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Scarface's excess: Style and Latino stereotypes.

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ABSTRACT

Hollywood cinema from the past has often been linked with a stereotyped depiction of reality. This depiction was present in eighties' Hollywood films from all genres. One of these genres is the gangster film. This dissertation aims to explain how the gangster film *Scarface* (Brian De Palma, 1983) is an example of Hollywood cinema's racial stereotypes in the eighties. Specifically, it analyses some filmic elements of this movie in order to establish a relation between this film and the representation of Latino people as a homogeneous group, based on their race.

To test the thesis that *Scarface* is a demonstration of racial stereotypes about Latino immigrants, an analysis of the film has been done. The elements of the film that have analysed in this dissertation are visual style, mise-en-scène, sound and performance. This dissertation focuses on specific examples and aspects of these elements that are relevant in order to demonstrate the thesis. This analysis' results show that costume, setting, décor, style, power and deaths in this movie contribute to emphasizing these clichés.

This analysis suggests that what at first sight looks like a usual gangster film hides details and aspects about the stereotyped representation of Latino characters as dangerous, flamboyant, excessive and difficult to control people.

El cine de Hollywood del pasado suele estar vinculado a una representación de la realidad cargada de estereotipos. Este tipo de representación está presente en películas de Hollywood de los ochenta pertenecientes a todos los géneros. Siendo uno de estos géneros el cine de gánsteres. El objetivo de esta disertación es explicar cómo la película de gánsteres *Scarface* es un ejemplo de los estereotipos raciales del cine de Hollywood de esta época. Concretamente, en esta disertación se analizan algunos elementos fílmicos de la película con el propósito de establecer una relación entre dicha película y la representación de los latinoamericanos como un grupo homogéneo, basándose únicamente en su etnia.

Para demostrar la tesis de que *Scarface* es una demostración de los estereotipos raciales sobre los inmigrantes latinoamericanos, se ha realizado un análisis de esta película. Los elementos de la película que han sido analizados son el estilo visual, la puesta en escena, el sonido y las interpretaciones. Esta disertación se centra en ejemplos y aspectos concretos de estos elementos que son relevantes a la hora de demostrar la tesis. Los resultados de este análisis muestran que en esta película el vestuario, el escenario, la decoración, el estilo, el poder y las muertes contribuyen a reforzar estos clichés.

Este análisis sugiere que lo que a primera vista parece una película normal sobre gánsteres esconde en su interior aspectos y detalles sobre la estereotipada representación de los personajes latinoamericanos como personas peligrosas, llamativas, excesivas y difíciles de controlar.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In order to begin with this dissertation, I will make an introduction of the gangster film genre by explaining the long and complex evolution that this genre has suffered since its creation until the release of *Scarface* (Brian De Palma, 1983) and then I will make an introduction about the movie and its context. Carlos Clarens explains this process in his book, later updated by Foster Hirsch in 1997, *Crime Movies*. Gangster cinema reflects the shift in American society's attitude when facing crime. In the first gangster films, the main characters dedicated themselves to bootlegging.

However, these characters did not disappear when the Prohibition was abolished in 1933, they changed their activities for gambling, drug trafficking and other illegal activities. Actors such as Ciannelli, Bogart or Spurin-Calleja formed the second generation; they performed lonely and moody people whose strong point was their intelligence rather than their circle of people. At the end of the thirties, gangster films had a considerable presence of violence and they intended to give moral messages. *The Roaring Twenties*' (Raoul Walsh, 1939) success demonstrated that the general audience preferred watching the old kind of movies that presented good gangsters against bad gangsters and that the real gangsters of the late thirties had the influence of the previous years' criminals.

In the 1940s, crime movies started to be told from the gangster's point of view and this created a link between the fictional gangster and the spectator. The Hays Office allowed gangster comedies because they portrayed criminals in a ridiculous and funny way. During the first half of the forties, the figure of the gangster was not predominant in cinema. In fact, it was not until the release of *Baby Face Nelson* (Don Siegel, 1957) that a real gangster appeared in a film because The Production Code of the Motion Picture Industry forbade it. During the first half of the fifties, union mobsters started to appear in cinema in films like *The Mob* (Robert Parrish, 1951) or *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954). These mobsters had the appearance of businessmen in order to look

like legal people. McCarthyism considerably marked the fifties and this affected cinema due to the prohibition of social themes and due to the blacklist (Clarens and Hirsch, 1997: 14- 236).

In 1968, the Production Code disappeared and filmmakers were now able to treat polemical themes. *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967) proposed a new life's perspective that emphasized the idea of living fast and dying young instead of living a long and boring life. Then, there was a revival of the thirties' style in gangster cinema. The release of *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972) was one before and one after in this genre. It was a commercial and critical success when Mario Puzo published the novel and when Francis Ford Coppola made the film based on the novel too. Clarens tells that *The Godfather* changed the previous vision of the gangster; it showed how society had been corrupted and how customs, allegiance and respect were disappearing through the depiction of criminals who had a code of honour and who did not attack innocent people but only other criminals. These mobsters were silent men in dark environments. *The Godfather* also deals with the swift from old traditions and honours ruling business into the imperialistic view. That is, the change in the mentality of people from one generation to the next one. *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973) showed how difficult it is to move crime away from daily life (Clarens, 1997: 262-325).

Nevertheless, despite how successful *The Godfather* was, the cops replaced the mobsters as the prevailing figure in the seventies' cinema. *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, 1975) presented a loser character who becomes a criminal instead of a criminal that becomes a loser and it showed how politics, in this case sexual politics, were also relevant for the genre. Foster Hirsch states that gangster films in the eighties and nineties offered a new interpretation of the genre, characterised by a romantic reinterpretation of the past and by the prevalence of the atmosphere over the narrative urgency. For instance, *Scarface* (Brian De Palma, 1983) is a remake of the homonymous film *Scarface* (Howard Hawks, 1932), replacing its Italian main character for a Cuban criminal who just arrived in Miami. The criminals became myths due to the focus on the facade, their path to power was not luxurious but now it was shown as disturbing. The gangster was depicted as a psychopath

who has the necessity of controlling the people surrounding him. Love and sex are a deflection in the gangsters' lives and they affect their lives like it is the case with Tony Montana (Al Pacino) and his obsession with his sister's sexual life, and his unhappy marriage with Elvira Hancock (Michelle Pfeiffer) that end up driving him mad. Gangster films from this period started to show criminals from new ethnic groups and places, and these films were pervaded by stereotypes. This provoked some spectators to complain about the link between some ethnic groups and crime activities as black and Hispanic people were usually the ones portrayed doing these activities. *Scarface* and *Carlito's Way* (Brian De Palma, 1993) depict Hispanic characters as drug addicts who often go to clubs where sex and drugs are their main entertainment (Clarens and Hirsch, 1997: 297-359).

Scarface tells the story of Tony Montana, a Cuban immigrant who arrives in Miami. Tony has criminal records and he is sent to a refugee camp. Tony is set free from the camp after killing a Cuban communist official, Emilio Rebenga (Roberto Contreras). Then, Tony and his friend Manny (Steven Bauer) start working in a restaurant, but they are not happy with this job and they start working for a drug dealer called Frank López (Robert Loggia). Frank sends Tony and his friends to purchase cocaine to an apartment, but the deal goes badly and one of Tony's friends is killed. Tony escapes from the apartment with the cocaine and the money. After this, Tony and Manny meet Frank and his wife Elvira (Michelle Pfeiffer), whom Tony falls in love with. Tony visits his mother, who repudiates him, and his sister Gina (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio), whom he overprotects. Manny likes Tony's sister and Tony tells him to stay away from her. Then, Tony travels to Bolivia to meet Alejandro Sosa (Paul Shenar), an important drug dealer who tells Tony that Omar Suárez (F. Murray Abraham), one of Frank's employees, is a police informant and Omar is killed. Tony and Sosa agree a deal with the condition that Tony never betrays Sosa. Tony starts working independently and a corrupt police officer who works with Frank tries to extort Tony in the Babylon Club. Then, two hitmen attempt to kill Tony, but he manages to escape. Manny and Tony kill Frank and the corrupt police officer because they sent the two hitmen to kill Tony. Tony marries Elvira and he starts working for Sosa, becoming a powerful and rich man. Tony is sentenced to prison for

tax evasion. Sosa offers Tony to keep him out of prison if Tony assassinates a man who is going to speak in public about Sosa's illegal activities. Tony, Manny and Elvira go to a restaurant where Tony gets drunk and has an argument with Elvira, who leaves him. Then, Tony goes to New York to assassinate Sosa's target. This man is in a car that has a radio-controlled bomb. However, the man's wife and kids are in the car too and Tony refuses to kill them. Tony finds out that Manny has a love relationship with Gina and he kills Manny. Sosa is angry after Tony's betrayal and he sends many men to Tony's house in order to kill him. One of Sosa's men kills Gina and Tony ends up being killed too.

Concerning *Scarface* and its context, this film portrays eighties' capitalism by means of remaking a film from the thirties. That is, it takes a story from the past to the context of its contemporary times. This film deals with the ambition of a criminal who goes from rags to riches. The main characteristic of the 1983's version is the excess and greed mainly represented by its main character. The considerable presence of violence was quite controversial when the film was released. However, Mason argues that this violence is nothing but another argument in favour of its excess and exaggeration, the film criticizes an empty culture of which Tony ends up being another victim like the rest of the people. Tony embodies the excess of the eighties based on the loss of self-identity and the desire for money, power and material elements (Mason, 2002: 145-146). Tony thinks that money is necessary to get everything else, as exemplified when he says "In this country, you gotta make the money first. Then when you get the money, you get the power. Then when you get the power, then you get the women". However, after realizing that this thought was not so true he says "capitalism is getting fucked". This excess was also present in the version of 1932. There was also a high presence of violence for its time and an incestuous obsession of the protagonist with his sister, in this case between Tony Camonte (Paul Muni) and Cesca (Ann Dvorak). The desire for improving economically is spoiled by the violence that this ascent requires for a criminal and both films' protagonists end up being driven by greed. The only character who tries to stop the protagonists is their mother, but this does not have any effect. They both lack taste even though they

have a lot of money because they are trying to look like they belong to a social class that is not theirs. Their behaviours are characterized by excess, violence, danger and destructiveness and all this is what ends up causing their deaths and the death of the ones who are with them such as their sisters and their sisters' lovers, who are their best friends too, due to their desire to control and rule everyone. This sexual obsession with his sister shows Tony's greed, as he does not permit his sister to enjoy the same excessive life that he is living. In addition, Manny can be seen as another possession that Tony does not want to lose and Manny's murder happens just before Tony loses everything. That is, Manny was the one who represented loyalty, losing him means losing the power, and this provokes Tony's death (Mason, 2002: 24-28).

Scarface dates from the period from 1970 to 1988 that has been catalogued as a period of ethnic commercialization in America and this is reflected in cinema. Post-classical films are distinguished by their urban realism and graphic violence. Martin Scorsese was the most relevant filmmaker who portrayed in his films the low-class hoods and the difficulties that people from these parts of the towns suffered. (Wilson, 2014: 96). This ethnic revival took place during the sixties and the seventies. Hollywood started producing films about ethnicities such as Italian-Americans, who were mainly depicted as criminals. Before this, film gangsters had been American people who did not obey the law or people who were not associated with any ethnicity in particular. Therefore, this change towards the representation of ethnicity somehow came back to the racial stereotypes of silent cinema. These new films were more realistic and the urban realism that they depicted accentuated the characters' ethnicity. Furthermore, these films suggested that immigrants caused a rise in criminality as they showed criminality as a tradition of their cultures (Wilson, 2014: 81-84).

Scarface puts the spectator in context from the first scene since at the beginning it tells the spectator that the immigrants that entered the USA from the harbour of Mariel (Cuba) in the eighties were the dregs of Cuba's jails. The movie tells this by means of a text explaining that twenty-five thousands of the one hundred and twenty five thousands of people who entered the USA through this harbour had criminal records. That is, twenty percent of these immigrants were

criminals. *Scarface* is an example of these ethnic-themed films about criminals produced in the post-classical period. The visual style and other filmic elements in this film contribute to emphasizing 1980s Hollywood cinema's stereotypes about Latino immigrants as dangerous, flamboyant, excessive and difficult to control people. In order to demonstrate this, I will analyse the film by focusing on costume, setting and décor, style and power and deaths.

2. ANALYSIS OF *SCARFACE* (1983)

2.1 COSTUME

First, I am going to analyse the clothes worn by the characters and their implications in relation to the stereotypes of the film. Gangsters during the 1950s used to wear their own style of clothes, mainly “hats and dark suits, jackets and trousers; and later tight-fitting, double-breasted jackets, coats with big Napoleonic collars and flared trousers”. In the 1970s, the counterculture had an impact on clothing and gangsters wore “pink pastel shirts, open-necked sport tops, bright checked jackets with non-matching coloured trousers, stack-heeled boots, velour tracksuits and ethnic jewellery” (Grieverson, Sonnet and Stanfield, 2005: 165-166).

There is a constant differentiation between the clothes worn by the Latino characters and the clothes worn by American characters in *Scarface*. At the beginning of the film, when the film shows two cops interrogating Tony, we see the police officers dressed in their uniforms whereas Tony is wearing a flamboyant shirt with blue and orange flowers and birds, and he has a scar on his face. That is, the film presents Tony as the different one. In addition, the main characteristic in Al Pacino’s performance is his Cuban accent. Tony’s way of speaking makes the spectator constantly remember that Tony is not American as he speaks English with a considerably marked Cuban accent. The adding of sound in cinema contributed to characterizing immigrant characters and characters from low social classes by giving them a vernacular way of talking and/or street slang (Munby, 1999: 41). What’s more, in the scene in which the Cuban immigrants are in the bus on their way to The Florida internment camp, the spectator sees a dark and sweaty image of their skin. There is little light in this scene in order to emphasize this darkness. Darkness implies negative aspects. Therefore, this lighting causes these characters to give a negative image.

Moreover, in the scene in which the movie shows Tony, Manny and their two companions on their way to the deal in the apartment, all of them are wearing flamboyant clothes. Manny is wearing a purple shirt, Tony is wearing a red shirt with birds and flowers, the co-driver is wearing a

black flowered shirt and an orange hat, and the other character is wearing a pink shirt. These clothes are highlighted by the contrast between their colours and the colours of the clothes worn by the people in the street who appear in this scene and who are probably Americans. That is, the Latino characters in this film wear clothes that are flamboyant and represent the Latinos' excess that the movie intends to depict. The film's choice in terms of colours is relevant. Latinos wear clothes of exuberant colours. It is as if all the Latinos had the same culture and costumes even though they belong to different countries. The Latino characters in the film are from Cuba, Colombia and Bolivia. However, they all look as if they belonged to the same place because of their similar style and characteristics.

2.2 SETTING AND DÉCOR

Moving on to the setting and décor of the film, it is a similar case as the clothes. The décor and style of the places that Latino characters frequent contributes to creating a differentiation between their style and the style of the Americans. In the scene in which Tony and Manny are working in a restaurant, the spectator can see a poster of another restaurant that shows an image of the city of Miami with pink and purple colours. In addition, the name of the restaurant is Little Havana RESTAURANTE with red coloured letters. The name of the restaurant is Little Havana, the part of the city in which Cubans live, "restaurante" is written in Spanish with flamboyant letters and this place's door is full of pink, blue, red and yellow lights and has big windows and luxury cars parked in the door. This poster's flamboyance works for the spectator to focus on it and have the idea that Cubans see the city of Miami as a place for vice and excess.

Another remarkable place in the film is the Babylon Club, where Tony and his workmates meet and drink. This place has several enormous sculptures outdoors, an enormous garden, pink and blue lights on its door and a long carpet that drives to its high door. Everything in this place is of a considerable size. When the camera moves to the indoors of the club, we can see that its style is the same as outside. The lights are pink and blue and there are big sculptures too. Most of the characters

inside the Babylon Club are Latinos. The place is full of mirrors in which we see the same images several times. This implies repetition, calling attention, excess and the fact that wherever you look you can see all these images. The dance floor shows the characters dancing all together, giving the image of them as all mixed. This favours the stereotype that Latinos are all the same, a homogeneous group. Furthermore, in the scene in which Manny and Tony are talking in a car after leaving the Babylon Club, there is a dark background. This darkness works for the spectator to focus on the two characters and on the car seats, which are made of tiger skin. Tony says that the world and everything in it is coming to him. The tiger skin highlights when Tony says this. This implies that Tony is like a tiger who wants to devour his prey, in this case, the world and everything in it.

This ambition and desire for power show how capitalism transforms people. Tony comes from Cuba, a communist country in which there is no private property and he arrives in the USA, the most representative capitalist country. Capitalism causes that power does not reside in owning territories, but capital, causing deterritorialization. That is, criminals in capitalist societies do not look for controlling territories as it happened before, and if they want to control a territory, it is because this territory lets them control society, it is more important to control this than controlling space (Mason, 2002: 89). Gangsters live a privileged life. They are the aristocrats of the proletarian class because they have access to places and things that other proletarians will never have access to. Within society, they are the ones who have the power and rule (Mason, 2002: 148). Therefore, becoming a gangster is a way for Tony to have power and have access to what he could not reach in any other way. It was in the thirties when stories like these started to be told, stories about gangsters who lived at the low place of the social ladder and whose story was told from their point of view, they were not characters from other people's stories but they were the main characters and the focalizers. The story told in *Scarface* tells the rise and the fall of the protagonist, the American dream's capitalist myth emphasized by the film's motto "The World is yours". All the characters in the film support Tony in this unstoppable desire for power, except his mother. She is away from

him because she knows that his way of life is immoral and she treats him as the bad of the family because his desire for money has driven him mad. Tony's desire for controlling everything provokes that he does not even want to see his sister with another man. This incestuous desire shows how gangsters' personality affects their sexuality until the point of feeling attraction to their own sisters (Munby, 1999: 40-41, 56-58). Here, Munby refers to the 1932 film, but this can also be applied to the 1983 version, as these features are present in both films.

When Tony and Manny go to pick Elvira in the car with the tiger skin seats, she mocks Tony because of the style of the car. Elvira is not Latino and she tells Tony that the car is not beautiful. Tony is surprised when she says this and he says that it is a normal car, ignoring its extravagant appearance. Here, the film is implying that Latinos see their extravagant and excessive style as something normal. They are not conscious of it but the rest of the people, represented in this scene by Elvira, instantly see this excess and extravagance. Elvira says that the car looks like "somebody's nightmare". Here, the film is ridiculing the Latinos' style through Elvira's words. The film depicts gangsters as people obsessed with fashion and having good taste who buy luxurious objects and clothes to get this but they fail because there is no money or possessions that can make them have good taste. This causes the gangster to be mocked when trying it. This was a way of telling people from working classes and ethnic minorities that they should not try to belong to a higher social class, applied to the gangsters' search for style (Grieverson, Sonnet and Stanfield, 2005: 174).

When the film presents the character of Frank López, the first image shown of this character is inside his house, seen from a long distance. Frank occupies a very small part of the screen because what the director intends the spectator to pay attention to is the house instead of the character. Frank's house is a mansion and the part that the film shows is the living room. The colours that predominate in this scene are red, white and black. In this case, excess is not represented by colours, but by objects. It is a big and luxurious house of minimalist style and it has a big swimming pool outdoors. It is remarkable that there is an elevator inside the house. This

elevator is quite extravagant and is where we see Elvira for the first time. Elvira is not from Latin America, but from Baltimore, and she does not have the same style as the Latinos. Her clothes' colours are not flamboyant. This allows the spectator to visually differentiate Elvira from Latinos.

Alejandro Sosa appears for the first time in the scene in which Omar Suárez and Tony go to visit him. The film's first image of Sosa is walking and talking in his cocaine's laboratory. The background of the laboratory is dark. However, the fire is easy to see as it stands out in this dark background and there are red lights illuminating the cocaine. Therefore, what calls more attention in this scene are the cocaine and the fire for the spectator to focus on these elements. In addition, the colour that illuminates cocaine is the red colour, one of the flamboyant colours that the film uses to represent Latinos. Therefore, the film is conveying the idea that cocaine is associated with Latinos. This is a stereotype as Latinos are usually associated with drug dealing, especially cocaine. The film shows Sosa's house in a similar way in which it previously showed Frank's house and the Babylon Club, by showing a long moving shot that lets the spectator see the entire place and notice its size and the objects that decorate it.

2.3 STYLE AND POWER

With regard to style and power, the characters in *Scarface* have different clothes and houses depending on whether they are poor or rich. However, the stereotypes are still present even though these characters do not belong to the low social classes anymore.

When Tony becomes rich, the film shows a scene of him at his house looking at a zeppelin with an advertisement in it that says "The world is yours". This zeppelin is a huge object and it is flying in the sky, so it is easy to see. The message in the zeppelin is written in illuminated letters that are moving on a screen. After this scene, there is a montage with the song "Push it to the limit". These two scenes mark the division between the part of the film about Tony's path to power and the part of the film after reaching it. This second part shows the change in the characters' style once they have become rich. The montage scene is a succession of images that show the excess that now

characterizes Tony's life. In this scene, the film shows a money counter, Tony and his employees arriving at a bank several times with bags full of money, Tony and Elvira's wedding and the expensive things that Tony has bought such as a mansion, a tiger, a painting, expensive clothes and so on. This scene ends with an image of Elvira taking drugs. The song chosen for this scene is "Push it to the limit" by Paul Engemann. This song gives details about what is happening and about Tony's personality. For example, some lyrics from this song that create this effect are "Push it to the limit", "Past the point of no return you've reached the top but still you gotta learn how to keep it", "Nothing gonna stop you, there's nothing that strong so close now you're nearly at the brink so, push it, ooh yeah", "You might get careless, but you'll never be safe while you're still in it welcome to the limit standing on the razor's edge". These lyrics talk about unstoppable ambition, self-assertiveness and the cold mind needed to keep power. They contribute to emphasizing the idea of Tony as a person who only thinks about himself controlling everything and being able to do anything in order not to lose his power.

As I said before, from this part of the film on we can see the change in Tony's style. The décor in Tony's mansion is similar to the Babylon Club. This mansion has several swimming pools, security cameras, a big garden with trees and a tiger, and spacious rooms inside with red walls and a big painting of Tony and Elvira. Indoors, there is also a fountain with a statue. Tony's bureau has several TVs that show the security cameras' images, a luxurious chair that looks like a throne and golden decorative objects. The colours of the house are mainly black and white, especially outdoors. That is, the excess of Tony is not represented by the colours of his clothes anymore but by his house, its décor and the extravagance of this décor. Although colour is not the main element that represents excess, the golden objects in Tony's bureau are highlighted because the predominant colour in the room is black. The film does this for the spectator to easily see these objects. Furthermore, the scene in which Tony is in a Jacuzzi lets the spectator see a room decorated by statues, columns and golden objects. The palette of colours has changed since Tony is rich. Now it is mainly white, golden and to a lesser extent, black. Elvira is blonde and she is dressed in white or

in other light colours. It is as if since Tony is with her, she has made him change his style.

Furthermore, when she was Frank's partner his house was also mostly white. Elvira is like the little purity shown inside this world of criminals and this is why she is associated to white and light colours, which represent purity. She is the only main character of an American origin and the only one that has this style. Her facial expression is sad. This might be because she suffers the consequences of the kind of life that first Frank and then Tony have. At the beginning of the film, she tells Frank that his lifestyle is not good and she later tells the same to Tony. She ends up abandoning Tony because she cannot put up with this situation. The spectator feels identified with Elvira and understands her suffering because the film depicts her as a victim.

Once he has become rich, the colours of Tony's clothes are not flamboyant anymore. However, Manny still wears this kind of clothes. This shows that Tony has reached power and Manny has not yet. Both Tony and Manny represent excess. However, in the case of Tony, the objects he owns now represent his excess. Otherwise, Manny's clothes still represent his excess. For instance, the film shows this contrast in the scene in which Manny is in Tony's bureau; his pink clothes highlight more because the elements that surround him are black and golden. This provokes a noticeable contrast between Manny and the background. In addition, it gives the image that Manny does not fit in Tony's house and life now that Tony belongs to a higher social class.

Nevertheless, although Tony has become rich and his style has changed, he cannot go unnoticed within the atmosphere of rich people. For instance, in the scene in which Tony, Manny and Elvira are in a restaurant. They are wearing elegant clothes and they are in a high-class restaurant. At first sight, they do not look different from the rest of the people there. However, they cannot go unnoticed because Tony gets drunk and he has an argument with Elvira. They start shouting and the rest of the people stay quiet looking at them. After Elvira leaves, Tony says to the people in the restaurant "You need people like me so you can point your finger and say that's the bad guy". Although criminals dress elegantly and go to a high-class restaurant trying to look like high-class people, they end up calling attention because, after all, they are different people.

Gangsters have their own talking and this is like a mark from which they cannot escape even though they try to hide it. This does not let them reach the highest point of their ambition in which they have the power and people treat them like the ones who got this power legally (Munby, 1999: 43). Similarly, when Tony and Manny are working in a restaurant at the beginning of the film, they talk rudely and say swear words even though there are clients in front of them. This is an atypical attitude coming from people who work facing the public. Gangsters have a vernacular voice that discriminates against them and makes the spectator see them as different from the rest of the people (Munby, 1999: 43).

When Tony meets Sosa and the other Bolivian men, the film shows Sosa's house from the inside. Red, white and black colours predominate and the décor of the house is classic, with a big lamp hanging from the roof and long windows. Although Sosa is Bolivian and the house is in Bolivia, its décor is of a similar style as the Babylon club and Frank and Tony's houses. In addition, the scene in which Tony kills Manny is set in Manny's new house and it is of a similar style. That is, Manny has passed from the low class Latino style to the high-class Latino style. It is as if all the Latinos had the same style with very few differences. This gives the idea of Latin America as a whole, ignoring the fact that different countries with different cultures form it. As I have previously explained, low class Latinos were portrayed wearing similar clothes in the first part of the movie and in the second part of the movie the film presents high class Latinos as also having a similar style.

The weapon that Tony uses in the final scene is a grenade launcher with automatic shooting. This is a powerful and expensive weapon and it is a representation of what Tony has become in this part of the film; power, money, excess, exaggeration and flamboyance. It is also symbolic that the final scene happens in the hall of Tony's mansion. This hall is also a representation of power, money, excess, exaggeration and flamboyance as there are statues, red walls, red floor and a fountain that contains a statue with illuminated letters that form it. In addition, Tony's image before Sosa's employees attack him, with a mountain of cocaine, represents his excess and absence of

control. He does not only sell drugs but he also takes them and he has become an addict. Here, the film is implying that Latinos cannot have power because they cannot control themselves and they end up dead or destroyed by it and destroying everything that surrounds them.

2.4 DEATHS

Another relevant aspect in the analysis of *Scarface* are some death scenes. For instance, the scene of the deal at the apartment. Here, the spectator can see a Latino gangster who has a chainsaw. The chainsaw is a big weapon that makes a lot of noise. The film emphasizes this when it shows how another character has to turn up the TV volume so that the chainsaw does not sound outdoors. In addition, the chainsaw cuts the victim's body parts and it makes the victim bleed a lot. The spectator can see this when they cut Angel's (Pepe Sernac) arm and the walls are stained with blood. The chainsaw is noisier and has a higher visual impact in comparison with the guns that are common in movies such as pistols and shotguns. Therefore, this demonstrates that even the weapons used by Latino characters contribute to reinforcing the image of them as excessive and flamboyant.

In addition, the scenes of Omar, Manny, Gina and Tony's deaths also display excess. The scene in which Omar dies shows him wounded inside a helicopter. After this, Omar screams and is pushed out of the helicopter. Then, the film shows his dead body hanging from the helicopter with a rope. Similarly, Manny's death is cold-blooded and it happens in front of Gina. In the scene of Gina's death, she receives several shots from an automatic weapon and the film shows her dead body stained with blood. Furthermore, Tony's death happens after he survives several shots and then he falls on a fountain. The film shows this death by means of a pan shot of the dead bodies of Tony and Sosa's employees. Thus, excess and extravagance are even present in the characters' deaths.

The scenes in which Tony kills the man who has the chainsaw and Alberto (Mark Margolis) are relevant in order to understand Tony's personality. When Tony kills the man who has the

chainsaw, he does it in the middle of the street. Tony shoots him even though there are several unknown people witnessing it. Alberto's death is also striking as Tony shoots him cold-blooded inside a car after shouting "you die motherfucker!" and then the film shows an image of the window of the car stained with blood and Alberto's dead body is seen in the co-driver seat while Tony is driving in a crowded zone of New York. These two scenes portray Tony as a dangerous person, difficult to control, who does not care that people see him killing a person in the middle of a crowded street.

3. CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explained the evolution of the gangster film since it was created until the release of *Scarface*. Then, this dissertation has analysed how the visual style and other filmic elements of *Scarface* contribute to reinforcing the stereotypes about Latinos in the Hollywood cinema of the eighties. As this dissertation has explained, *Scarface* is an example of the eighties Hollywood films' stereotype of Latinos as excessive, extravagant and difficult to control people.

In the introduction, this dissertation gives an overview of the genre of the gangster film and the context and topics treated in *Scarface*. Then, in the analysis, there are four different chapters. The first chapter is an explanation of how the colours and the style of the Latino characters' clothes create a distinction between American characters such as Elvira and Latino characters such as Tony and Manny. The second chapter is an analysis of the style and the décor of the places and other objects shown in the film such as the Babylon Club or Tony's car, and how they emphasize the clichés previously mentioned. The third chapter deals with the relationship between the characters' clothes and houses and the power they have. It also deals with how these elements change when Tony and Manny pass from being poor to being rich. The fourth chapter analyses the deaths of Angel, Omar, Manny, Gina, Tony, the man with the chainsaw and Alberto. This chapter explains how these deaths portray the excess, extravagance and danger of Latino people that the film intends to portray.

To sum up, *Scarface* reveals how Hollywood cinema of the eighties constructed and reinforced representations based on national, racial, class and gender stereotyping. This is a common gangster film at first sight, but after a deep analysis it reveals eighties Hollywood's racial stereotypes about Latinos as a homogeneous group of people linked with crime and with an excessive lifestyle, uncontrollable and dangerous in a capitalist society and difficult to go unnoticed when put in a different environment.

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