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# Literary and cinematic perspectives on gender studies

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# Literary and Cinematic Perspectives on Gender Studies

## The House of the Spirits

Based on Isabel Allende's novel, *The house of the Spirits* (1993) by film director Billie August depicts notable aspects of a culture rooted in machismo. My research explores the film's portrayal of sexual influence and the power that women have over men to analyze the impact of changes in main characters. From inner passions to transcendental experiences, female characters abandon simple roles to project their power and restore a sense of justice in their lives. While the gender of a character was crucial in establishing their level of power and influence in the film, the opposite is also true. With Clara's character, we are shown how women can use their sexuality to influence the actions of a man, and thus gain power. It was women who brought about changes of heart and changes of politics. **Katie Lovett**

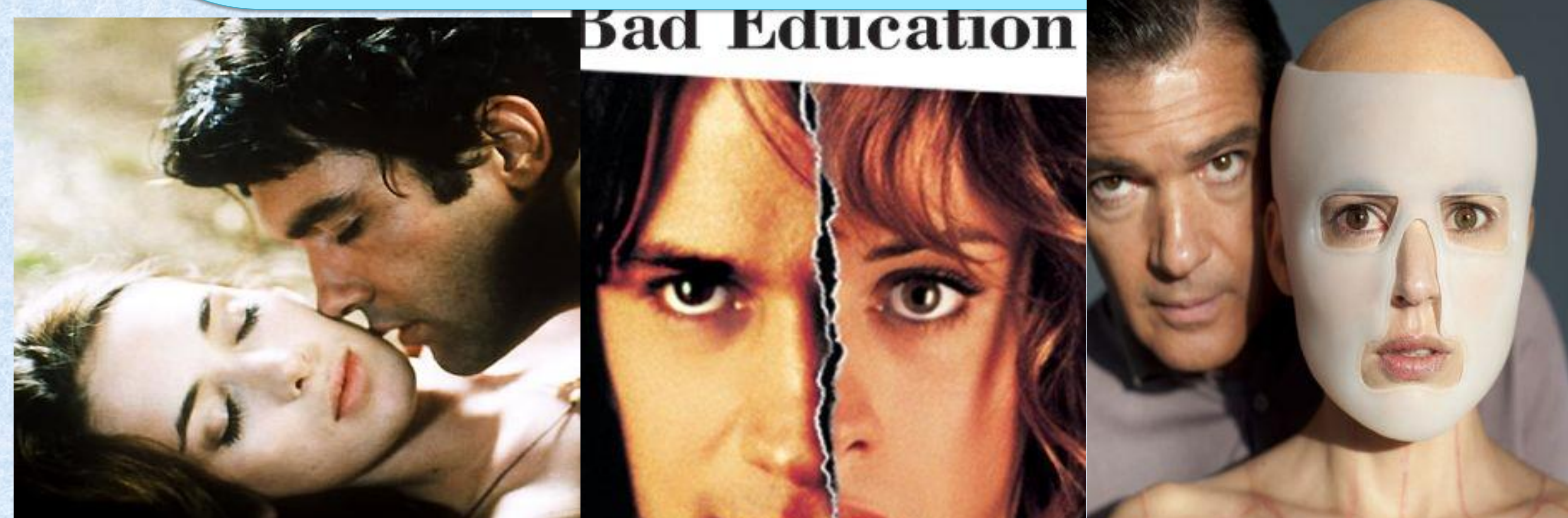


## Kiss of the Spider Woman

The movie *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Héctor Babenco, 1985) is adapted from Manuel Puig's novel and explores problems that transgender people face. The purpose of this study is to analyze the "trans-reality" world recreated as a fantasy world that some transgender people are forced to live in. I also analyze the psychological and emotional effects that this fantasy living has on individuals and its impact on their confrontation with structured systems. Throughout the film, Molina reenacts scenes from his favorite film. This reenactment is meant to provide a sort of fantasy world that the two men could live in for just a moment. Molina uses fantasy to deal with his sexuality as well as to escape from his oppressive situation. The story that Molina tells is a parallel tale about his and Arregui's love. **Emily Winburn**

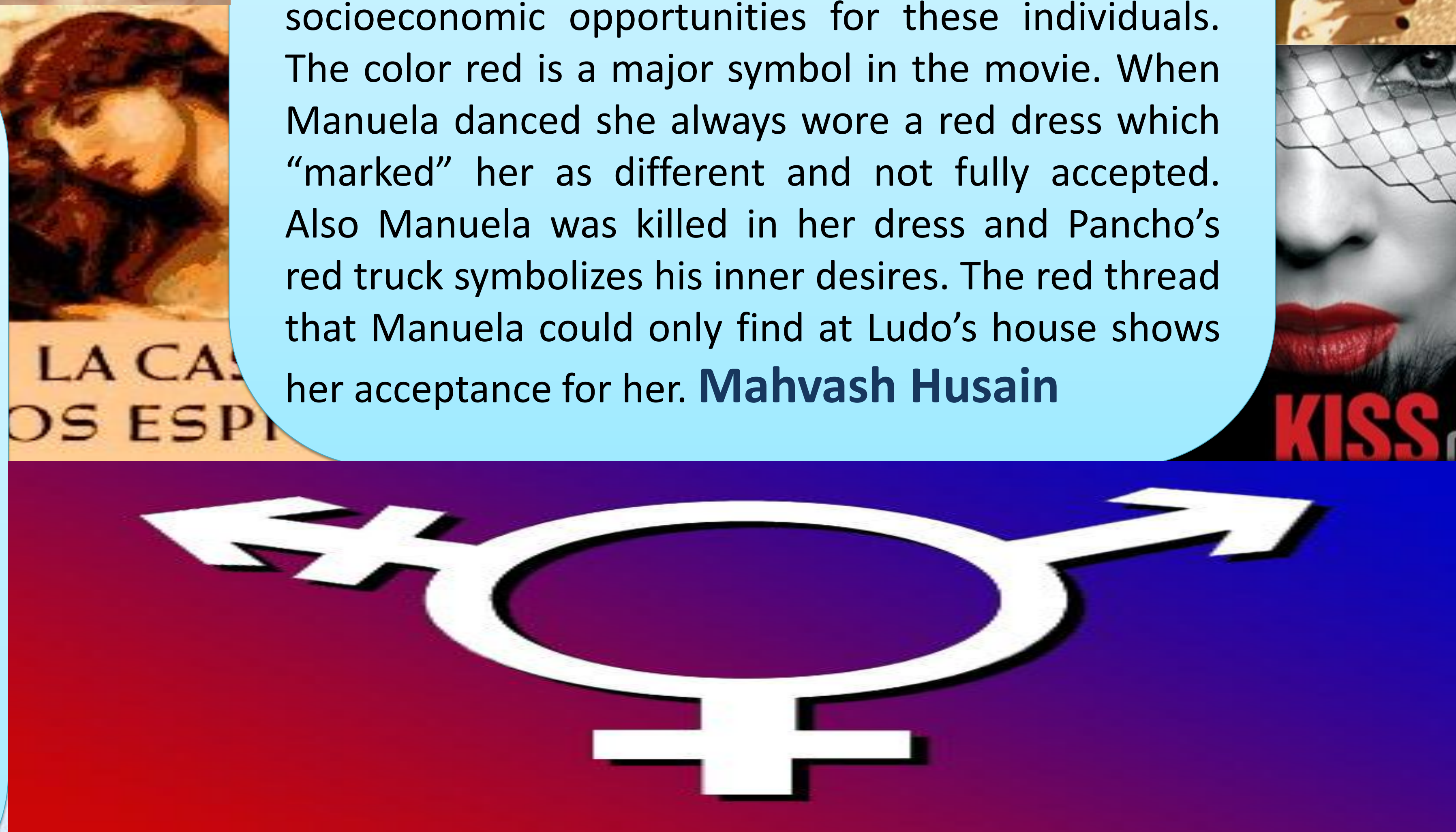
## The Place without Limits

Film director Arturo Ripstein adapted *The Place without Limits* (1977) from the novel by José Donoso. My research focuses on the backlash and neglect presented by society for transgenders and women. I explore the stereotypical macho persona in comparison to more feminine characteristics, as well as the stereotypical female persona and how these stereotypes lead to persecution and lack of socioeconomic opportunities for these individuals. The color red is a major symbol in the movie. When Manuela danced she always wore a red dress which "marked" her as different and not fully accepted. Also Manuela was killed in her dress and Pancho's red truck symbolizes his inner desires. The red thread that Manuela could only find at Ludo's house shows her acceptance for her. **Mahvash Husain**



Gender roles are a socially constructed paradigm based on cultural norms and social class. The analysis of *The Skin I live in* (2011) focuses on Almodóvar's interest in transgender identity and the impact of science. The characters in this film feel the pressure to comply with the expected gender roles from birth and throughout life but are forced to participate in an experiment with synergistic effects that can drive them to extreme measures. Gender is a part of who we are, and it is not something that can be altered through medicine or surgery. Gender encompasses biological, behavioral, and mental aspects. All of these determine our personality, our identity, and our perspective of the world. The main character cannot escape his altered body but he keeps his identity behind unconventional masks. **Courtney Dunnigan**

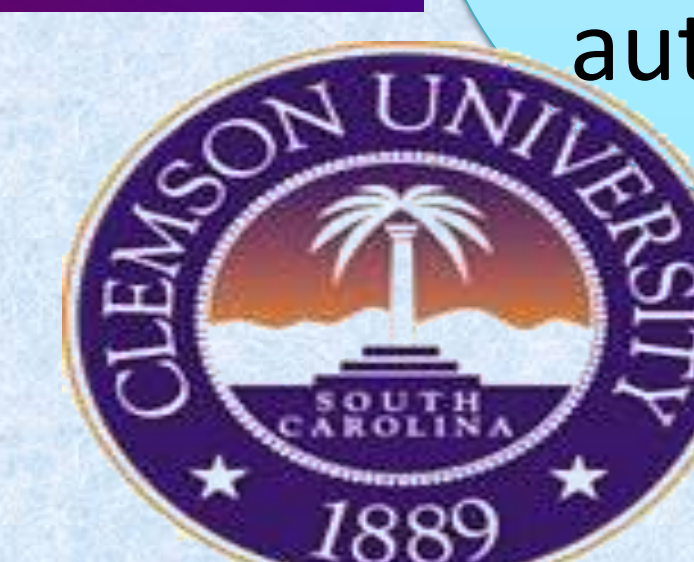
My research focuses on how the characters in *Bad Education* (2004) understand the beauty of love and art but also the fear of harassment and abuse they face because of their sexuality. With the intention of presenting real life and fiction, Almodóvar has created a film that portrays multiple perspectives on transgender issues and the role of society in shaping people's perception related to what are considered "controversial" issues. The film completely stretches the walls of the noir film genre and takes place in a handful of different time periods. There is real world, the film world, the imagination and the flashbacks all intertwined to the point where the viewer is almost unsure of what the truth is. This entanglement of separate realities initially creates the idea of an autobiographical work of art. **Hannah Haire**



*The Skin I live in*



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*Bad Education*