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GENDER, CORPOREALITY AND SPACE IN ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ IÑARRITU'S *AMORES PERROS*

Abstract: *Amores Perros*, Alejandro Gonzalez Iñaritu's box office hit immerses the spectator in a series of uncomfortable images of bodies. The corporeal stance colonizes the screen with visceral force. The nodal scene of the picture features a car crash which reunites the three narrative lines and at the same time displays with swift and intense force the damage inflicted upon the characters' bodies by the accident. This is one of the first clues suggesting Iñaritu's emphasis on the body as privileged medium of conveying meaning in *Amores Perros*. The cinematic language pertains to a persistent viscosity and identity fragmentation which is conveyed with the help of specific artistic means and through a unique corporeal aesthetics. The object of the present endeavour is to ascertain whether *Amores Perros* preserves stereotypical approaches in its depiction of bodies. Using the analytical tools provided by film studies, French feminism, gender studies and psychoanalysis, the present inquiry places the corporeal instance in relation with space and gender issues.

Key words: gendered identity representations, visual stereotypes, corporeal and spatial narratives, abjection and viscosity, scopophilia and the fourth gaze

Introduction

It was argued that identities are “constituted within, not outside representation”¹. The limited number of variations accessible to the individual in the process of acquiring an identitary definition is therefore reflected in the range of available representations. Cinematic discourse is not only a passive reflection of the possibilities available to individuals in their constitution of themselves as gendered subjects. Identities are constructed through adhering to certain tropes put in circulation and reinforced via the numerous media exploiting the powerful tool of the image. The necessity to ascertain if cinematic productions contribute to the reiteration of tedious stereotypes or open virgin grounds in what identitary constructs are concerned emerges therefore as a paramount area of research.

The nomadic journey which constitutes the individual subject finds the body as one of its privileged sites. Pushing beyond a Foucauldian stance, the body reveals itself not only as the passive recipient of social and cultural influences and pressures, but as the surface where resistances or domestication are inscribed. The body mirrors the individual journey towards the articulation of a personal narrative in relation to cultural constructs. Both the passive and disciplined body, as well as the conflictual and restless one reveal the subject's position regarding normative social and cultural prescriptions.

The manner in which the body is represented becomes therefore emblematical for the agenda of a certain cultural product. The resistance to stereotypical tropes or the unconcerned reinforcement of normative constructs are sometimes very clearly exposed by filmic captions of bodies.

Body and space

To consider the cinematic reproduction of bodies in relation to place and space, it seems sensible to start with the question of the theoretical rapport between the spacial and the corporeal instances.

Following the Cartesian division between subject and object, our conception of the body has evolved under the threat of ontologically assimilating bodies to the realm of objects.² The binary opposition mind/body reserved an unprivileged position for the body, as being marred by specificity, sullied by abjection and disruptive for the production of neutral and rational knowledge. The cinematic representation of bodies was regulated therefore thoroughly regarding the ways in which corporeality can be captured; the objectification of the body required strict norms which reiterated bodies as veiled presences, but it also indicated the rules of unveiling them.³

Environment in cinematic language opens up to privileged associations, as it is theoretically considered the co-relative of interior, mental space. The process of offering clues about the characters' subjectivity and state of mind through specific spacial settings or through the chromatic manipulation of topography is a well-known tool in the art of the moving image. The association was underscored with reference to *Amores Perros* itself: "interiors [...] point towards [...] state(s) of mind".⁴

Ascertaining whether the modes of inscribing the corporeal instance in space respond to representational stereotypes or resist them involves an analysis centred on whether the cinematic material maintains the same tedious dichotomies (mind / body; internal / external space; depth / surface, etc.).

a) Confinement and alienation

In many instances, in *Amores Perros*, the characters' bodies are confined, being allowed only restrained mobility and spacial flexibility.

The domestic interiors metamorphose into cages, foreclosing any means of escape for the protagonists. Their bodies agonize under the pressure of the claustrophobic enclosure, emanating putrid whiffs of violence, misplaced sexuality, hysteria and decay, regardless of their social positioning.

The working-class interior of Octavio's house is "dense, crowded and visually differentiated from room to room"⁵ - the red room confines Susana and Ramiro's space of sex and violence; the blue one is Octavio's TV and cigarettes impregnated interior.

Valeria's story is shot almost entirely within her sterile new flat; here we can discern most clearly the intricate relation between the constraining space of the home and bodily decay. The locked door of her room finally establishes the causal connection between the amputation of Valeria's leg and the restrictive space of her home.

In one of the first shots of Valeria inside her new flat, space and image superimpose to offer the spectator a clue about the outcome of her story. We see her parallel to a painting of a woman whose body is restrained in a cocoon-like wrap (Fig.1). She is, although with different connotations, as much a captive of her corporeality as Susana is; the narrative feels the threat of her over-sensual presence and needs to deal with it in a restrictive manner. Valeria's body dominates her life inasmuch as its image insistently dominates her space (the gigantic billboard in front of her window and the set of shots on her wall establish her body as means of supporting her existence and ultimately her relationship with Daniel). Faced with the threat of this sensuous phallic presence, the narrative moves towards castrating the *femme fatale*, as a means of restraining her menacing corporeality.

Also, Chivo's home is dirty and cluttered (Fig.2), a non-space which visually sustains the lack of visibility of his own social position. His body is as penetrated by decay as his house. Chivo shares his living space with his dogs, thus engendering the threatening theoretical analogy between the corporeality of the body and the proximity of animals. He eats with his dogs, they lick his toes in the morning (Fig. 3), and finally, Chivo recognises his alter-ego in one of them. Chivo's bodily space and living space intertwine in constructing his image as dwelling at the confines of animality.

Upon deciding to change his life, both body and living space suffer alterations. He leaves his house (where the two brothers remain to fight for survival while still partially restrained), setting out into the wilderness on the edge of the city. Previously, he is pictured trimming his beard, cutting his nails (Fig. 4) and repairing his glasses. Removal of facial hair and acceptance of the real details of the world in his field of vision act therefore as markers of his return into the society. The meaning of his gesture emphasises the compulsory domestication of the body required by social and cultural normativity. Taming the body is therefore a *sine qua non* condition of access to social space.

The metaphor of the caged body functions not only in relation to fixed, domestic spaces, but is present also in environments conveying a sense of accelerated rhythm, speed and mobility. As Paul Julian Smith remarked, Gonzalez Iñarritu "chooses to show no trace of the very particular and popular public transport in D.F.: the excellent metro, handy *peseros* [...] and distinctive green Volkswagen taxis. Characters are confined to private cars, which are in the city, but not of it."⁶ The bodies are trapped in cars speeding through the anonymous "space without place" of the megalopolis. The same meaning is preserved through insistent shots of bodies through vertical blinds, emphasising a corporeality that can only be represented in association with constraint and incarceration.

These visual tropes reproduce a sense of decenteredness, articulating a narrative of social atomization and alienation. The caged body develops pathological responses and the texture of all relationships mutates. Relations between people have been replaced by failed relations between objects; there is always a faulty mediator - the telephone calls which reach the wrong addressee, the dogs which operate a sublimation of hidden urges (Cofi, but also Chivo's dogs), etc. The blockage in relationships is inscribed in the corporeal geographies of the protagonists: Valeria's lost leg, Susana's bleeding ear (Fig. 5), Ramiro's distorted face (Fig. 6), Octavio's visible skull mark (Fig. 8). The body becomes therefore the surface where the narrative is physically inscribed.

Like a Mobius strip, the epidermis expands both inside and outside the body, creating a continuity between space, bodies and text that reminds us of Lyotard's *pellicule*, the "great ephemeral skin", a model of body which permits neither absence nor alterity.⁷ The parallel to Lyotard's tropes becomes more visible if we read *Amores Perros*' corporeal topographies in the framework proposed by the beginning of *Economie Libidinale*: "Open up the so-called body and spread out all its surfaces."⁸ That is precisely the manner in which Gonzalez Iñarritu utilises the body, demonstrating at times a morbid and perverse curiosity towards his characters' corporeality.

He feels the need to insist on Valeria's scars (Fig. 7), to superimpose images of violence and sexuality, to graphically depict the blood of Chivito's victim sizzling on the hot plate.

The director of photography uses pioneering techniques (namely skip-bleach in post-production) in order to enhance the contrast of colour and tone within the frame.⁹ This last technique was used with the intention to make the nuance of red in depicting blood look more intense. The insistence on bringing forward the visceral details of human bodies reveals an insidious effort to emphasise the animality of our physical structure. Also, the persistence in the visual field of bodily surfaces institutes corporeality as a threat; the menace of an all-engulfing animality is always present and the narrative tensionally struggles to contain this peril by offering as an alternative the conservative morality associated with family values (and especially with the much-lamented absent father).¹⁰

Intradiegetically, the relationship between body and space is a nocive one, as spacial confinement affects bodies negatively. Chivo's story is the only one which allows the character to escape the loop. In his case, escaping the menace of corporeality is necessarily conjoined with leaving his home. The negative repercussions of bodiliness expand therefore upon the spacial element – the cage and the captive are constructed as interdependent slip zones of the same continuous surface. The textual product depicts body and space in interaction with each other, sustaining a mutual relationship, which overturns the classical binary structures attached to their representation.

b) Permeable spaces

Commentators have noticed in *Amores Perros* a rigorous separation of private space, controlled and strictly delimited, from external space, the violent environment of the city. Chivo's decrepit compound and his daughter's luxury home have a common element: they are both protected by strong metal gates. The function of this is at once "social and psychological: to keep out the horror of the city beyond."¹¹ The domestic

space is constructed as a counterpoint to the violence of the megalopolis. The persistent association of violence with urban space attracted great deal of criticism for *Amores Perros*, as representations of chaotic and syncopated violence became the new exoticism in terms of representational tropes referring to Latin America.¹²

The exquisite turn in Gonzalez Iñarritu's film is that the threat does not come from outside, but from within the domestic womb. The hole in the floor of Daniel and Valeria's flat is the most explicit depiction of this insidious invasion of the inside. The private space becomes extremely permeable to this irruption of abjection and viscerality. The rats under the floorboards create one of the most stringent depictions of violence – a threat from within, acting under the protection of invisibility.

The narrative also offers several indications of a simmering conflict with domestic rather than exterior roots – the Cain and Abel relationship between Octavio and Ramiro implies an attack from the inside; similarly, the micro-narrative of Gustavo Garfias and his brother Luis Miranda Solares mirrors the same context.¹³ Despite the locked gates, Cofi, confined inside the home, kills all Chivito's dogs – Flor, Frijol, and Gringuita. Susana's pregnancy – another horror emerging from deep inside – is the trigger of her involvement with Octavio.

Valeria's story finds her trapped in the cavity of her domestic space in the aftermath of the accident. Her progressive movement into an increasingly confined zone can be read as a return to the inside of the body, “that site of claustrophobia and nausea which cannot be expelled, however hard we try.”¹⁴ The images associated with Valeria reiterate in the space of her story the viscerality of the impact of the dogs' dead, bleeding bodies in the previous episode. Her figure smeared by blood, trapped inside her car is bordering abjection in a manner that Octavio's wounded body does not. The specificity is given by *Amores Perros'* transgression of the unspoken taboo in the art world (and society) against representing female blood or menstrual blood. Indeed all blood that flows from a woman falls under this taboo. Elizabeth Bakewell comments:

“Contrary to depictions of the mutilated male, where blood and guts are a sign of sacrifice (as seen in the blood of Christ and the guts of the war hero), the mutilated female represents absolute violation ('protect the women and children') and, by extension signifies a breakdown in the social order.”¹⁵

Valeria's blood is therefore profane and evidence of a violation. The image of her blemished, imperfect, bloody and scarred body (Fig. 10) operates a de-eroticization of the fetish she embodied before the accident. We can say that, in the case of this character, the narrative operates an invasion of corporeality. She was previously only image, only mask.¹⁶ In the aftermath of the accident, the surface slips and the visual layer

metamorphoses into bodily texture. Her whole life changes on the account of her body – her abject corporeality becomes the cage she cannot escape.

The hole in the floorboards extrapolates the irruption of this corporeality into the domestic space. The animality of the rats lurking beneath the foundation mirrors the natural conditioning of human beings. We cannot escape our instincts, just like Valeria cannot escape the viscerality of her crippling wounds.

The permeability of physical space, its fragility and instability when assailed by internal factors emphasises in fact the stark contrast constructed in *Amores Perros* between the rigors of civilization (at the foundation of which we find the moral imperatives created around the traditional family unit) and the instinctual urges to which life in urban chaos reduces us.

Gendered bodies in (narrative) space – between absence and excess

As several critics remarked, despite its guise of progressive gender dynamics, *Amores Perros* outlines an intrinsically conservative morality, grounded in the concept of the traditional family unit, whose fragmentation is greatly lamented.¹⁷ The narrative seems to follow the classical analogies between the binary of gender and the binary of public and private. The association of women and domestic space and the hierarchy between the gendered public and private is salient at a closer analysis of the film. The feminine characters of the feature are all “confined to the home and remain dependent on men.”¹⁸ Even when they are not theoretically a part of the domestic landscape (Valeria has a career as a supermodel, Maru is also suggested to have a suitable job following her university education), the camera surprises them in association with this specific space (Maru exits her home – Fig.11); Valeria is represented mainly inside her flat). Susana herself is represented mostly inside the house; in one of the few shots of her outside the home we see her as a “failed guardian of the hearth”¹⁹, while she opens the door, allowing her husband's dog, Cofi, to make a break for freedom.

Consequently, other spaces are opened and reserved to men only. The dog fighting arenas, as well as Mauricio's room (the master of the fights) are territories associated with violence and illicit activities and are open to the sole exploration of men. An unambiguous threshold is maintained throughout the film between zones of speed and action, which are constructed as the favourite hunting grounds of masculine protagonists and grey areas of claustrophobic enclosure, where women are/become confined to.

Chivo's place is also off limits for women, as it is otherwise his entire story, where the intradiegetic space is pierced by one woman only – mute Maru. The elusiveness of Maru's feminine corporeality is

accentuated by the fact that she is symbolically situated in the classical space reserved for women after the amusing adventures of Lacan in the realm of feminine sexuality - outside language, outside signifierness. Cinematically, Maru is the perfect visual trope for the space Lacanian psychoanalysis reserves for women - "Woman cannot be said. Nothing can be said of woman."²⁰ If, as it was contended, all three stories are about the (absent) father²¹, Chivo's episode is the one which concentrates most clearly on this leitmotif. Returning to a psychoanalytical reading, we could notice that the moment when the narrative focuses most poignantly on the law of the father coincides with the moment when the feminine presence falters, becoming elusive, mute. In a conscious or unconscious way, the visual material illustrates precisely the fact that only one body of signifiedness can occupy the symbolic space at a given moment. It becomes more and more salient which gender that body belongs to.

Maru's body without a voice corresponds to Valeria's body without a past. Paul Julian Smith mentions how Valeria's story was the most altered in the shooting and editing process. Gonzalez Iñarritu consistently cut sequences which "would have directed more audience sympathy to this vain and superficial character. Thus we do not learn that Valeria has previously suffered an abortion of Daniel's child and we are not privy to scenes of domestic intimacy between the lovers (Daniel tenderly tending to the injured Valeria on the toilet) or charting the gradual disintegration of their relationship (a first argument after Valeria dismisses the maid brought in by Daniel to care for her)."²²

This process reveals the intention to provoke spectatorial disengagement or distancing from this character, which is not provided with a back story in the way the other protagonists are. As commentators remarked, she is "spectacularly visible on the screen and covertly undercut in the narrative."²³ The absent geographies of femininity are also marred in Valeria's case by the nefast association with the Spanish origins of the character. Goya Toledo makes no attempt to disguise her Peninsular accent and idiolect; therefore, when the woman is not mute, she speaks the wrong language...

Amores Perros associates femininity with a persistent corporeality which threatens to force the boundaries of rationality at any given moment. When present in the narrative, women's bodies are out of control and on the verge of expanding to engulf the surrounding space.

Susana has not discovered the miracles of contraception and abortion doesn't come as a viable alternative for her. Her body keeps swelling and insistently produces offsprings, following a mind of its own. The weight of her body and its attachments (she is frequently pictured balancing her baby on her knees; even during sex scenes the baby is in her immediate vicinity) are the reason for her confinement to the domestic

space. She cannot escape her body – she has difficulties attending her maths exam because of her child; she cannot leave abusive Ramiro because of the child; she actually married him because of the misadventures of her body (getting pregnant); her new pregnancy creates the circumstances for her plans with Octavio. The narrative space makes an effort to contain this uncontrollable body.

Between excess and sublime absence, Susana's body appears (or, more appropriately – disappears) in one of the movie's most surprising scenes – Octavio and Susana's sexual encounter in the bathroom. The intercourse takes place in the symbolic space created between the confines of two mirrors: the camera and the bathroom mirror. Octavio is not lured only by Susana's body, but by his own image in the mirror (Fig. 12). After the intercourse, the characters are pictured in Susana's room. At a certain point, Octavio turns his eyes from Susana to the spectator (Fig 13). It is then that we witness a crafty cinematic artifice known as the fourth gaze – Octavio “sees” us looking at him. The fourth gaze is the blank spot of the screen which is created when the narrative space is suspended and the picture (or the character) returns the gaze.²⁴ The procedure is used in order to disturb spectatorial pleasure through abolishing the distance between the screen and the viewer. According to Laura Mulvey²⁵, scopophilia is sustained as long as a certain distance from the moving image is maintained. Visual pleasure retains an element of voyeurism, as we need to objectify the characters on the screen and at the same time to identify with a certain instance in order to nullify our position as perverse observers of the intradiegetic space. The moment a character returns the gaze, staring through the screen back at us is the moment when we are made aware of our perverse position and become unable to retain visual pleasure. The gaze is here turned into a dangerous instrument that forces the spectator to recognize his/her own repertory of cheap bourgeois fears.

Octavio's gaze at his reflection in the mirror serves not only as an intermission for his own bodily pleasures, but for the spectator's visual pleasures as well. It was contended that Octavio “gazes fiercely at his own face in the cracked [...] mirror, as if to reassure himself of the reality of his desire.”²⁶ He therefore interrupts his corporeal trajectory to rationalize his actions; his lust must be contained, as a moral boundary was crossed. The moral high ground is thrown back at the spectator, as we are also awakened to ascertain whether Octavio's moral laxity is progressive or subversive.

Reinforcing a Cartesian framework, the gaze serves as a reminder of our status as rational beings and of our duty to contain the animality of our bodiliness. It is extremely significant that Octavio, the man, is offered access to a moral and rational high ground, while Susana is unwarily lost in her overbearing corporeality. Her body serves as a prop or lure for

the male look, which is, in a typical Lacanian formula²⁷, not even directed to her, but to his own reflection in the mirror. He is whole, the mirror is essential for his sense of self, while she is animally absent.

Analysing Susana's story, we conclude that the excesses caused by her burdensome corporeality are resolved through recourse to traditional methods: an excess of morality. She repents for breaching the marital contract and refuses to renew the relationship with Octavio; instead she chooses to sacrifice herself and raise her two children alone. Her return to traditional patterns is emphasised by her choice to name her second child after her late (not to mention violent, unfaithful and abusive) husband. The possibilities opened by Susana's story reflect the ideological wager of the picture – it does not go all the way in problematizing the characters' decisions through engaging them in a sequence of events, but insistently returns to a conservative moralism grounded in the family.²⁸ In this context, *Amores Perros* operates a throwback to the period of Catholic Cinema previous to the 1940s, which “exalted the repression of instincts in favour of moral servitude.”²⁹

A moralizing denouement is not the only method of dealing with a threatening corporeality. In Valeria's story the excessive bodily instance is tamed through castration. Her body loses its phallic lure; she becomes a cyborg.³⁰ (Fig. 14). Her transformation from image to body and from body to machine emphasises the necessity evident in the cinematic material to control and restrain a menacing physicality which is here associated with the feminine body. The machinic metamorphosis of women has been long commented as one of the tropes of phallocentrism. Luce Irigaray comments :

“Doesn't the 'desiring machine' still partly take the place of woman or the feminine? [...] isn't the [body without organs] a historical condition? [...] Since women have long been assigned the task of preserving 'body matter'[...], doesn't the [body without organs] come to occupy the place of the [...] evacuation of women's desire in women's body?...”³¹

Transforming feminine corporeality into a machine, or, more precisely, constructing a hybrid body with the help of prostheses is a self explanatory locus in representation operating the replacement of woman as real presence with woman as a projection, a sublimation of masculine desire.

Conclusion

The object of our inquiry on the intricate corridors of the symbolism used in *Amores Perros* was to ascertain whether the depiction of bodies subverts or reinforces the stereotypes classically associated with this instance in rapport with spacial and gender elements.

Analysing the conventional relationship between body and space, stereotypes were identified as the representational tropes which reinforce the tedious dichotomies maintained by a Cartesian framework, separating mind (space as its corresponding metonymy) and body while objectifying one of the terms of the binary (namely the body). The conclusion of this analysis is that in *Amores Perros* there is an intensive slip zone between body and space. The two function as interrelating layers of the same surface; there is a continuous flux in which the body is physically inscribed with traces of alternative urban micro-narratives. Space, in its turn, reflects and enriches the symbolism of the body. The use of body in the filmic text conveys the existence of a corporeal knowledge.

One of the stereotypical associations persists nevertheless, as corporeality is associated with animality or violence and there is a discernible textual drive towards a moralizing denouement. The characters evolve with and through their bodies but occasionally bodies do retain fixed meanings associated to specific spaces.

The gendered investigation of the use of body revealed a more tensional relationship to the visual and identitary stereotypes, as several disturbing cinematic tropes are reinforced – femininity is situated outside language and associated with pervasive corporeality, restrained to domesticity or machinic metamorphoses.

There is a discernible effort throughout the film to contain the instinctual bodiliness as the narrative strives to recuperate the loss of a paternal instance which seems to throw the society into chaos. The patriarchal nuances are clearly visible and the approach clearly detracts from the innovative use of body that the film initially promises.

Visuals:

Fig. 1: Valeria and the cocooned body



Fig. 2: Chivo's domestic interior



Fig. 3: Chivo's perilous corporeal proximity to animals



Fig. 4: Domesticating the body



Fig. 5: Susana's body as marked surface



Fig. 6: Ramiro's body as text



Fig. 7: Opening out the great ephemeral skin



Fig. 8: Octavio's scarred skull



Fig. 9: Valeria's immersion in the interstices of her living surface
(flat/body)



Fig. 10: Constructing the hybrid body

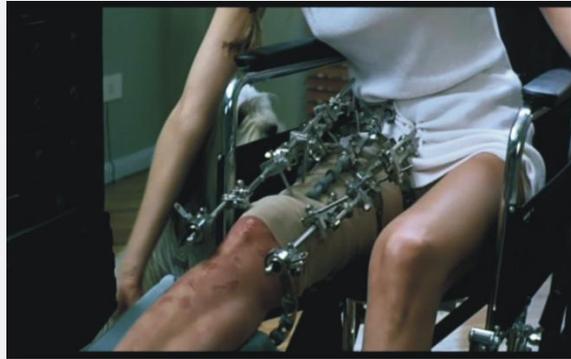


Fig. 11: Maru's home



Fig. 12: Octavio's reflection



Fig. 13: Octavio's gaze



Fig. 14: Valeria as cyborg



¹ Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. (London: Sage, 1996), 4.

² Elisabeth Avery Bakewell, *Picturing the Self: Mexican Identity and Artistic Representation, post - 1968* (Michigan: Bell & Howell, 1991), 174.

³ The Motion Picture Production Code, cited in Patricia White, *unInvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1.

⁴ Paul Julian Smith, *The Body Hispanic: Gender and Sexuality in Spanish and Spanish American Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 53.

⁵ Smith, *The Body Hispanic*, 53.

⁶ Smith, *The Body Hispanic*, 56.

⁷ Smith, *The Body Hispanic*, 180.

- ⁸ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Economie Libidinale* (Paris, 1974), 9.
- ⁹ Stephen Hart, *A Companion to Latin American Film* (London: Tamesis Books, 2004), 156.
- ¹⁰ Ignacio M. Sanchez-Prado, "Amores Perros: Exotic Violence and Neoliberal Fear", in *Journal of Latin-American Cultural Studies* 15 (2006): 42.
- ¹¹ Smith, *The Body Hispanic*, 55.
- ¹² Rossana Reguillo, "Latin America: A Story in Three Movements", in *Radical History Review* 89 (2004): 42.
- ¹³ Hart, *A Companion to Latin American Film*, 157.
- ¹⁴ Paul Julian Smith, *Representing the Other: Race, Text and Gender in Spanish and Spanish American Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 124.
- ¹⁵ Bakewell, *Picturing the Self*, 166.
- ¹⁶ Smith, *Representing the Other*, 47.
- ¹⁷ Sanchez-Prado, "Amores Perros: Exotic Violence and Neoliberal Fear" 41.
- ¹⁸ Smith, *Representing the Other*, 41.
- ¹⁹ Smith, *Representing the Other*, 41.
- ²⁰ Jacques Lacan, "Une lettre d'amour", in *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*. (London & NY: Norton and Co., 1999), 81.
- ²¹ Laura Podalsky, "The Young, the Damned and the Restless Youth in Contemporary Mexican Cinema", in *Framework* 1 (2008): 150.
- ²² Paul Julian Smith, "Transatlantic Traffic in Recent Mexican Films", in *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 12 (2003): 398.
- ²³ Smith, "Transatlantic Traffic" 398.
- ²⁴ Slavoj Zizek, *Enjoy your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 15.
- ²⁵ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", in *Screen* 16, 3 (1975): 44-53.
- ²⁶ Smith, *Representing the Other*, 44.
- ²⁷ Namely, "S -> a" - as cited in Jacques Lacan, "Une lettre d'amour", in *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973* (London & NY: Norton and Co., 1999): 73 - which contends that technically there is no sexual relationship, as masculine desire is directed not towards the woman, but towards *objet petit a*, the unfathomable something that makes an ordinary object sublime.
- ²⁸ Sanchez - Prado, "Amores Perros: Exotic Violence and Neoliberal Fear" 41.
- ²⁹ Carlos Monsivais, "Mythologies", in *Mexican Cinema*, edited by Paulo Antonio Paranagua (London: BFI, 1995): 119.
- ³⁰ Smith, *Representing the Other*, 47.
- ³¹ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 140-141.

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