

The ‘Endless Space Between Words’

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a smartphone. The phone's screen is the focal point, displaying a red error message. At the top of the screen is a large, white question mark. Below it, the text 'OPERATING SYSTEM' is written on one line, and 'NOT FOUND.' is written on the line below it. The phone is held in a landscape orientation. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a wooden surface.

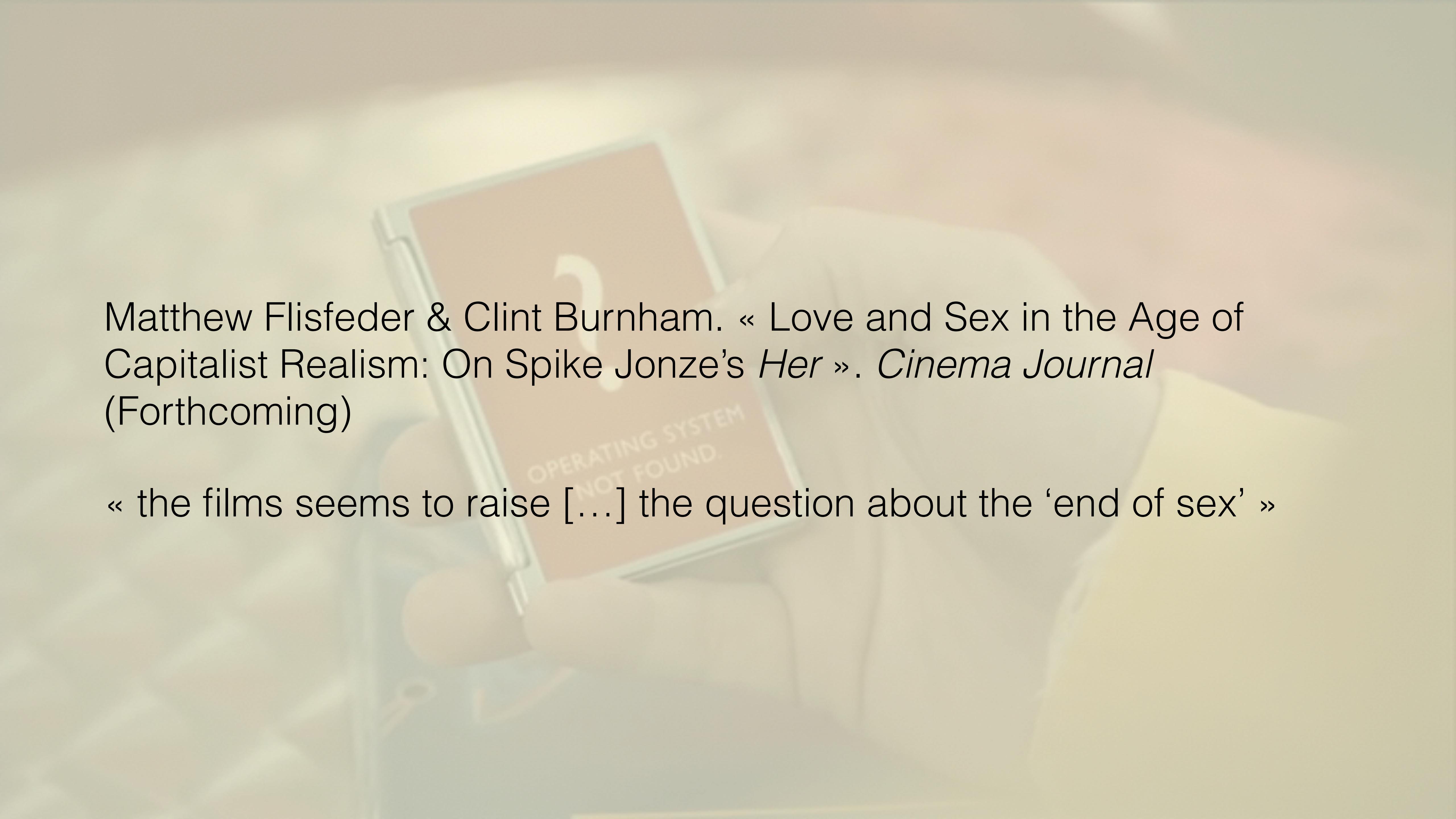
A Lacanian Perspective on *Her*

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)



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

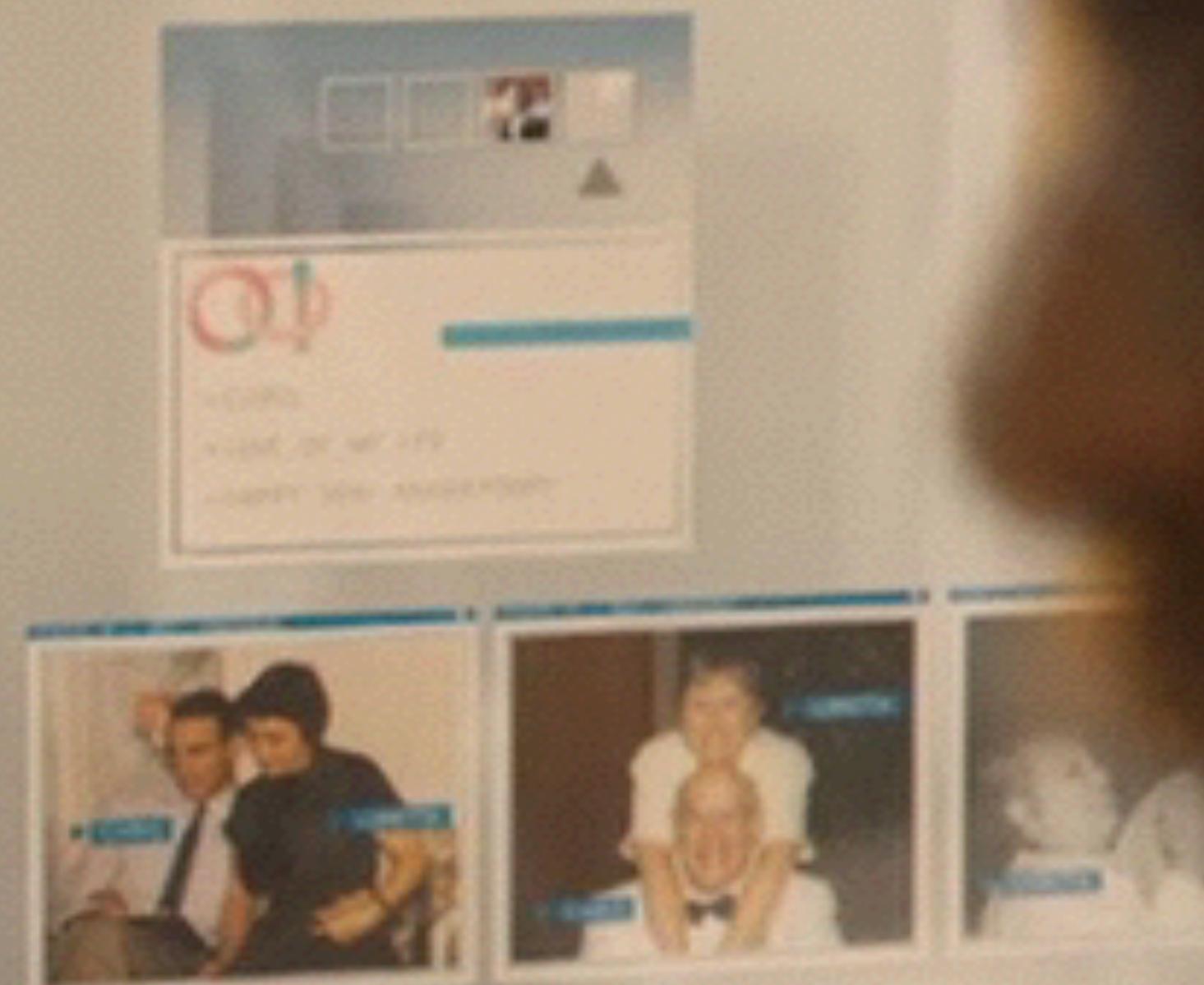
« The interface [...] has a similar status to that of fantasy in Lacanian theory. For Lacan considers fantasy also [...] to be an inevitable medium for ‘interfacing’ the inaccessible real and the world of imaginary depictions and symbolic representations that humans mentally live in. » (2009: 5)

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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)

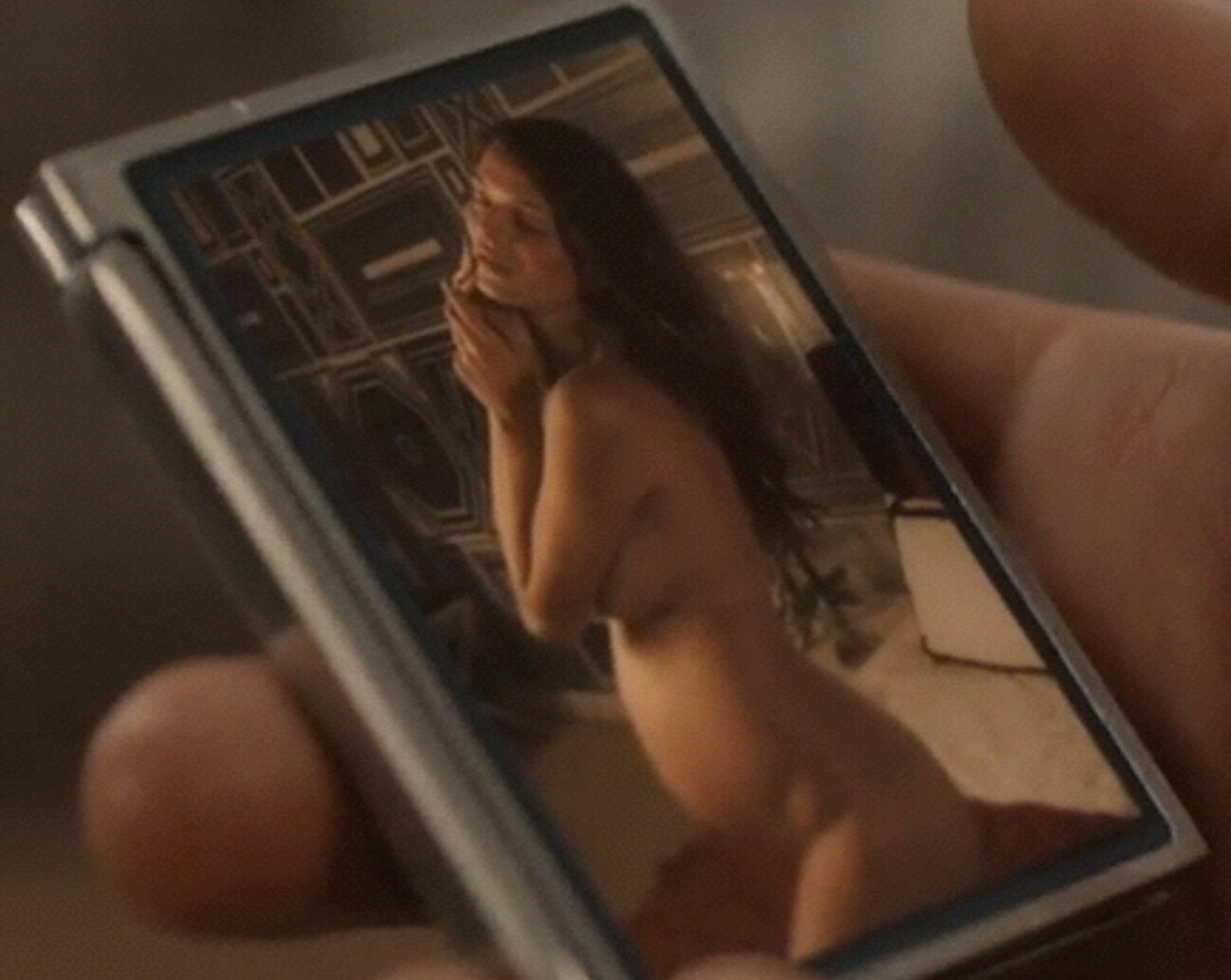


parents and our parents parents. Before that
I was just living my life like I have
every other, and suddenly this bright light hit
me and woke me up. That light was you.
I can't believe its already been 10 years
since you married me. And still to this day,
every day, you make me feel like the girl I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





Respond later.





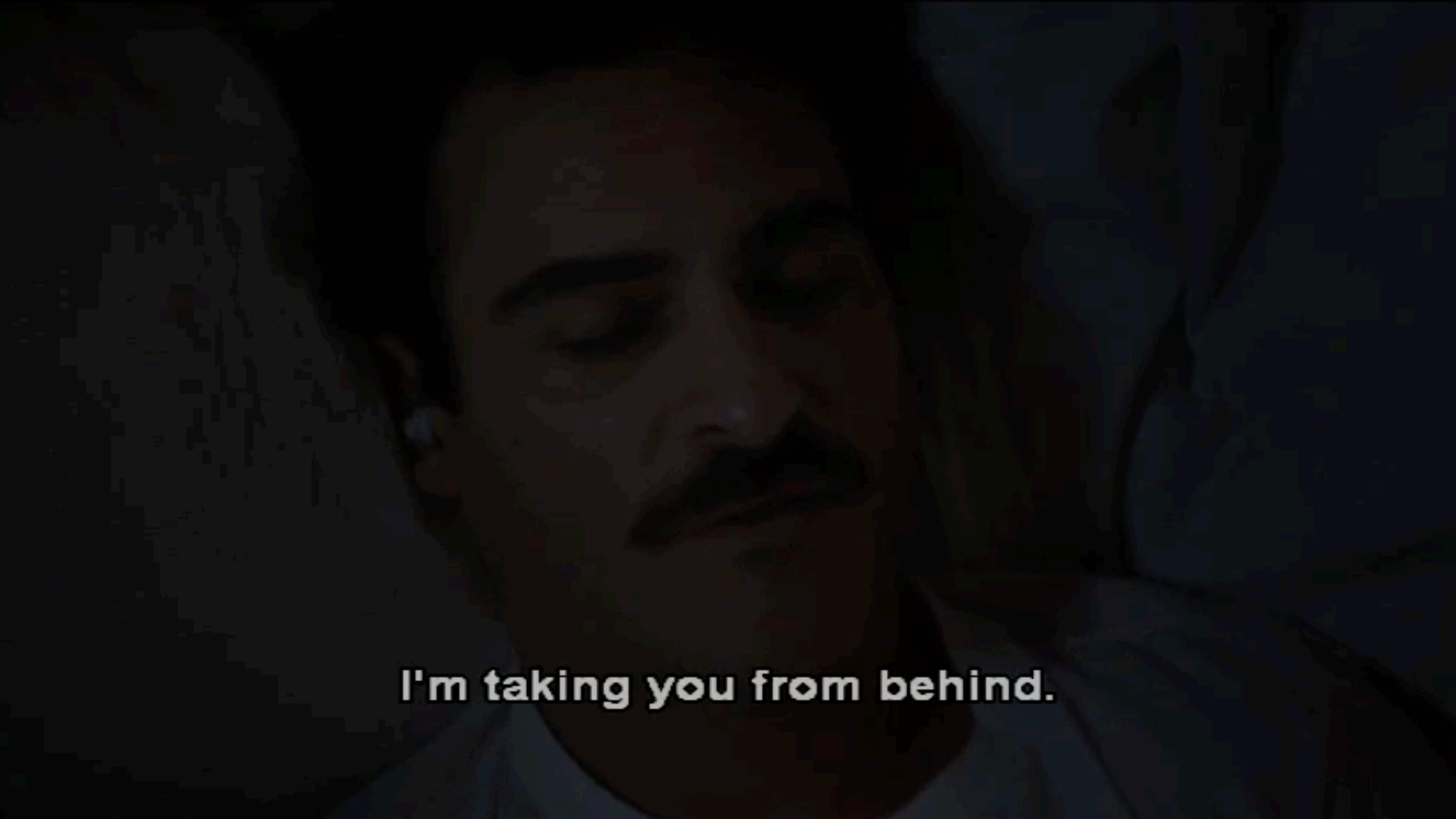
Interface Fantasies

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*, Tranference. 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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A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a smartphone. The phone's screen is visible, displaying a red error message with a large white question mark at the top, followed by the text 'OPERATING SYSTEM NOT FOUND.' in a smaller font. The background is blurred, showing warm, out-of-focus colors.

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Louis-Paul Willis, April 2016