

# The 'Endless Space Between Words'

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, red, rectangular card. The card has a white question mark in the center and the text "OPERATING SYSTEM NOT FOUND." in white capital letters at the bottom. The hand is holding the card between the thumb and index finger, with the rest of the hand visible in the background. The background is a blurred, warm-toned surface, possibly a wall or a piece of fabric.

A Lacanian Perspective on *Her*

Louis-Paul Willis, April 2016

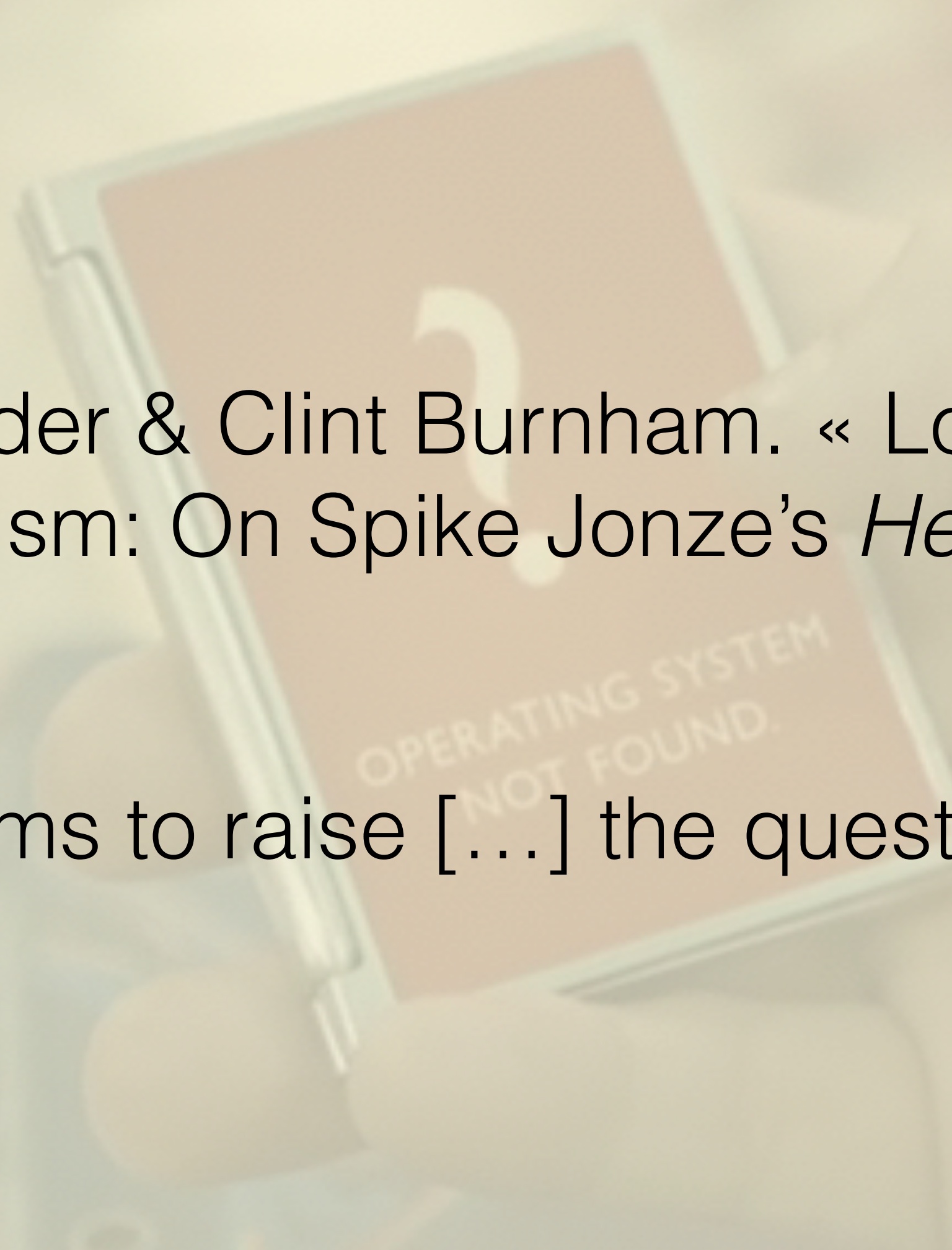


# Plan

Unusual depiction of desire and fantasy

1. Fantasy as interface (André Nusselder)
2. Love and the three registers (Bruce Fink)



A hand holding a small, red, rectangular device with a white question mark and the text "OPERATING SYSTEM NOT FOUND." on its screen. The background is a soft, out-of-focus image of a person's face.

Matthew Flisfeder & Clint Burnham. « Love and Sex in the Age of Capitalist Realism: On Spike Jonze's *Her* ». *Cinema Journal* (Forthcoming)

« the films seems to raise [...] the question about the 'end of sex' »



# Interface Fantasies

André Nusselder:

- ▶ *Interface Fantasy: A Lacanian Cyborg Ontology* (MIT Press: 2009)
- ▶ *The Surface Effect: The Screen of Fantasy in Psychoanalysis* (Routledge: 2013)



# Interface Fantasies

The centrality of fantasy for Nusselder:

« I find fantasy to be the central concept of psychoanalysis — at least of the Freudo-Lacanian stream. » (2009: 3)

« I seek [to present] fantasy in the work of Lacan as the primary medium for the subject of desire. » (2013: 1)

« Fantasy consists of the order of images and that of meaning. [...] Because signifiers work in it, fantasy is more than a mirror-image or reflection of the real: it is also a (symbolic) construction of it. » (2013: 1)



# Interface Fantasies

*Interface Fantasy: A Lacanian Cyborg Ontology*

« The interface [...] has a similar status to that of fantasy in Lacanian theory. For Lacan considers fantasy also [...] to be an inevitable medium for 'interfacing' the inaccessible real and the world of imaginary depictions and symbolic representations that humans mentally live in. » (2009: 5)

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Fantasy is « the medium between object and subject. » It is « a third area, at the surface of self and other, interfacing individual and world. » (2013: 2)








parents and our parents parents. Before that  
it was just being my life like I have  
everything, and suddenly this bright light hit  
me and woke me up. That light was you.  
I can't believe its already been 10 years  
since you married me. I still do this boy,  
every day, you make me feel like the girl I  
was when you first turned on the lights  
and woke me up and we started  
this adventure together.

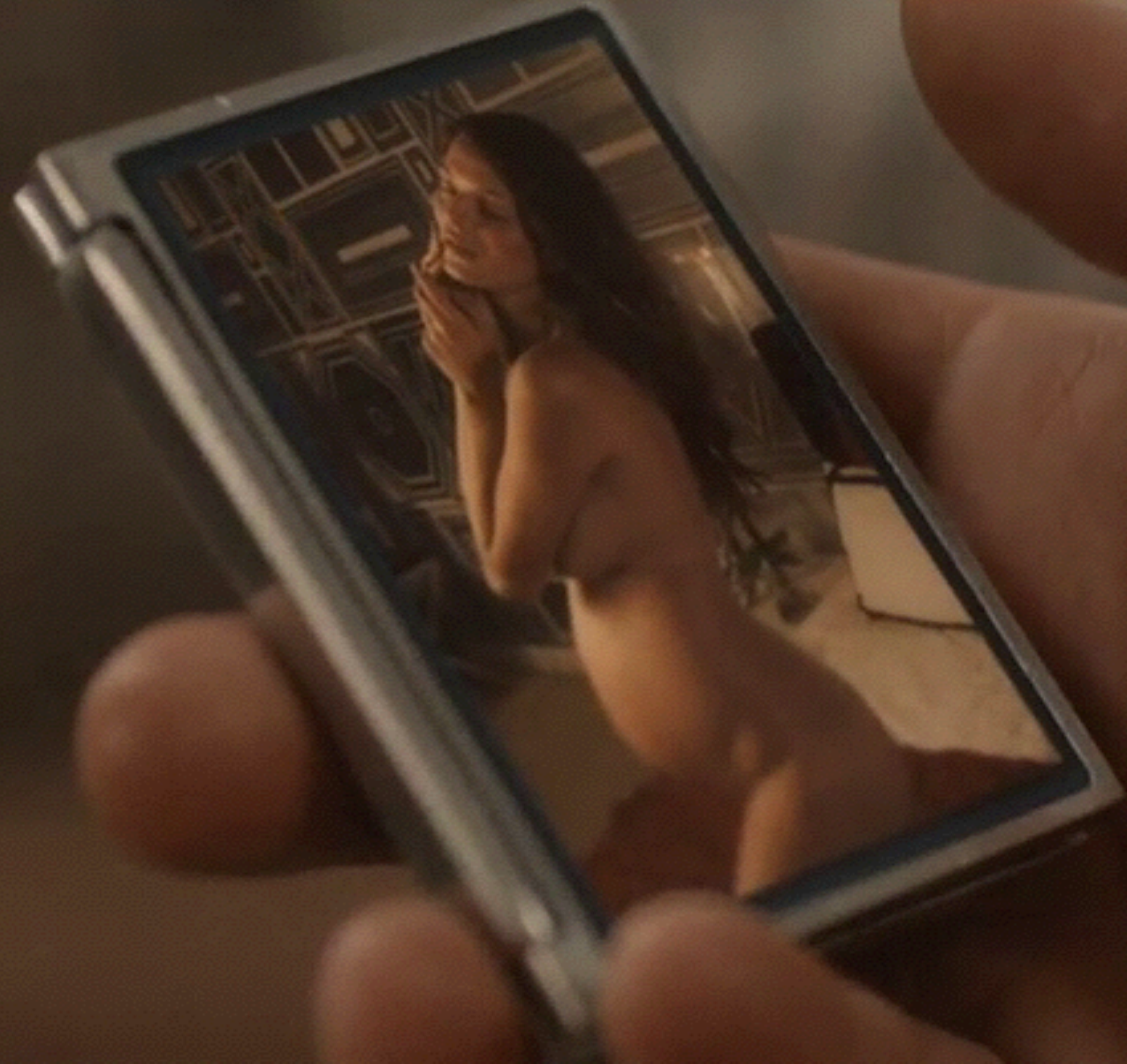




A cinematic wide shot of a city skyline at dusk. In the foreground, several people are walking on a paved area, possibly a promenade or a wide sidewalk. A man in a red jacket is walking towards the camera, looking down at something in his hands. To his left, a man in a light blue shirt and khaki pants is walking. To his right, a man in a light blue shirt and dark pants is walking. Further back, other people are visible, including a woman in a white shirt and a man in a dark shirt. The background is filled with tall skyscrapers, some of which are illuminated with lights. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall atmosphere is that of a busy city at night.

**Respond later.**















# Interface Fantasies

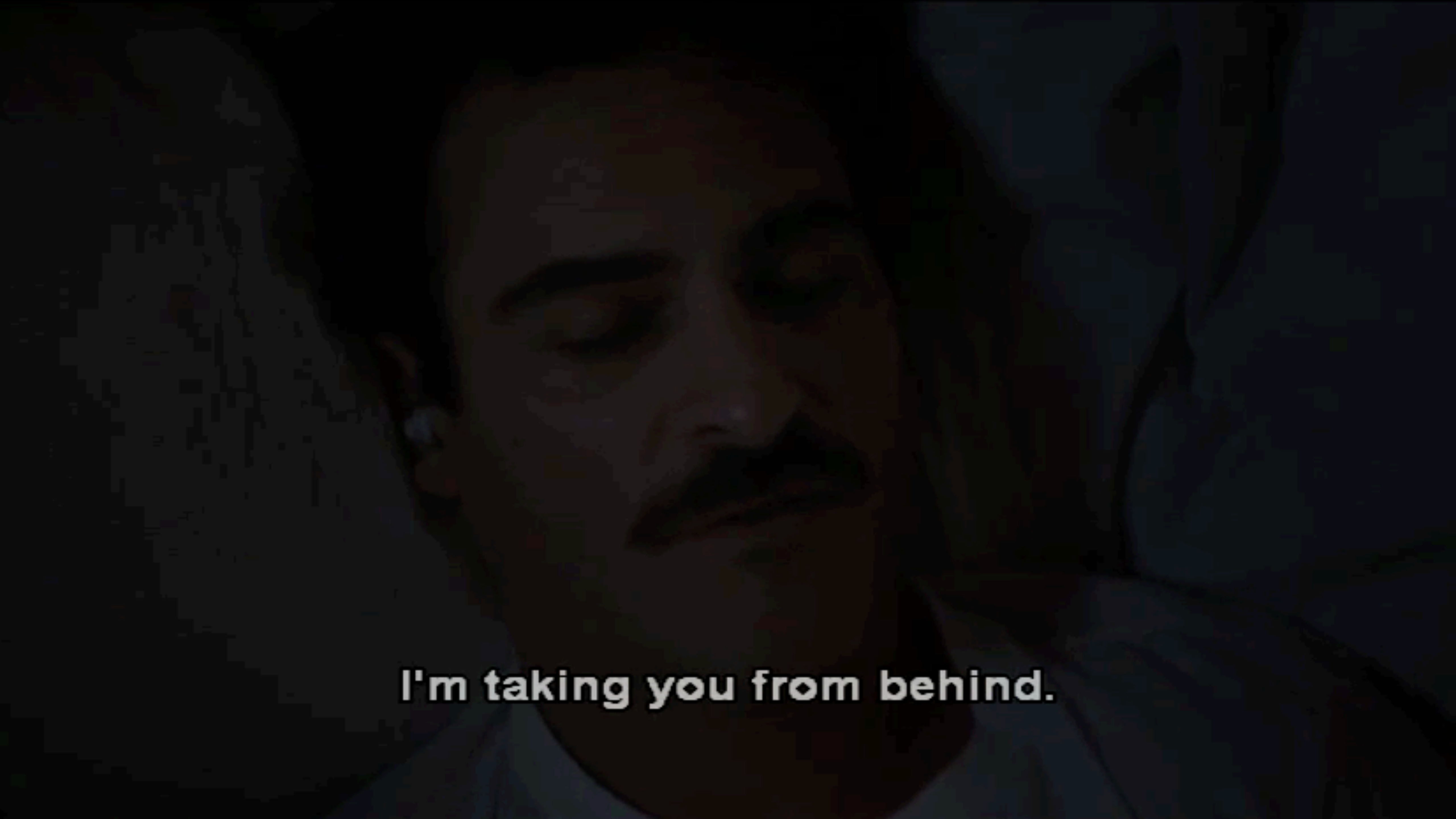
Nostalgia:

The nostalgic desires a past that is « always absent [and] continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack. » (Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, 1993: 23)

« This point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire. » (Stewart, 1993: 23)

« Nostalgia is the desire to desire. » (Stewart, 1993: 23)





**I'm taking you from behind.**



# Interface Fantasies

« The 'image' in fantasy thus covers several dimensions, including those of pleasure and enjoyment, of signification, and of protection. » (Nusselder, 2009: 2)

« The objects that aim and orient desire have no mirror image. They need fantasy to be productively brought to the surface. » (Nusselder, 2009: 93-94).







# Giving What You Don't Have

Bruce Fink. *Lacan On Love: An Exploration of Lacan's Seminar VIII, Transference*. Polity Press, 2016.

« The lover [...] gives his lack of something, something he would be hard-pressed to account for or explain, for *he does not know what he is missing*. He feels a lack or emptiness within himself, and a yearning for something to fill the hollow, to make up for this sense that something is missing — this is the lack or gap from which desire springs. » (Fink, 2016: 35)



# Giving What You Don't Have

« There is something about the encounter with sexual sensations and feelings that is traumatic for each of us » (Fink, 2016: 94)

« Even at the moment of the most intense bodily contact with each other, lovers are not alone, they need a minimum of phantasmatic narrative as a symbolic support. » (Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, Verso, 2008: 82)



# Giving What You Don't Have

« Insofar as the Other jouissance would clearly be characterized by Lacan as real, as opposed to imaginary or symbolic, we might wonder whether the love that establishes a link between the Other jouissance and the phallus, between the Other jouissance and the symbolic order, is itself real. » (Fink, 2016: 100-101)

« That lack obviously stems from symbolic castration: from the fact that we are required to express our needs in words, in a language that is not of our own making. » (Fink, 2016: 35).



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