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**TITLE:** Political Trauma, Intimacy, and Off-Screen Space in Pablo Larraín's *Tony Manero*

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**ABSTRACT:** Pablo Larraín's films *Tony Manero* (2008), *Post Mortem* (2010), and *No!* (2012) constitute what he has called an "unintentional" dictatorship trilogy. This paper analyzes style and form in *Tony Manero* to show the ways in which the director infuses his *mise-en-scène* with history and memory that exceed the diegetic world of his films. Specifically, I focus on his use of off-screen space and off-screen sound and argue that Larraín inscribes the political at the margins of his stories in order to invoke horror in the everyday. His intimate character studies become steeped, by means of this aesthetic, in a political violence that is felt as much as seen. Such an affective rendering portrays Pinochet's dictatorship as a kind of peripheral specter, one that connects even the most minimalistic and mundane of actions to large-scale historical forces. While Larraín's "unintentional" trilogy clearly differs from the more direct, urgent and transparently "intentional" political cinema for which Latin America is historically well-known, it does encourage viewers to identify with the terror and trauma of Chile's past in a manner that is haunting and highly deliberate.

**KEYWORDS:** Political Cinema, Chile, Intimacy, Off-screen Space, Horror

**RESUMEN:** Los filmes *Tony Manero* (2008), *Post Mortem* (2010) y *No* (2012) constituyen lo que el director Pablo Larraín ha llamado "una trilogía no intencional" sobre la dictadura chilena. Este ensayo analiza el estilo y la forma en el primer film de esta trilogía, *Tony Manero*, para mostrar cómo el director infunde su *mise-en-scène* con una historia y una memoria que superan el mundo diegético representado. Me concentro en su uso del espacio y del sonido en *off* para argüir que el film inscribe lo político en sus márgenes con tal de invocar el horror cotidiano. Su particular estética hace que los retratos íntimos de los personajes sean impregnados de una violencia política que se siente más que se ve. Tal representación evoca la dictadura de Pinochet como un espectro, que conecta las acciones más minimalistas con fuerzas históricas a gran escala. Si bien la trilogía "no intencional" de Larraín se diferencia del cine intencional y directamente político de los años 1960 en América Latina, logra suscitar la identificación del espectador con el terror y el trauma del pasado chileno de una manera tan agobiante como deliberada.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** cine político, Chile, intimidación, espacio fuera de campo, horror

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## Political Trauma, Intimacy, and Off-Screen Space in Pablo Larraín's *Tony Manero*

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Pablo Larraín's films *Tony Manero* (2008), *Post Mortem* (2010), and *No* (2012) constitute what the director has called an "unintentional trilogy" about the Chilean dictatorship. Larraín did not, he says, set out to make three films about Augusto Pinochet's coup and 17-year rule: "It just happened to me" (Rohter). The characters in Larraín's films are likewise people to whom things just happen. They live in and move through one of the most brutal periods in Chile's history, yet they often affect a kind of matter-of-factness, one that verges at times on blankness (this is less true in the third film, *No*, where the scenario has to do explicitly with a political campaign, although there too one can find surprising continuities). Large-scale political events are things that happen around and behind these characters, in the periphery of our vision. Larraín chooses to focus instead on their idiosyncrasies, with an unrelentingly naturalistic gaze that follows their movements through intimate spaces—the backroom of a dancehall in *Tony Manero*, a dimly lit morgue in *Post Mortem*, or the cluttered apartment where René lives with his son in *No*. The cinematography and sound design that Larraín uses to portray these private interiors create what is, at many moments, a horrifying atmosphere, whereby political forces operating off-screen can be seen to traumatize characters, whether or not they realize it.

This paper analyzes style and form in the first film of Larraín's trilogy, *Tony Manero*, to show the ways in which the director infuses

his mise-en-scène with history and memory, creating a text that exceeds the diegetic world of his films. Specifically, I concentrate on his use of off-screen space and off-screen sound to argue that Larraín inscribes the political at the margins of his stories in order to invoke horror in the everyday. His intimate character studies become steeped, by means of this aesthetic, in a political violence that is intuited as much as seen. Such an affective rendering portrays Pinochet's dictatorship as a kind of specter, one whose power connects even the most minimalistic and mundane actions to large-scale historical forces. While Larraín's "unintentional" film clearly differs from the more direct, urgent, and transparently "intentional" political cinema for which Latin America is historically well-known, it does encourage viewers to identify with the terror and trauma of Chile's past in a manner that is haunting and highly deliberate.

*Tony Manero*, the first installment in what would become Larraín's acclaimed trilogy, was the director's second feature film. Born in Santiago de Chile in 1976, Larraín studied audiovisual communication at the Universidad de las Artes, Ciencias, y Comunicaciones and founded the production company, Fábula, with his brother, Juan de Dios Larraín, in 2003. His directorial debut, *Fuga* (2006), a co-production with Argentina, follows an obsessive and mentally traumatized composer who believes that his music caused the death of his sister and love interest. Although not a political or even nationally-specific film, *Fuga* does

exhibit some of the stylistic characteristics that recur in Larraín's subsequent work—intense proximity to an obsessive male protagonist, rendered through extensive use of close-up; dimly lit, claustrophobic interiors; unusual framings that often involve showing figures from behind; and shots that emphasize characters' voyeurism and acts of looking. These characters rarely, if ever, derive pleasure from looking, but they look nonetheless. *Fuga* also includes a supporting performance by Alfredo Castro, an accomplished and incomparable Chilean actor who was Larraín's former drama teacher. Castro has a significant part in every film that Larraín has made and plays the leading role in both *Tony Manero* and *Post Mortem*.

*Fuga*, as Larraín himself attests, was made with an eye toward the international market. "*Fuga* está pensada como una historia universal, que pasa en Chile, pero no es local" (Campino n. pág.).<sup>1</sup> Ironically, *Fuga* fared far worse in terms of critical response and gross receipts than the atmospheric and decidedly local *Tony Manero*. Set in Santiago in 1978, during some of the most repressive days of Pinochet's dictatorship, the film follows Raúl Peralta (Alfredo Castro), a 52-year-old sociopathic dancer who is obsessed with *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). The idea for the film started with a black and white photograph that Larraín saw in a book while traveling through Spain. It showed a middle-aged man sitting in a chair in his underwear, with his shoes on, looking out a window with a gun in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Larraín brought the image back home and shared it with Castro, asking him what he saw in the picture. "A killer. And I don't know why, but I see a dancer," and they began writing the story from there. As the script evolved, they seized on the year 1978, which was when *Saturday Night Fever* was released in Chile, and realized they had an opportunity to set this disturbing character portrait against the context of Pinochet's institutionalized terror (Guillén).

*Tony Manero* was well-received at international festivals, screening at Cannes,

Toronto, and New York, and won an award for best film at the Turin Film Festival, as well as top prizes for direction and acting from FIPRESCI. Despite some controversy within Chile, spurred by the film's bleak representation of the country's recent past, Chile submitted *Tony Manero* for consideration in the Best Foreign Language category for the Academy Awards, and the film gained a U.S. distributor through the then newly established Lorber Films. At the time, CEO Richard Lorber, an art-house and independent-cinema stalwart, quipped that not all the films on their list "will be a nightmarish, political allegory" (quoted in Hernandez). *Tony Manero* is indeed a kind of political horror film with black comedic undertones, but generic labels are not adequate or complete in conveying the trauma and dread that permeate the film, nor the degree of Larraín's narrative and aesthetic experimentation. Through its intimate depiction of a charmless sociopath, with whom viewers are nonetheless encouraged to identify, and its oblique yet powerful entanglement with North American pop culture and Chilean history, *Tony Manero* represents a new kind of political cinema in Latin America.

Stylistically the film favors handheld camerawork and jump cuts and strives for the effect of authenticity that can come from a deliberately imperfect style. It begins, after the credit sequence, with a dimly lit long take fixed on the back of Raúl, who is walking away from the camera, snaking past set decorators, some of whom carry enormous chess pieces, on the backstage of a production studio where a popular game show, "The One-O'clock Festival," is taking place. The show is a celebrity look-alike contest in which contestants impersonate iconic pop cultural figures, typically American ones, and a live audience determines the winner through applause. Raúl is there with his white suit, ready to dance like John Travolta, but he has the wrong day. "Saturday Night Fever" is next week, and today's contest is Chuck Norris. Larraín downplays the easy humor of the

scenario by focusing on the intensity and seriousness of the worn-faced Raúl. There is barely any dialogue, and Raúl stalks intently through the studio, studying it as if he were in a police procedural. Larraín has stated in an interview that his intention in directing Raúl was always “to play it straight,” not for laughs or heavy political symbolism (Guillén). There is certainly nothing didactic or clumsy about Larraín’s depiction of life under Pinochet. If the films are political allegories—and they must be understood as such—Alfredo Castro’s performances seem masterfully unaware of it. The unspoken horror and collective trauma of Chile’s past press in around the edges, but at the center there is an unnerving calm.

Larraín achieves this feeling of imminent threat in part through his use of off-screen sound and off-screen space. The opening sequence is darkly voyeuristic, initiating a dreadful tone that will intensify as the narrative progresses. Unlike more conventional sound design that omits or filters out extraneous noise, Larraín emphasizes noisy unpleasantness throughout. The first cut after the title card harshly drops the audience into a soundscape of loud hammering in a backstage warehouse of metal walls. Miguel Hormazábal, the sound designer who regularly works with Larraín, adds the voices of people arguing and eventually the sounds of the game show itself. There is nothing inherently scary, in any traditional sense, about this initial use of off-screen sound, but Larraín establishes what will become a pattern: the presence of sounds whose sources are obscured or rarely shown on screen. The functions and effects of off-screen sound have been extensively written about by cinema theorist Michel Chion, who differentiates between the reassuring role of visualized sound, which occurs when an off-screen sound’s corresponding source is shown at some point, and the anxiogenic effects of acousmatic sound, which:

creates a mystery of the nature of its source, its properties and its powers, given that causal listening cannot

supply complete information about the sound’s nature and the events taking place. (72)

Although *Tony Manero* features a good deal of noisy ambient off-screen sound, which promotes the film’s naturalistic style, there are also sounds beyond the frame that create tension and paranoia in the manner Chion describes. Take, for example, the frequency with which sirens are heard but not shown, and then never seen to intersect with the plot in any way; or the many dogs barking off-screen; or human whistling that is never embodied or identified. This kind of acousmatic sound, when added to darkly lit images of Raúl fervently looking off-screen in all directions, toward things that are themselves often withheld from the audience, helps create a deeply unsettling atmosphere. There is a furthermore a kind of visual complement to Chion’s ideas about acousmètre in *Tony Manero*, namely that there are few eye-line matches. The camera regularly shows Raúl looking toward off-screen space at something beyond the frame. A conventional editing style would provide the match shot, to show what the character is looking at, but this film, more often than not, withholds that image. We spend much more time watching Raúl look. So what is Raúl looking at so intensely, and why is he so often shown looking? This furtiveness creates a desire to know on the part of the audience. It gives us impetus to watch more closely, in the hopes that something will be revealed. But it also signals very clearly that the film—as we experience it visually—has much to do, and directly to do, with events taking place immediately off-screen.

The audience gets at least one answer to the question of what Raúl looks at toward the end of the opening sequence. A close-up profile shot focuses on Raúl’s eyes as they gaze, slowly from left to right. He gradually turns his head away from the camera, and during the last seconds of the shot, the backs of three women dressed in French-cut, purple-and-aquamarine leotards move through the background. There is a slight shift in Castro’s performance as he

moves from furtiveness to steely concentration, and it's hard to tell whether his stare is amorous or violent. Regardless, its fixedness suggests something predatory, which we would not immediately expect from the slight, seemingly timid man. At this moment a game show production assistant asks Raúl for his name, and he responds, "Tony Manero." Raúl shows no irony toward his over-identification with John Travolta's character. In fact, when asked by the game show crew to name his profession, which happens twice in the film (once in the beginning and again at a final performance), Raúl impassively states, "This [...] show business."

With this, the film officially introduces us to the menacing anti-hero with whom viewers will remain intimately tied for the remainder of the film. There is not a single scene in *Tony Manero* in which Castro does not appear. Larraín's camera stays in close proximity to Raúl throughout, watching his every action, however inscrutable in its motivation or meaning, forcing the audience into intimacy with his character, often against our better judgment. By spending so much time with Raúl—and perhaps more importantly, Raúl's face—the film engenders or at least requests sympathy for this man who is so pitiful and delusional, but also dictatorial and sociopathic. Viewers become deeply familiar with his habits, watching him when he is alone, in the shadowy spaces of his bedroom, where he practices his dance moves, or when he is walking down the street, on another errand to procure some prop that will perfect his act. The narrative clearly establishes our protagonist's goal and unfolds somewhat conventionally, with Raúl facing various obstacles in his quest to be recognized as the best *Saturday Night Fever* dancer and Manero impersonator. Viewers align with Raúl as he attempts to secure the necessary high-density glass tiles for his disco dance floor, and we flinch for him when he falls during an important number at his homemade dancehall bar, where he lives and performs with an incestuous group of malcontents.

Larraín stimulates particularly strong sympathy for Raúl during an early scene in which Raúl goes to the movie theater to re-watch *Saturday Night Fever*. Again in close-up, the camera finds Raúl gazing upward toward a gigantic movie screen, his eyes seemingly on the verge of tears, as he watches Travolta's character ask Stephanie, his love interest, out on a date. Raúl, alone in the theater, repeats each word aloud, mimicking the English lines in his heavily accented Spanish. The high contrast lighting here draws attention to each wrinkle on Castro's rugged face as he follows Travolta's lines, "You're a very good dancer. I would like to meet you." He then continues with Stephanie's response after she rejects Tony, repeating her words, "Don't be hurt." As Castro slowly speaks these last lines, a broader irony can be felt. With his dejected aspect and hangdog face, Raúl seems completely vulnerable and diminutive before this larger-than-life image that may be giving him a false sense of hope. It feels as if these lines, "Don't be hurt," were meant for him, with Larraín using *Saturday Night Fever* as a *mise en abyme* to comment on Raúl's circumstances and fate.

The camera immerses us in an intense closeness with this reserved anti-hero, with whom after all we spend so much time. Yet, only minutes after this scene, Raúl coldly deceives and murders an old woman, without any rational motive other than convenience. Posing as a good samaritan after seeing the woman being robbed on the street, Raúl enters her small apartment, pets her cat, watches her color television, and then suddenly bludgeons her to death. His actions come as a complete surprise, and the notion that this sociopathic killer could ever "be hurt" seems almost absurd.

Like many unspeakable things in *Tony Manero*, this act of violence takes place off-screen. The camera's central focus stays on Raúl's profile as his arms repeatedly strike the old woman's head, which stays outside the frame. The editing further emphasizes the difference between onscreen and off-screen space in the subsequent cuts after her murder. Raúl

stays in the woman's claustrophobic home for a while, smoking and watching television in the dimly yellow and washed-out room. Occasionally he glances over to where the woman presumably lies dead in her armchair, but once again, Larraín offers the eyeline without the match shot. The camera never shows the woman's body. The effect is one that infuses this intimate and mundane domestic space, where a television has been playing the entire time, with horrific remorselessness.

That Larraín seeks to tie these elements of intimacy and horror to the political context of Pinochet is made transparent through the sound design. One of the main tracks of sound during this sequence comes from the television, from which a newscaster announces, "The President of the Republic is about to sign the decree giving *la cueca* the status of national dance." Such a detail not only plunges viewers into a highly specific national and historical context, it also serves as a kind of counterpoint and affront to Raúl's obsession with an arguably imperialistic North American pop-cultural phenomenon. Also, the last words the woman speaks before Raúl begins beating her, which are the majority of the scene's spoken dialogue, are about Pinochet's eyes, "Did you know that General Pinochet has blue eyes? Strange [...]. With so many Mapuche Indians. It's strange." Via the television, Pinochet functions as a kind of pseudo-presence to the horrific action that transpires, and then the television itself, the late twentieth-century hearth and site of domestic intimacy, becomes the mechanism through which Raúl disassociates from his own violence.

One can readily relate Raúl's capricious violence, which is so monstrous in its pettiness, to the institutional violence carried out during Pinochet's regime, which lasted from 1973-1990. Some scholars have analyzed the film as allegory and as social criticism, highlighting Larraín's critique of masculinity and power, and a French film critic writing for *Le Monde* went so far as to call the character of

Raúl Peralta "a small-scale replica of Pinochet" (Costa, Mandelbaum). Certainly, there is an allegorical dimension to *Tony Manero*. Despite his weak stature, Raúl is a kind of despot within his household and dance troupe, especially in relation to the women. Cony, his girlfriend, played by Amparo Noguera, constantly attempts to please Raúl, feeding and bathing him, and trying, but typically failing, to arouse him sexually. She is almost pathological in her allegiance. Cony's young adult daughter, Pauli (Paola Lattus), whose communist-sympathizing boyfriend, Goyo (Héctor Morales), is the other male member of the dance group, also kowtows to Raúl. After one of their performances, she lets him grope her and almost has sex with him, but they are both too drunk, and she masturbates instead. Cony is furious about the incident, but instead of directing his anger at Tony, he points it at his girlfriend.

Everyone in the house fears Raúl and his irrational outbursts, such as when he smashes a hole in the dance stage because he has tripped on a loose board, but they also respect him and submit to his exacting directions. It is easy to see here how this sociopathic representation corresponds to the totalitarianism of Pinochet, propped up by North American imperialist interests, but Larraín complicates things by forcing viewers into a state of semi-complicity, because ultimately, we do want Raúl to win that dance contest. The real political nature of *Tony Manero*, I argue, reveals itself through an understanding of Raúl as both sinister perpetrator and victim, misguidedly trying to advance himself during an era marred by systemic violence and trauma.

Specifically, Raúl's cruelty is an expression not of power but of his own impotence. His acts of violence occur suddenly, as the outbursts of a sociopathic child, and they are accompanied by heavily punctuated silences. His murder victims never make a sound when they are attacked and dying, nor do they ever

try to fight back. When Raúl first strikes the old woman in her apartment, for example, there is a long pause during which time she is alive but completely quiet. Likewise, during the brutal head bashing of the projectionist, whom Raúl kills because he has dared show the film *Grease* (1978) instead of *Saturday Night Fever*, not only does the victim fail to cry out, but his wife witnesses the attack and stands dumbfounded, quietly holding a cup of tea. The camera does not even reveal her presence until after the beating, but she's been hovering off-screen the entire time. The film then cuts away from her, and presumably she gets killed, too, but that remains ambiguous. Finally, Raúl bludgeons a glass seller as he lies sleeping on his bed in front of a staticky television. In this particular shot, the frame shows only the glass seller's legs stretched across the bed, while Raúl, in the foreground, raises his arm to deliver a single blunt blow to his victim's head. This viewers hear but do not see. Again, the results of his violence and the horror of a beaten body remain off-screen.

In each of these scenes, the victims' silence, rather than signifying absence, becomes an expressive site of meaning. "Silence," as Chion asserts, "is never a neutral emptiness. It is the negative of a sound we've heard beforehand or imagined; it is the product of a contrast" (57). The lack of screams heightens viewers' visceral experience of the brutal acts themselves and underscores their chilling and banality. They also, I think, come to signify Raúl's unaccountability. As Larraín himself has stated in an interview, almost all of his films deal with the evasion of justice:

The connection between [my films] is impunity. With the dictatorship as well, justice never came. Without that, wounds cannot heal. Pinochet died free, you know? Acknowledgment changes things. But when it doesn't happen, they just get worse. (quoted in Leigh)

The juxtaposition between the sounds of physical violence and the silence of the victims, who are unable or unwilling to defend themselves or cry out, may also correspond to the culture of torture and everyday silence associated with life under Pinochet. Overall the dictatorship was responsible for killing over 3,000 people for political reasons and torturing 30,000 others, questioning and terrorizing suspected dissidents and their families, and instilling widespread fear of retaliation that encouraged silence and obedience. The Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation reports that officials working beneath Pinochet who refused his commands were executed by firing squads, and:

people readily accepted the prevailing current of opinion, or they acquiesced to a poorly understood principle of due obedience, or they believed it was necessary to maintain silence about what was happening. (606)

in order to protect their lives. The character of Cony, for instance, repeatedly warns her daughter to disassociate from any anti-Pinochet activities and "stay out of that shit," and the host of "The One-O'clock Festival" always tells his contestants, "No political talk," before going on the air. This culture of silence has enraged many Chileans who seek to confront and expose Pinochet's legacy, so as to recuperate historical memories suppressed by collective trauma, as echoed in the statement of Larraín's quoted above.

In *Tony Manero*, mise-en-scène and cinematography work to re-create an atmosphere of fear, compliance, and denial. Larraín does represent Pinochet's secret police at two different moments, but their presence is at best ancillary to the plot. In one scene, Raúl follows a disheveled associate of Goyo and prepares to hit him with a rock when the police drive up and start following the "dissident" from the other direction. Although the film does some

quick cross-cutting between Pinochet's men, who eventually shoot their suspect in cold blood, and Raúl, who hides among the rocks and tall grasses, the majority of the action that transpires is heard and not seen. Larraín presents instead a series of jump cuts that show Raúl running away from the camera. Just as Raúl enacts his inscrutable terror with dispassion and almost boredom, Larraín's style keeps the political climate of Pinochet at the margins of the diegesis. In this way, one perceives the systemic nature of institutionalized terror, even while it's of little to no consequence within the plot.

Take, for example, the handheld tracking shots that follow Raúl after he leaves the game-show studio, when he sprints down the sidewalk for no apparent reason, with his white suit hanging over his shoulder. Why is he running so fast? Who is he running from? The soundtrack emphasizes his breathing and the sounds of his dress shoes hitting the concrete until off-screen police sirens overtake the design, and somewhat counter-intuitively, Raúl stops in his tracks and stares vacantly off-screen for several unusually long beats. His face registers apprehension and deep thought, but viewers are not privy to its meaning, nor does a police car ever appear, or anything else that would have motivated his running or his fear. Once the siren dies down, Raúl settles into a walk, again shown in tracking handheld. Then another off-screen sound is heard, this time some kind of beckoning human whistle. The source is never revealed, but Raúl hears it and stops in his tracks again before the film cuts to another scene.

Writing about the fundamental characteristics and pleasures of the horror genre, Noël Carroll argues that "the horror story is driven explicitly by curiosity [...]."

All narratives might be thought to involve the desire to know—the desire to know at least the outcome of the interaction of the forces made salient in the plot. However, the horror fiction is a special variation on this general narrative motivation, because it has

at the center of it something which is given as in principle *unknowable*—something which, *ex hypothesi*, cannot, given the structure of our conceptual scheme, exist and that cannot have the properties it has. This is why, so often, the real drama in a horror story resides in establishing the existence of the monster and in disclosing its horrific properties. (35)

Larraín's narrative frequently incites our desire to know and our desire to look, and his style employs some conventional horror-film techniques. The scene described above, for example, feels entirely voyeuristic and stimulates our curiosity in the manner Carroll describes. The use of handheld camera coupled with Raúl's performance—sprinting as if he's in pursuit, nervously darting his eyes—as well as acousmatic sounds whose sources are not shown, convey paranoia and the feeling that someone outside the frame is watching. Such effects incite not only our interest but an anxiety about whether or not we can trust our own vision and hearing, causing us to look and listen more intently. The cinematographer and set designers meanwhile make regular use of low lighting, darkness, and expressionistic red gels, as in the movie-theater scenes and the scene in the butcher shop, where the camera shoots through meat hanging in the foreground.

Yet while *Tony Manero* does exhibit some of the stylistic conventions that we associate with horror films, it lacks the kind of satisfying revelation upon which the genre depends. For Carroll, a true horror film must eventually reveal the monster and prove its existence. This is the payoff that provides exhilaration and pleasure. *Tony Manero* definitely does not offer this kind of pleasure. While it may be tempting to refer to Raúl himself as the monster—he does after all defecate on a rival Tony Manero's pristine white suit—he is more like a walking affect of a monstrous environment, where brutality and horror are predicated and justified by imaginary forces that never materialize. Raúl is ultimately an



extreme symptom of a rotten political system that suffuses the film's atmosphere.

Larraín for his part provides an important clue as to his own interpretation of Raúl through a movie poster shown in the small office of the bludgeoned projectionist. The poster is of Werner Herzog's 1972 film, *Aguirre: the Wrath of God*, another unflinching portrait of a sociopathic despot with incestuous tendencies. *Aguirre* leans heavily on the expressive face and masterful performance of its lead actor, Klaus Kinski, just as *Tony Manero* does with Alfredo Castro. Moreover, both films preoccupy themselves with the madness that is bred from imperialism and the pursuit of total power. Both Aguirre and Tony are single-mindedly driven, and audiences are forced, against their better judgment, to identify with them, and even to root for their success. The famous concluding shots of *Aguirre*, in which the camera encircles Kinski and his dying men on their raft, as if it's waiting to pounce and devour them alive, has much in common with the seemingly subjective camera work and sound design that haunt Raúl from somewhere off-screen. Ultimately both Aguirre and Raúl are tyrannical characters, but they are also victims of systemic malice that colors the film but hovers beyond the edges of the screen, in history.

## Notes

1

Chile es un país que tiene un mercado muy pequeño. El chileno es un cine pobre. Por eso, ésta es una película pensada para exportarla. Si tú haces una producción exclusivamente para el mercado nacional que no sea 'Sexo con Amor,' estás fregado. 'Fuga' está pensada

como una historia universal, que pasa en Chile, pero no es local y puede gustarle a cualquier tipo de público.

[...]

Pablo Larraín: *Fuga* es una película pensada para explotarla. (Campino n. pag.)

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