that's something that I find very beautiful because, when you're reading a book, a piece of, a novel, you get immersed, you get lost in those pages, but you're not bound by time. And what I find is that, the sense of time binds us with the now. When we are experiencing a film we are in one hand lost in that universe, in that experience, but by the same token we are breathing that experience for as long as it lasts. You know a book can last, you can read a book in two days or in four weeks; a film you end up watching just the length of it. And I think that that's something that is so important in the process of screenwriting, is that sense of the experience that we're going to have in real time. And I mean, I prefer, frankly I prefer, to expand this into a conversation and more importantly, to have the conversation with you if that's okay?

[Applause]

[JB] Shall we sit down?

[AC] Where shall I sit?

[JB] Come and sit here.

[AC] I'm going to steal this...

[JB] To steal the tea?

[AC] Yes!

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[JB] Great.

[AC] And again, I'm so sorry, I was so unprepared for that.

[JB] No, not at all! Not at all!

[Laughter]

[JB] Cosy huh?!

[AC] Yeah!

[Laughter]

[JB] So, first of all Alfonso, thank you so much for taking the time out to come and talk to us. You mentioned there the importance and the significance of time in film and in the filmed experience. Can I begin by taking us back a bit to the beginning of your career? And I want to just begin by asking you studied philosophy then you studied film in Mexico. What, at that time when you were young and unknown, were your cinematic inspirations? What were you looking to? Who were you going to hear talking or what films were talking to you at that time and inspiring you?

[AC] Well it depends, which period...

[JB] I'm talking about when you were a student at university, studying.

[AC] The thing is I was studying philosophy and film at the same time.

[JB] Right.

[AC] And, so one thing was pretty much informing the other thing. And this was the late 70's, so there was a lot of, in terms of cinema, well there was, the new German cinema.. you know..

[JB] Yeah

[AC] The Nouvelle Vague was still kind of ringing, but there was the post Nouvelle Vague, people like Alain Tanner, and uh,

there was together with that, there was all these crazy experiments, from the Germans. So it was pretty much a lot of European, that whole period was marked by a lot of contemporary European filmmakers. And this beautiful period of the Italians of the 70s, I'm talking about the Taviani, particularly the Taviani who were my favourite.

[JB] Yeah, yeah, you've talked in the past in interviews about your personal experience of life in Mexico, you've used the word, being scarring, can you talk a bit about how that um translated into the first film that you co-wrote with your brother Carlos, *Y Tu Mamá También*. What was the inspiration for that film and how did that screenplay emerge from the memories that you brought to it, how did that evolve?

[AC] Well, there was a complete different period than my studying years, that was probably twelve years after, and during that period there's a funny thing about how life works because at that time I was kind of recovering and trying to recoup. I was very into American cinema of the 40s. Particularly the 40s, maybe the 30s, I was in love with Lubitsch and Billy Wilder.

[JB] Billy Wilder and IAL Diamond

[AC] Yeah,

[JB] They co-wrote of course

[AC] They co-wrote yeah

[JB] With Martinis

[AC] With a lot of Martinis

[JB] With a lot of Martinis

[AC] Yeah, that's the reason I wanted to...

[JB] Yeah of course! Naturally!

[AC] Yeah, the um, so it was this whole idea of rhythm.

[JB] Yes

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[AC] And with Carlos, my brother, he's a writer and we would talk so much about rhythm.

[JB] Yes

[AC] And we wanted to do something that was precisely honouring that sense of rhythm, and it was uh and that was the focus but it was a period; I have to say that I am a late bloomer in film. I admire filmmakers that from their first film they already get it, you know? It took me a while to get it, you know, it took me many, many, many, years to start, and haven't got it yet..

[JB] Some people might argue with that...

[AC] Yeah but I'm saying it's, but to start having the sense, the notion of it

[JB] I understand, I understand

[AC] And, I have to say in my early films, it was always just trying to really do something that worked.

[JB] Mmm

[AC] You know?

[JB] Yep

[AC] I was so satisfied, even with Lubezki, my collaborator the cinematographer, we would say, if we do one scene that is good we're happy. You know?

[JB] Mmm, yeah, yeah. Um when, when... 'cause you talked about rhythm, often screenwriters talk about the music of a screenplay and there are analogies I think that work very effectively with music, there is a sense that one is orchestrating a story, can you talk a bit about how the storytelling of *Y Tu Mamá También* evolved, so what really strikes me about it as a screenplay, even though the screenplay is invisible, is that you are telling a very intimate story, against a backdrop that's as important, so the environment of their world, the disjunction

between privilege and poverty, the rights of passage that those boys go through with Luisa, did you, did you evolve what's become something that I recognise in your work, this parallel between character and environment, did that evolve as a conversation with Carlos, was that something that you were consciously imprinting in your script, or did you learn it as you went along?

[AC] Yeah in that, the thing is when uh, the way that *Y Tu Mamá También* happened was after many years of... that I consider maybe that I lost many years of my creative life.. uh being that the.. allowing myself to follow the, the siren, the siren...

[JB] Siren call...

[AC] The siren call of Hollywood, and that was informed precisely by going back to the reasons why I love film. One day I was very frustrated and I went, we still had video shops at that time, you know those places and I was living in New York I went and I just rented a bunch, there was like twenty something videos, I locked myself in my house, and great delivered food in New York by the way...

[Laughter]

[AC] And I watch, film after film of the films that I would just go through the video thing and start getting stuff that I recognised were the reasons why I loved cinema. And I was watching one after the other and it was the recognition again of this thing of... film is not just this thing of illustrative pictures, you know it's that, pictures and illustrated stories. Film is something way more complex than that and also the recognition that cinema doesn't owe anything to, to literature.

[JB] No absolutely not

[AC] Or to, or to drama, or to painting, it's... cinema is way more similar to music.

[JB] Mhmm, completely agree

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[AC] You know, it's an art that flows in time, that also is an abstract language, that uh, that flows with themes.

[JB] And it has the added complexity that at the same time, one is still having to stitch together a narrative that's coherent and that's one of the beauties of what I feel you've achieved in your work that I can see it nascent in *Y Tu Mamá También*, the ability both to um, control rhythm and tone, but to also tell a story that's incredibly enthralling, the story of these boys and their sexual awakening and the story of their rights of passage from a kind of innocent sexual bravado.

[AC] Yeah but the simple thing because I remember when I started writing with Carlos, after I finished that period I called my brother and said let's write a screenplay, come to New York let's write a screenplay, and he said okay, and he went there and we started talking about this, the basic premise of *Y Tu Mamá También*, of the two kids going with an older woman is something that we have, for ten years or twelve years, actually before doing my first film was one of the choices to do. And I'm glad we didn't do it, because we started talking about it and we start talking about how, by itself how uninteresting it was, and it was just yeah it was it was a silly fun story.

[JB] The frat movie story yeah

[AC] Yeah, you know, but we started talking about it was more interesting to explore who these character were, and to explore how their social class and their social context informed characters,

[JB] Yes

[AC] And how these characters by the same token informed that environment because coming back to your question and that's when we were starting the whole writing process was to be conscious about those, about the tension of those...

[JB] To stay aware...

[AC] Of those two layers.

[JB] Implicit in that is an anxiety that sometimes overwhelms other screenwriters because you're trying to hold an awareness of it as a piece of music and something that's tonally very pure unto itself, but at the same time to tell a story. One of the things that you do in *Y Tu Mamá También* which I think is very bold is you use third person voiceover and I'm interested to know whether you, as a writer or as writers whether you deployed the third person voiceover from very early on, or whether that was a discovery?

[AC] No it was, it was already, that was part of the reason why doing the voiceover I remember when I mention Carlos, and we need a voiceover and he refused to do this screenplay, he said I'm not going to do *The Wonder Years*.

[Laughter]

[AC] and I said, well no it's not *The Wonder Years* and I said there's a piece of music that I love and he loves from a German composer called Hansen, that is called *Tristan*, in which it's such a, it has this beautiful interludes of very melodic stuff. And then suddenly those pieces are brutally interrupted and there's the narration of this child. And when it happens it just takes you out emotionally, to get into a more reflective state and then springs back into these interludes, you know, and the result of that is, an amazing emotional depth. And then we started talking about Brecht, you know, and the whole Brecht, I don't know in English how you call the distance...

[JB] Alienation

[AC] Alienation, the Brecht Alienation, you know how... taking you out to engage rationally into the whole process. And then he starts saying 'okay, okay' and then I showed him, I think it was *Masculine and Feminine* that he hadn't seen. And he started watching and said 'okay I get it'.

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[JB] 'I get what the voiceover's doing..'

[AC] And 'stop, stop lecturing!'

[JB] 'Stop telling me!'

[AC] And that was the process and it was from there in the screenplay, it's described that the narrator comes out with no other sound.

[JB] Yes, yes it's very noticeable actually, the sound is killed and then the voice comes in

[AC] It's killed for a few seconds...

[JB] Yes! And it has precisely that Brechtian effect of taking you out for a second because you're aware that nothing's happening and then the voice cuts in. There's a particularly, we haven't been able to bring the clip up unfortunately for reasons of copyright, but there's a really lovely moment in the car, I'm going to describe it if I can...

[AC] Really you have copyright issues?

[JB] I don't know what's happened but anyway we're not allowed to show it, which is very, very frustrating, so I'm going to paint a picture with words. There is the moment in the car where Julio and Tenoch are boasting to Luisa about their manifesto and then there's a moment of silence and then the voiceover tells us about their private inhibitions, their intimate inhibitions, the loo seat... for me that's one of the most extraordinary moments in the film because it deploys voiceover, as both alienating but incredibly intimate and incredibly telling about the boys. In the writing, is that in the screenplay, how written is that? And how much did you discover that as you worked with your actors?

[AC] All of that was written in the screenplay.

[JB] Good.

[Laughter]

[AC] Yeah, it's...

[JB] This is exactly, but I think this is something that people, um we were talking about this weren't we earlier and we'll address it again with *Roma* but it's something that is a misconception about the screenwriting process, particularly with auteurs like yourself, that in some way or other vision is ultimately the property of the director on the set, whereas in actual fact what you, what you do in the screenplay is to master the structure and the dialogue and everything so that you can then liberate yourself, does that make...?

[AC] Well yeah totally I mean, and it's two things, it's the screenplay, but as important as the screenplay is, it's the thought out process to get to that screenplay and the more thought out the whole thing is, as a director when I arrive to the set, I'm free. You know, then I can improvise

[JB] Yes.

[AC] In *Y Tu Mamá También* then we would be free to improvise, most of the time, going back to, it was a full circle going back to the script, but also even if you find new things, are only because everything was so thought out and you have this amazing safety net.

[JB] Yes.

[AC] You know in which you can fall and you're going to be fine, you know?

[JB] I'm interested in, when you mention improvisation, when I've worked with American actors they very often treat the script as a rough guide. Which is deeply frustrating if you've spent, fifteen or twenty drafts, is there a sense that the improvisation is as much an opportunity for the actors to find their character? You say that they come back to the screenplay, how often in your experience have improvisations changed the nature of the scene that you'd written beforehand?

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[AC] It's not about changing the nature of the scene it's about making it alive. You know one thing is I recognise I'm writing, I have my conception but then I'm going to be dealing with humans that have their own ways of moving.

[JB] Yes.

[AC] And own ways of talking in which sometimes the rhythm that I'm setting on the page are not compared... and by the way I'm not Tarantino, Tarantino is amazing doing that, he's a writer that is about the rhythm of his dialogue, you know? My approach is a different approach; it's about trying to find the rhythm of the character. In *Y Tu Mamá También*, very often what happened is that Carlos and I, we are older than Gael and Diego and they were just making fun, Gael and Diego, of our slang..

[JB] Right.

[Laughter]

[AC] And, then they would change to their slang and it was fantastic but they aren't so happy because now younger people are making fun of their slang!

[Laughter]

[JB] Good!

[AC] Yeah, you know...

[JB] Serves them right!

[AC] They are, so then so that kind of stuff you know, in *Y Tu Mamá También* where we would.. the improvisation of *Y Tu Mamá También* is that here's the script, here are the pages, this is the dialogue, now and it was all the time, running each one of the scenes. We would say, 'we're going to improvise one minute or two minutes before the scene begins'

[JB] Yes.

[AC] 'Then we engage into the scene, and you're we're not going to cut, you keep on improvising until I cut', and that was more the improvisation.

[JB] Yes, yes, I understand.

[AC] And then improvisation sometimes would inform something that was already written

[JB] Yes.

[AC] But it was in the context of what was already there.

[JB] You've touched on this but in all your films the environment is as important as the characters and never more so that in *Children of Men*. Let's talk a bit about that film and how that development process differed from *Y Tu Mamá También*, I know that obviously for a start it's a PD James novel, so it's an adaptation, rather than public domain or personal. How was the experience of developing that screenplay different from *Y Tu Mamá También* for you as a writer?

[AC] It was not that different because I never read PD James' book.

[JB] Right

[Laughter]

[JB] You heard it here first..

[AC] Yeah, uh, what I read was the synopsis that was sent to me, one page..

[Laughter]

[AC] And, it triggered, I found the whole thing brilliant and it triggered the whole idea. I was thinking about what was, it was 2000 and I was very intrigued about the thing that were going to shape the new century, and when I read that and it was very serendipitous because it happened at the same time, when I read that I said, whoa this is an amazing opportunity to talk about this and

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immediately a move came into my head... and I started the mental process of drafting how would it go.

So I started working with Tim Sexton a collaborator, writer, and Tim said shall we read the book? and I said I don't want to read the book because I don't want to detour from this idea. But I said you read it and maybe if you, say you think there's something relevant let me know

And he said do you know there's another screenplay that was written? I said I'm not interested but you read it if you want. So he read this stuff and says okay, well, there's the book that is absolutely brilliant, it's really good but has nothing to do with what we're doing

[Laughter]

It's the character of Julianne Moore is the one that is burying the baby,

[JB] That's pretty different

[AC] There are no immigrants, it's about you know it's more about this authoritarian society, uh more like uh, like a leader, more Orwellian leader that is running the whole thing and I was interested about making a more democratic society that is going to be burned. You know to the edge of things.. just a little bit like today.

And about immigration and about all these themes and the screenplay was just a straight adaptation of the novel, so let's just stick to the plan. And from then on it was just about it was a similar process because the process was about how we were going to form all these other themes, you know because I was doing a lot of research about what was shaping...

[JB] You were reading Naomi Klein and John Grey weren't you?

[AC] John Grey, yeah the good misanthropist, John Grey...

[JB] Yes! The very nihilistic John Grey!

[AC] He's brilliant.

[JB] Yes, he's brilliant, very nihilistic.

[AC] Yes and people like, Todorov and Žižek and Saskia Sassen a lot, a lot of thinkers and that started to form the whole background, the whole thing. Also, we wanted a lot of this stuff just to be you know like, I don't know if it's symbolic of metaphorical elements because there was also a little bit of Foucault and an echo in the process... and as we were doing it, it was about engaging the two stories, you know the foreground.

[JB] Foreground and background stories

[AC] So one and the same

[JB] Yeah, which I think is a feature of your work. Coincidentally you mentioned uh, all those thinkers that you were working with. I know that our audience often ask this question about research, some screenwriters find it a black hole into which they never come back into the light, because this research can overwhelm you. How do you deal with what you beautifully described once as 'the tapestry of information', which I loved, as a description of research.

How do you deal with the necessary moment when you draw that down into a document? How do you stop yourself from flying off into the research and never returning? What is, for you, the process? Do you write treatments, do you write structure? How do you bring all those notes, down to a script?

[AC] Yeah, that's, it's very dangerous,

[JB] Mm it is, so dangerous...

[AC] I've been lost in the Bermuda triangle

[JB] We all have!

[AC] It's a Bermuda triangle and it's terrible

[JB] It is

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[AC] I uh, when things have been good, it's been like in *Children of Men* or even *Gravity* in which, before anything else was like strong concept, a strong idea of the narrative.

[JB] The initiating idea, yes.

[AC] You know? The narrative and how it was going to flow from the A to Z.

[JB] Yep.

[AC] And uh, and even, putting down in paper some of that stuff.

[JB] Yes.

[AC] And then the research starts to

[JB] Inform...

[AC] It's not, no because sometimes inform, but sometimes the research starts taking the foreground and you, and your characters in the background but just following that structure, that you're already... right before doing *Roma*, I was not going to do *Roma*, I didn't know I was going to do *Roma*. For a couple of years I developed a project with my brother Carlos that dealt with humans a hundred thousand years ago. Early humans, not an adventure, it was more a domestic drama, but 100,000 years ago.

[JB] have you read *Sapiens*, Yuval Harari's book about..

[AC] Yeah, yeah well... that was one of many that came after at the end of my research. I was more talking with amazing people here, at the Natural History Museum. And reading a bunch of books of very specific things about the early grains; or early theories of language; theories of how language was created; books about the fire; cooking; stuff like very, very specific things. So much, also relations, Neanderthal, *Sapiens* and the other species of humans

[JB] Homo Erectus and all the others.

[AC] Yes, the Naledians and all those other guys. And so much so that then we started writing the screenplay, when I felt that I had all this knowledge, what started happening is that I was so obsessed about all of that information to be conveyed in the screenplay, and at the end I got lost... you know I, there was the story more or less that we had set up to do, except there was, it was kind of dry, it was kind of... it was making sense, a lot of sense but it I didn't find the angle, I stopped finding the angle. I found it interesting but, I want to go back to that story eventually, but freeing myself from all that stuff.

And that happened right before *Roma*, and that's the danger of it, you know. I think that research it's an amazing, yes, it's this tapestry in which you access, but it should not be the one leading the game.

[JB] So you reached a hiatus with that project and then you went on to *Roma*, we'll come onto *Roma* in a moment. I just want to go back to *Children of Men* and another very powerful disjunction that you deal with in a lot of your work between privilege and poverty. And there's a moment in *Children of Men* where Theo and Nigel are talking about the art that's collected, *Guernica* etcetera, ostensibly to save it for humanity but really as décor. And, and there's a moment in *Roma*, and if you haven't seen *Roma* it's a masterpiece and I will try not to put too many spoilers in, but there's a moment where the forest is on fire and the privileged members of the party are still drinking cocktails and some of them are just staring at this devastation in a kind of numb way. You've talked about green spaces and about the importance of people breaking out and thinking more collectively. Can you talk a little bit about where that comes from in your life and about how important that is to you?

[AC] Well I guess that has to come, it comes from you know, one experience informs an experience. Mexico is a country in which you have... it's impossible to go through Mexico and not to see contradictions all the time, you know, not to see the most amazing

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beautiful places and the most beautiful expressions of generosity, together with misery and atrocities, you know. The developed world is different because the developed world outsources that misery, you know? And has created these green zones that those green zones even in the developed countries are becoming narrower and narrower and narrower because those green zones used to be the countries themselves and now even each country is becoming... needing to have their green zones because there's already stuff going on outside those green zones. So when you're growing in a society that is so obvious what is going on around...it makes you wonder...

[JB] Yes

[AC] You know...

[JB] One of the things you did in *Children of Men* was I believe you and your cinematographer agreed that you wanted to try and make London as much like Mexico City as possible and I'm sure it's no joy to you to discover how clairvoyant that film was, because here we are twelve years later and the immigration crisis and the climate chaos that we now have right around us was there in that film.

[AC] Yeah well, people were warning about that for decades now.

[JB] Yeah, but very few people were listening

[AC] Yeah but it was not yet... not a topic trend I guess.

[JB] Yes

[AC] And the, what is amazing is that now everybody, even people saying *Children of Men*, oh, look at that and, you know I was just...these people were talking about that like two decades ago and now it's happening. All of this these things that we're living, it was completely predicted two decades ago... Immigration, environment, this whole thing of the populism and

authoritarian states, I mean this is really, it's not news.

[JB] No, no it's not news. While you were developing *Children of Men*, you directed a *Harry Potter* and I don't really want to talk about *Harry Potter*, but I wanted to ask one question with regards to that just in terms of storytelling and to ask whether there was any elements of the storytelling that you were engaged in or that influenced you as you went on or whether that was a bespoke experience. Did you take anything from that experience? From *Harry Potter* as a storyteller?

[AC] Oh it was a joy to do, first of all you, you know you're engaging into something that has so much goodwill.

[JB] Yes

[AC] So there's a joy to do that, you know you're engaged in something that is beloved. The source material is absolutely brilliant, you know, and my only concern was rather than to do a fantasy as it was in the previous two films, it was more to try to understand these characters as people that really exist. That's the great thing that I really love about JK Rowling's books is that everything has a reference to real life. And that was the process of doing that. And the challenging thing is, I was not, I had never done and I was not used to doing, films that that have so much scope in terms of characters and stories and so much plotting... and that was so much fun.

I have to say, from the narrative standpoint, it's very joyful. And besides that, it was, as a director, it was my kindergarten for visual effects!

[Laughter]

[AC] You know, and it was brilliant and another side effect is that *Children of Men* was the film it was going to do before *Harry Potter* and they didn't want to do it, and after *Harry Potter* they gave me the green light so...

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[Laughter]

[JB] Exactly!

[AC] The magic of *Harry Potter*...

[JB] The magic of *Harry Potter*!

[Laughter]

[JB] So talking of visual effects, *Gravity*, now I'm interested again as always here at this particular series in the process of developing that as a screenplay. The thing that comes across so powerfully and poignantly is the theme of grief and how grief is expressed visually by a world without anchors and a world, in which death or even annihilation is split seconds away. Can I ask you about how that screenplay evolved with your son Jonas and how you dealt with the fact that you didn't have the conventional tropes of story, plot, narrative, that say you have in *Harry Potter*, how did that come about and what did you do to meet that challenge in the screenplay?

[AC] Well, that I owed to Jonas and actually the stories that I...he wrote a screenplay of another film that he directed called *Desierto* and he had the very early draft and I was reading that and said this is brilliant because he was making a big political statement in the context of a chase, a nonstop chase film. And the funny thing is, it's one of those films that now, when it came out four years ago or so it was kind of not really, it didn't...

[JB] Get picked up by many people

[AC] Yeah it didn't, but now they're starting to pick up on that because of everything that's happening in the US border, Mexico/US border. So, and I said well this is great, I would love to do something like this, as bold as this. And because he kept on saying 'look I like...your films are alright'...

[Laughter]

[AC] 'It's just that your films tend to be very rhetoric, and I, I get bored with that', he said. And the whole challenge was how to do a film in which we could convey the information or the emotion or the thematic elements, without talking about them.

And then we took the point of reference we took, we started talking about doing this and said well what if we do this, trying to bring it in a big scope. In a big scope but at the same time to make a big scale but at the same time making it absolutely...

[JB] Intimate, the intimate story about how..

[AC] A very intimate story, and we were talking a lot about *A Man Escaped* by Bresson which is a film about a man escaping a prison, that thematically is about many other things, you know but in reality is...

[JB] That's the framing device...

[AC] Yeah but in reality what you're watching is an actually quite exciting story about a man escaping a prison. And that was the point of departure for *Gravity*, and it was about that, it was this thing, he said 'let's make the images count', you know let's make the images be the power of that thematic element that you sometimes do in rhetoric with characters...

[JB] And again, not wishing to bang on about screenplays but presumably, all those visual images that are so rich and the very stripped down cinema that, that's very, very, very low on dialogue of any kind, presumably that's all written in, but before you start shooting something as massive as that I imagine...

[AC] Well, you really have a choice because something that was kind of tough and sometimes frustrating of *Gravity* is that we were constrained by the technology. So we had to, everything, even the performance of Sandra Bullock, I admire her performance because she was so constrained about timings about rhythms and stuff. I mean we had done a draft with Sandra doing a voiceover, just like reading the whole thing to

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try to get her cadence and her rhythm, but then she had to reproduce not exactly the same performance but the timings. You know, so everything was very constrained.

[JB] So there was a lot of technical constraints around.

[AC] Oh yeah, a lot, a lot of them.

[JB] Sure, sure, one of the themes that runs through all your work, but is particularly vivid in *Gravity* is, for want of a better word, the notion of incarnation, of birth, rebirth, of stillbirth. There's the extraordinary moment in *Children of Men* where that Christ-like baby walks through the warzone and everybody just stops and then there's Sandra Bullock in the foetal position and then in *Roma* there's the stillbirth...can you talk a little bit about what you're exploring when those images occur to you, what is it that's bringing those ideas into the films that you write?

[AC] Well a lot of that is instinctual you know, recently someone commented about those things and the funny thing is I was not really that aware of that, or of the connection of those things. Also someone commented that most of my films finish in the water and...

[JB] I didn't, I didn't notice that.

[AC] I haven't noticed that either.

[JB] But I am very aware that birth, rebirth, are...

[AC] I'm, and the thing that, my only explanation is that I have very little imagination [laughs] thinking about, to keep on going to the same things!

[Laughter]

[JB] I think yeah, again I think people would dispute that! let's talk a bit about *Roma*, I'm aware that we should give half an hour to our friends here because I know they'll want to talk to you. Just briefly on *Roma*, that's an intensely personal film, what do you do to meet the challenge of drawing down

memories into a multi-layered complex story? What was the challenge there for you in the screenwriting because memorial material from memory can very often, rather like research, take you down a rabbit hole. How did you control the material in the writing?

[AC] This is contradicting everything that we talked about because my process on *Roma* is unlike any other process I've done in any other film in any front of my filmmaking experience, not as a writer director, even cinematographer, anything.

[JB] Right.

[AC] The process of *Roma* was, when it manifested the idea, it had three pillars, and one, those are things that I respect and I don't move, are unmoveable, when I have some idea manifest it comes with certain pillars and you use...

[JB] Yep, they're there

[AC] They are there, one is that it was about this character Cleo, based upon one person a woman who raised me. I'm part of her family, that the process, the tool was going to be memory. And that is was going to be in black and white, those were the only three things and so the process had to be memory and that was about... all the research that you surely do in books and talking with experts was just like getting lost in memories.

And the thing with memories is that it's like this corridor with many, with an infinite number of doors, that which door that you open leads you to another infinite corridor with an infinite number of doors, and you keep on going from door to door and you get lost in what Borges talks about the place of 'The Gallery of Shattered, Opaque Mirrors', you know, because you start getting lost in door after door after door after door, and I allowed myself to get lost. And as I was getting lost new details were, and this is the thing, once you open a door, it's just that another many other memories manifest, you know, it was kind of very interesting, and more interesting

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when I start balancing those memories with the real life Cleo. And then learning about her memories, and it was a whole process like that and when I felt that I had reached like that point, I was sad to write. And I wrote the whole thing and this is the thing I've never written a script for more than three weeks. I believe that a screenplay you write in three weeks or thirty years.

[Laughter]

[AC] There is no time in between..

[JB] Everybody take note!

[AC] It's the um, and I'm talking about the first draft obviously.

[JB] Sure, sure, sure.

[AC] But in *Roma* there was only one draft because I decided what I was going to do was sit and write without any consideration to length, any consideration to characters, structure, any kind of structure, plot points or anything. Just sit and write. Almost like automatic writing.

[JB] Free form, yeah.

[AC] And trusting, being responsible enough or very arrogant to think I've developed a narrative muscle over the years that would take care of everything. And I would just write, I wrote for three weeks, I finished the screenplay and I never read it again and nobody ever read that screenplay, not actors, not the crew, nobody read the screenplay, the only person who had, the only one was my partner David Linde from Participant Films, he said 'well I need the screenplay just because of insurance, otherwise I cannot pay the money' [laughs] I said 'yes, but it's for your eyes only!' 'And he said 'yes only give me a draft' and I gave him the draft it was in Spanish, he doesn't speak Spanish...

[Laughter]

[AC] and I would open the pages, but I would never read the script from A to Z to check structure stuff like that. You know and, because I didn't want anything to taint the process. I didn't show it to my old collaborators like Alejandro González Iñárritu, Guillermo Del Toro, Pawel Pawlikowski or Carlos my brother, I didn't want, because I know that they would give me amazing suggestions that will make me kind of side-tracked and I didn't want... I just wanted to preserve the purity of those memories and the way they were.

[JB] It's a supremely confident thing to do I think and it's manifested in the film which is exquisite, so bravo. Can we, take questions from the floor because I know they'll be very eager

[AC] Do you remember, we were going to just show the whole relationship because I

[JB] Yes thank you, could we just bring up a page of the screenplay?

[AC] For me it's important to mention this because...

[JB] We were having a conversation just before we came out and the nature of the conversation was about how detailed Alfonso's screenwriting is, and how important it is to get rid of, forever, the misconception that something as detailed and beautiful as *Roma* just happens on set, and I wonder if you'd like...

[AC] There's a misconception that a lot of that happens, in this film or films that I know or filmmakers that are writer-directors, that those are directorial choices. If you're reading a Guillermo Del Toro screenplay, every single detail of anything of the character, or the laboratory or anything, the labyrinth of Pan's Labyrinth and stuff that you would say 'okay that's the director working with a designer', no, everything is so precisely described. Here the thing is, uh if we stop for a moment, because...

[JB] Could you bring it down a bit actually?

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[AC] This is a scene in which a car enters a garage, and when you see the film, you'll see there's a lot of different cuts and everything, as a director I didn't have to do anything but just to follow the screenplay

[JB] Yes, yes

[AC] And I think it's important because the film, for example *Roma* and they ask me if those are directorial choices and I said no those are writer's choices. In *Roma* it's filled with a lot of foreground/background and a lot of description of what is in the background and everything is in the screenplay. The film is very aural; there are a lot of sounds going on.

[JB] Sound is actually a character in the film

[AC] And all the sounds are described in the screenplay. I mean there is stuff that then you are looking for locations and you get informed and you add, but those are really little things that you add here and there. The whole thing, the core of everything is already described in the screenplay and I think it's very important because it's a misconception of, sometimes what is the writer and what is the director, you know going on...

[JB] Well this is a triumphant expression of how important screenplays are.

[AC] Talks about the waltz, you know about the musical that is there, there's uh, the engine shuts off and with it the music. Like it's when the waltz picks up the rhythm

[JB] Yep

[AC] You know like all of that is already there

[JB] And what's remarkable for those who've seen the film and even for those who haven't is that, this is the first time the character is introduced, it's the father, and this moment in the film is so predatory, so animal in its power and it says so much about the man we have not yet seen walk out of the car and informs so much of what then follows, and

thank you so much for sharing that with us because it's a triumphant expression of what screenwriting should be about. Is it alright if we uh...

[AC] Yeah, no let's do so, let's...

[JB] So we're gonna take mics around, we'll start there on the second,...

[Q] Alfonso thank you very much for sharing your reflections, I'm just curious to know about legacy and also what you're doing to preserve the future of the Mexican writers and stuff, I mean because obviously there must be writers out there in the Mexican film community who are still trying to get their voices heard. Have you, are you mentoring people are you... and in terms of, how does the, how is the local film industry doing at the present time?

[AC] Well, in Mexico, as opposed to the period that I was living in, that, making films in my generation was very difficult, even more difficult than the generation before mine. Now there's a very, there's an immense industry in Mexico, and that's good and bad because, right now it's very good in terms of there are jobs, you know and that's fantastic, a lot of the stuff is not necessarily great.

There's a lot of series going on and none of them, not all of them amazing. And what happened, my problem is there's so many jobs going on is that there's... a certain sense of discipline that gets lost. Because rather than people staying in one position and learning the craft before moving into another, or let's say uh, another position, very soon they become heads of departments. Like that happens with technicians you know, rather than learning the craft properly and being an assistant to someone who knows a lot, very soon they have the opportunity to move on and become the head of department.

And then what happens is that, he went to move into the head of department but not with all the knowledge he should have.

So it's a great thing and sometimes there's a bad side effect.

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Nevertheless, there's a, from the standpoint of the creators, it's so damn exuberant what is happening right now... it's really remarkable. I believe that the young generation of filmmakers is the best generation of filmmakers in Mexico, probably in the history of Mexico. They have an immense confidence, and that is fantastic. The whole thing of Mexican cinema in my generation and the previous generations, there was lack of really narrative understanding and now the narrative of this, the young generation is kind of second nature. And some are really exploring very interesting thematic elements; I think that... I'm not worried about the legacy of Mexican cinema.

[JB] Somebody has, we've got a mic over here. I promise we'll go further

[Q] Yeah hi, I was curious, when it comes to... 'cause a lot of, I think a lot of people are very impressed by a lot of technical things that happen in your films when it comes to the cinematography and stuff, so I was curious about when you're writing. Because you know you're going to direct, do you in your writing process think about how you're going to technically approach things and I suppose the second part of that question is do you think you would write differently if you weren't going to direct?

[AC] No it's, I don't think technically when I'm writing, that's the joy of writing, you're not constrained by technique. The sky's the limit when you're writing so it's fantastic. Mainly not my favourite... the process of getting to writing is maybe not my favourite but once I'm writing it's just, you get into the zone and it's so much fun. But the whole thing of the description is that same. I have collaborated with other people writing or co-writing stuff, and what happens is you just describe, you just try to describe... this thing is not to be read it's to be seen, you know and you try to describe, as much as possible and then I have seen stuff and the choices that other directors do. And it's great but then I recognise that it has nothing to do with the visual I was imagining, but it does with the

rhythm that you're setting on the page. Your interns, maybe did the shot or the thing in a completely different way, but did the shot, you know. They did the... or let me put it this way, 'did the moment', you know conveyed that moment and it's about that, when we're writing we're conveying those moments. So I think it's that the approach is exactly the same and in many ways I don't think of directing when I'm writing, I would be very limited and I want to be free when I'm writing.

[JB] That's a wonderful answer. So is there anybody with their hands up further up there...

[Q] Um, muchas gracias, um the main question is like with people of your calibre we're seeing so many doing projects on like streaming platforms and things like that. Do you feel there's still kind of like enough sense of wanting to give a shot to newer voices to kind of like move into the streaming platforms or do you think we should try as newer voices going through the normal path or kind of like smaller productions, so on and then reach out for streaming. Or do you think there's still enough room there for newer voices to develop and to push forward and drive?

[AC] I think that is something that is way greater than platforms and theatrical. That is cinema. Cinema is what is important. The other stuff are, they are annoying considerations of showing our films, in any moment of history that, I mean right now is the conversation between streaming and theatrical. Years before was just the consideration of trying to get your film into a theatrical release. The only difference I see is that right now there's a fight in which two things that had nothing to do with cinema; it's two economic models, are fighting and eventually it's going to come into a balance. But I don't think as a filmmaker we should be concerned about economic models, we should consider, you know, concern ourselves just in terms of film.

[JB] And storytelling yeah, somebody up at the back there

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[Q] Hi, I was just going to say, from when you get your original idea, when you actually start writing the script, obviously with *Roma* it was different, do you, how much of the plot points do you have in your mind already? And do you do it from beginning to end when you're writing or do you find it easier to move around the script a little bit?

[AC] Yeah, in except *Roma* that was a completely responsible process of just going into you know like writing in a free-fall. In the other screenplays, I cannot start writing until I feel that in my head, I had the beats. Actually Pawel Pawlikowski, he talks about your five moments.

[JB] Right

[AC] He talks about, you need five moments, and that's his process, mine is different but I understand what he's talking about. Pawel talks about, you have your five moments, when you have your five moments it's just about..

[JB] Finding the relevant flow

[AC] Yeah, finding the flow in between those five moments. In my case yes, I need to understand, I need to understand how I'm entering the whole thing. I need to understand the main conflict, if you might. And then I need to understand where is it going to, you know, so if not I feel very insecure. Uh except *Roma* because then I... when I finished the screenplay because I didn't read it again, to Carlos my brother I kept on saying 'it's as, it's that feeling that it's not narrative', I didn't know it was narrative in other words, you know and when he, when finally he saw it he said 'you cheated me' because it's uh,

[JB] Of course

[AC] Because it's very

[JB] Of course, because it's very narrative

[AC] But I kept on telling him 'it's you know I don't know if anybody's going to care about it'. This is a very abstract thing but generally speaking, I once I have those things, is when I can do my three weeks of just writing.

[JB] So I'm not sure where the microphone is but we have a hand up here in the middle... yep... thank you. And we'll come to you, so there's another one down here on the third or fourth row.

[Q] Related to a lot of things you're talking about about time, uh the relationship the viewer has, the writer has and the filmmaker has with time. I feel like right now because of the platforms, not to get too much into it, sometimes as writer you have a choice, make your screenplay 75 minutes or eight hours, and we'll go either way. And if it's eight hours can you make it 40 hours for the next five years. And you're still thinking of it in terms of 'oh I have a story A to Z, I don't know if I can do five moments and fill it in eight hours' but it's a different type of paradigm we're talking about now that you have a film that can stretch out. So I just wanted to know your thought on that, do you see a place for yourself in that world? And the idea that...

[AC] It is an amazing moment, look if you consider that the only reason why films are two hours long is a convention that it has, was inherited in the early silent films because of commercial considerations. And it was a convention that was inherited from the Vaudeville and the theatre, you know and also because it started making sense in terms of the amount of shows that you could fit...

[JB] Fit in the day.

[AC] Fit in one day, so if you think about that cinema inherently is something that is very philistine, you know, it is one more time, a business model. And what I find is so exciting nowadays is that cinema is going to, is trying to get free into exploring uncharted territories. For instance, short films; we call it short films when if you think about it some of the masterpieces of the silent films...

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[JB] Are short films.

[AC] Are short films, but they are not short films, they are films. And when you call it short film, you're already doing some, you're calling it that in a very pejorative way, a film...

[JB] Yes, yes, you're suggesting that it's not the full meal.

[AC] Yes that it's not a full film. And if you see some works of some amazing masters, are films that sometimes are 10 minutes long or seven minutes long or 15 minutes long. So I think it's time to start just erasing those definitions and also it's, I remember, there's a great filmmaker, a German filmmaker called Syberberg, that Syberberg used to do these very crazy things with Wagner operas that lasted like seven hours, you know, and it was just such a treat to sit there and get lost in the madness of that. And right now I think that there's a great opportunity now. I'm talking about cinema. What we're experiencing a lot with platforms is not necessarily cinema; it's more, more connected with TV. That is a different thing, it's fantastic, it's a great thing, I enjoy them and they're romps and I can do my brain to watch but I'm watching, I'm getting lost in a soap or in a series but not because of the cinematic value of the thing. I'm getting lost in story, in many ways it's becoming a media for lazy readers you know.

[Laughter]

[AC] What I am more intrigued about is cinema and what you're talking about of stretching your five moments or turning, why five moments, why do Pawel, do fifty moments you know? Be more like the *War and Peace*, *War and Peace* you know. *War and Peace* is not five moments, you know so it's about stretching that but as long as *War and Peace* has as much literary power as a short story by also Tolstoy that is *The Winter Night*. You know and if you can achieve the whole thing in what is fifty pages that's *The Winter Night* or the hundred pages that is *War and Peace*, in a cinematic form, now that

platforms are giving that opportunity, fantastic. And by the way that's not to put down series, I enjoy them, I'm writing one! You know just because it's so much fun! I'm writing one because it's just, you don't have the constraints of the hours, you just keep on developing your character, you keep on developing story. You don't have to telegraph stuff. I think it's amazing!

[JB] We have someone down here on the third row.

[Q] Yeah I was interested to know what your advice to screenwriters is on sort of listening to notes, and like when uh, especially kind of producer and financier notes and when they're useful and when...

[AC] Those never!

[Laughter]

[AC] Those never [Laughs] no, no, listen to them, nod and say 'great ideas, let me think about them'

[Laughter]

[AC] But go on, go on...

[Q] I think that's the answer really!

[Laughter]

[JB] I think you won't get a more concise or acute answer than that, is there anyone else with a hand up? So in the middle here, could someone get a microphone?

[AC] But by the same token, find your trusted collaborators that are mean to you, and that is for momentum. There is nothing meaner to me than for instance Guillermo Del Toro.

[Laughter]

[AC] No! It's fantastic! I'm so grateful with him, or Pawel! The film about the early humans, Pawel read it and this was, this is how he killed me, this is how he killed me he said in his Polish...

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[JB] Yes in his Polish

[AC] He said 'yes, this is... I'm sure it's interesting... it's just a universe I don't give a damn about'

[Laughter]

[JB] Yep, wow! Thank you so much for that! Somewhere in the middle, I'm sorry I can't really see there.

[Q] How do I follow that? You talked about five moments and something I completely agree with with cinema, what were the five moments that guided you through *Gravity*?

[AC] Wow, I guess it was, it was uh, the triggering the whole thing into her getting lost in space. I'm pretty much, it was probably three moments. It was because there was a point in which we wanted just to do a whole film. The whole very first idea of Jonas, and I betrayed, is that there was not going to be any other character that we see. There was no George Clooney character, it was only going to be the centre character, and it was mostly about her getting lost in space and keep on rolling and rolling and rolling into the void. And, it pretty much was that and then getting back into... I remember we were talking about getting lost and we were talking with the tools that we had there that we knew existed over there. There was the Hubble Telescope, the International Space Station, the Soyuz and the Chinese station. Because the Chinese station, when we were doing it they had just launched it and we figured by the time we finished the movie it would be completed.

[JB] It would be up there

[AC] And now even fell you know. You see at the end that the Tiangong goes into the atmosphere and there are photos of that, it's fantastic. I mean it's fantastic because it happened. I mean it's not a good thing probably

[Laughter]

[AC] So those were the moments and then the whole thing of her coming back. But yeah it was pretty much structured about the bases; we used to go like the bases. The bases that we had available in space.

[Q] The reality?

[AC] Yeah

[Q] Thank you

[JB] Are there any other hands up?

[AC] And each one then, well we discussed this, in each one of those bases what was the emotional value of each one of those?

[Q] What were they?

[AC] Well one is a sense of rebirth, another is a moment of gestation. You know and at the end is pretty much the moment of birth.

[JB] Of reincarnation almost yeah... at the back somebody's there with the mic.

[Q] Hi, I really loved what you said about when you did the *Harry Potter*, how joy filled it was and I wondered for you as a writer how important is joy to you?

[AC] Yeah that, you know, joy is the thing that has to lead the process. And that's, if I have to define the moments of joy in the process of filmmaking for me, it's writing. Again because the moment that you're alone, there are no limitations, there's no constraint of time, there's no constraint of money, unless you have to pay the rent and then you have to deliver the draft!

[Laughter]

[AC] And that is the moment. And it's not only *Harry Potter*, it's just every single moment of writing is just, I love when you get lost and if you're, you know if you have to travel, instead of getting, falling asleep in the plane or watching a movie that is fantastic, to watch bad movies on planes.

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[laughter]

[AC] Not good movies, bad movies.

[JB] Yes bad ones!

[AC] Bad movies, and you cry!

[Laughter]

[JB] Yes, lack of oxygen! Lack of oxygen it does wonders!

[AC] Do you know that when you're flying you cry, and it's great but you even...don't do that because you just want to keep on writing and it's just such an amazing thing and you just get lost in that zone. Because, from then on everything goes downhill.

[JB] Yes.

[AC] You know it's just, the rest of the process is painful

[JB] It's the only moment of infinite possibility because everything after that is an interpretation.

[AC] It's an interpretation yep.

[JB] Yep, there's somebody up at the back I believe.

[Q] Me.

[JB] Yes, so they're just up there.

[Q] So, the words cinema and cinematic gets thrown around all the time, and I just want to know what it is to you, what is cinema to you? What are those elements?

[AC] Yeah, for me it's this language in which, that is a language in its own right. In that um, in which all of these, all of these other things around are just tools for that, for the sake of that language. And what I'm saying is that, you have seen other expressions of amazing, amazing, amazing films and masterpieces that have been done without sound. Without

music, without colour, without actors, even without stories but there is not one single masterpiece that has been done without images. You know and this is the thing is, the image flowing in time and it's this thing of how what matters is those images flowing in time and whatever is there, is there that is represented, is um, I'm not really interested in illustrated stories, you know, and that's the easy thing of a lot of the series, they are fantastic and I love watching them because I can watch most of them with my eyes closed.

You know, I can be doing stuff and I'm following this show, once in a while I come back and we stop and go back a little bit, I'll say 'oh wow!'

[Laughter]

[AC] But most of, I have to say most of contemporary mainstream cinema is the kind of cinema that you enter the theatre, you get your popcorn, you sit down the lights go off, you close your eyes you eat your popcorn, the movie ends and you didn't miss one bit. You know it's more like, again, it's more like books for lazy people. And when it's about cinematic is when the dance between the elements are greater than the sum of the elements.

[JB] Mhmm.

[AC] And that is what is amazing, that is what I consider cinematic.

[JB] Thank you.

[Q] Thank you.

[JB] Time for two more. Somebody's very patiently waited down here, the microphone's there so we'll take that question and then the last one will be down here at the front. Thank you.

[Q] Hey Alfonso, thank you for the inspirational conversation, I just had a question about the process of making your films. When you did now the film with Netflix *Roma*, was the process different than when

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you do it with a classical studio, did they try to influence you in any way or did you have complete freedom?

[AC] No the film was not produced by Netflix; the film was produced by Esperanto Filmoj and Participant Media. Then we sold it to Netflix for distribution, it's a completely different... I mean and but even if I, if I had done a film with Netflix you know Originals, they had financed it from the beginning, that wouldn't change anything. I mean it's, do you change how you do your films if it's going to be produced by Warner Brothers or Twentieth Century Fox? I think it's so important to stop like separating, you know like, those are economic models again. Those are just, had nothing to do with the work of cinema. I think that by the way, it's a film that is shot in 65mm with Dolby Atmos, you know, obviously it was not, no film that I will do is meant to be seen in a telephone, you know. If somebody chooses to see it like that well that's their choice but I hope that people who care about the art of cinema, they will want to see it in a big screen. As I hope that, please if you happen to see *Roma*, please try to see it in a big screen.

[JB] Mhmm, absolutely, last question down here on the front

[Q] This corresponds to the previous question about what is cinema and cinematic language. And your cinematic language specially *Roma* is very soulful, it has a kind of grace and wondered if that's an element that you consciously feed into the writing or it's just something that comes out of you naturally and you don't think about it, this soul?

[AC] I don't really think about it, I think about the elements.

[JB] Mhmm.

[AC] I think a lot about the elements that are going to comprise the thing and most of those elements are in the screenplay. And that's the thing, that's what I love about

screenwriting. I don't consider myself a writer because I don't know if I could write a book. Because what I try to write is to provide those elements in the page that can be transforming to a cinematic experience. You know, and I love the combination of sounds and characters and dialogue but also of the context of everything that is around, but also on the page there's... I try to describe a sense of time, you know, I'm not a believer of the economic writing, and maybe it's wrong, it's the economic writing that is just minimum description, dialogue, minimum description. Because I feel that that sometimes lies in terms of the flow of time. I prefer that if it's going to be, something that at the end is going to last four minutes, is represented...

[JB] Mmm, on the page.

[AC] On the page.

[JB] Absolutely, absolutely.

[AC] You know, and that is what I, I don't love screenplays when they just describe that there's going to be a very big battle and they use fill words to convey a sense of battle. Because a battle itself, is a structure in time. So even, again if the director is not going to follow every single one of the beats, that in the page to have that sense of the rhythm and how that battle is going to flow...

[JB] It's not enough to say the army marches into town

[Laughter]

[AC] Exactly, there you go.

[JB] Just before we finish, I wanted to ask you Alfonso, what your contemporary self now would say to your younger self if you had one word of advice?

[AC] You guys always do that!

[Laughter]

[AC] I'm the worst at giving advice!

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[JB] What would you say?

[AC] Talk to Guillermo! Hahahaha

[Laughter and applause]

[JB] That's a good piece of advice! Talk to Guillermo. On that happy note, I'm sure Guillermo's ready to take everyone's calls, I would just like to say from all of our hearts, thank you so, so much, you have been so generous, thank you.

[Applause]

[AC] Thank you, thank you!

[Applause]

[JB] Thank you so much.

[Applause]

[JB] Now let me take you for another cup of tea.