

## Abstracts for articles on *Alumbramiento* in SHORT FILM STUDIES Vol 1, No 2

Copyright ©Intellect Journals 2011 <http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=191/>

Rob Stone  
(Swansea University)  
TIME OF DEATH

Short films are no longer celluloid but software, and, following Deleuze, the most interesting short films no longer deal in movement but in time. These are not little movies but full-length timies. This article makes the case for a new critical approach to the short film.

Nathan Shaw (Swansea University)  
MOVING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

A new (post 9/11) emphasis on physical suffering and its transcendence (as opposed to post World War II psychological suffering and its confounding) is emerging in contemporary European cinema at all levels, from feature length movies to short films as exemplified by *Alumbramiento*.

Jimmy Hay (Swansea University)  
SUFFERING IN SILENCE: ALUMBRAMIENTO AS A MELODRAMATIC TEXT

How does a short film such as *Alumbramiento* relate to a classic genre such as melodrama? This article examines how the film's exploration of morality, its adoption of pathos and its use of soundtrack and *mise-en-scène* all demand its inscription within an evolving concept of melodrama.

Enric Bou (Brown University)  
OVERCOMING DARKNESS:  
ALUMBRAMIENTO'S JOURNEY TOWARD  
ILLUMINATION

This article focuses on the important role that light plays throughout *Alumbramiento*. The title itself, and the film's plot, stress the fact that everything is told in reverse, with oxymoronic elements playing a significant role. This is also the case with a celebrated poem by Vicente Aleixandre, *Ven siempre ven*, among other works, in which the title's imperative sentence is negated by what follows.

Jeffrey Middents (American University)  
NOT THE SAME ONES YOU SANG  
WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE: CHILDREN, SPAIN  
AND CHAPERO-JACKSON'S ALUMBRAMIENTO

Although the title *Alumbramiento* references childbirth, children are conspicuously absent throughout the film: motherhood defines María, but not her children. In framing death by referencing the trappings of children and parenthood, the film also comments on the nature of the post-Francoist Spanish family.

Joanna Rydzewska (Swansea University)  
EUROPE IS AGEING

From a gendered perspective, *Alumbramiento* is a traditional Oedipal scenario. However, in spite of the supposed ahistoricism of its Freudian overtones, they could and should be read as having profoundly social implications. If on the individual level of one family, the film explores the death of the matriarch and the emotional and practical impact it has on her son and daughter, at the more collective level it extends to the issue of ageing Europe and the question of who is doing the caring. As such the film reinforces the gendered division of caring labour where it is women who carry its burden.

Graciela Michelotti (Haverford College)  
CONTRASTS IN ALUMBRAMIENTO

With contrasting lights and shadows reminiscent of Francisco Zurbarán's paintings, *Alumbramiento* offers a palette of differing acts: 'to give birth', becoming a parent of your own mother, 'to illuminate' the path to a good death. The initial fear subsides and new alliances are born, inviting the viewer to take a stand.

Germán Labrador Méndez  
(Princeton University)  
THE BIOPOLITICS OF DEATH IN CHAPERO-  
JACKSON'S ALUMBRAMIENTO

This article will analyze *Alumbramiento* in the context of the sociology of death, examining whether the ways in which it portrays death and dying reflect recent changes that have taken place in contemporary Spain.

Ernesto R. Acevedo-Muñoz  
(University of Colorado at Boulder)  
COMING INTO THE LIGHT:  
*ALUMBRAMIENTO* IN CONTEXT

This essay places *Alumbramiento* in the context of Spanish cinema after 1960. Narrative and formal analysis focus on strategies to make dual metaphors of death and birth converge within the film as a family is brought closer together and renewed during the mother's final hours.