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Film Analysis 2:  
*Amores Perros*

I first want to say that *Amores Perros* was a powerful film. It was a bit long but, for the most part, necessary in order to develop each story and then tie them together. The genre of this film reminded me of *Magnolia*, which I believe was even longer. I want to talk about the film itself (how it was put together, the story, and the metaphor) and then talk about some of the Latin American aspects of it.

I really like the fact that the title has a double meaning. All three stories have a similar element; dogs. They also share the element of love. The title suggests that love is a bitch. The word used for bitch in the title is the masculine form of perra, which is female dog, or bitch. Right from the start there is a double meaning; it just takes a while for the audience to find out.

The other part of this double meaning is not so direct. It is more metaphoric. All the characters have a tough situation with love in their life. It's a bitch. Love isn't always, if ever, easy. The dogs share this meaning because they too are having a tough time. They suffer; and their owners suffer from the loss, or near loss, of them. It is a very clever juxtaposition of the two ideas, in both the writing and the filming.

The other thing that really grabs me about the film is how each story is tied together with the car accident. Octavio and Louis with the fighting dog Cofi hit the car with Valeria and her dog, Richie. El Chivo, homeless man/mercenary, then takes the wounded Cofi and nurses him back to health. The lives of these people are suddenly intertwined by a series of events that leads them all to the same place at the same time with an unfortunate incident. I don't think this accident is in vain or completely

detrimental to anyone involved. It was destiny for all of them. These things do happen in our lives everyday, we just don't always realize it.

The dogs, ironically, cause much of the sorrow felt in this film. It is events with the dogs that lead the characters to their self discovery, in part. The accident is caused by the men fleeing with the wounded dog. Valeria ultimately loses her leg because she got out of her wheelchair to look for Richie and further injured her leg. El Chivo loses all of his dogs to the Cofi after he nurses it back to health. It is like they are all being punished for things they've done in their lives.

The one person that seems to have been most awakened by these events is the freelance murderer, El Chivo. After the loss of his dogs and his ex-wife, he discovers that he has given up so much. In the process of this, he has also taken or destroyed the lives of others. In the end, he decides to change and try to make things right.

There didn't seem to be a whole lot of Latin American history incorporated into this film, but there was a hint of some traditional ideals and a tie to the revolution with the mercenary dog man. There are traditional gender roles, taboos, and role reversals within the film. There are also family values and the suggestion of fate. I think that this suggestion of fate could be interpreted as a vague reference to religion or spirituality.

Even in modern society, there are still traditional gender roles. This goes for Latin America and the rest of the world. The traditional role is that the man is the head of the house and the woman is the caretaker. It seems that in this film, most of the men have abandoned their roles as the head of the house. El Chivo leaves his family for the revolution. Ramiro (Octavio's brother) is too busy being selfish and robbing places to care for his family. Daniel is a loving man to Valeria, but only after he leaves his wife

and kids. Octavio wants to be a good man for Susana, but in doing so he is forsaking his brother. The women however, are playing their parts as the caretakers. They are just being taken for granted by their men. This cheating, lying and stealing are the taboos. The women have to care for everyone without a man. This is the role reversals I was speaking of.

The only link to history that I noticed was the story of El Chivo. He left his family because he wanted to save the world. He was an idealist. He ended up in prison and lost his family. This sent him on a downward spiral. He ends up becoming a mercenary and nearly forgetting about his family until his ex-wife dies.

There is also a suggestion of spirituality or religion in the film. It could also be considered karma. Everyone is living a life full of sin. Octavio is fighting his dog and cheating with his brother's wife. He is trying to do good; but he is doing the wrong things to get what he wants. Ramiro has a family yet he is going out and cheating on his wife and committing crimes. He is not being the man he should be for his family. Daniel is cheating on his wife with Valeria. He eventually leaves his wife to live with Valeria. They are both punished for their deeds with a series of unfortunate events. El Chivo is living the life of a vagrant because he abandoned his family for what he thought was a higher cause. He now lives on the streets and is a killer-for-hire. His only love now is for his dogs, which he loses out of an act of compassion for the dog Cofi. All of these characters seem to be getting punished for their wrongdoings. This, in my opinion, points to an implication of religion. These people are trying to better themselves, but they are doing so in such ways that they are only digging themselves in deeper. For some, they are digging their own graves.

*Amores Perros* is a great film that can be interpreted in many different ways. My interpretation is just one of many possible others. I found it somewhat difficult to relate it to many of the ideas from the class, but it does show us a modern depiction of life in a Latin American country. In so many ways it is like our American culture and way of life, as well as, many other cultures around the world.