“Transnational Conversations in Migration, Queer, and Transgender Studies: Multimedia Storyspaces.”

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In 2005, Spain passed the Ley 13/2005, de 1 de julio, por la que se modifica el Código Civil en materia de derecho a contraer matrimonio, which legalized same-sex marriage. Two years later, Ley 3/2007, de 15 de marzo, reguladora de la rectificación registral de la mención relativa al sexo de las personas was approved, allowing citizens to rectify their gender in the National Registry without proof of gender-reassignment surgery. One might ask how a predominantly Catholic country, newly liberated from Francisco Franco’s almost forty years of fascist dictatorship, could have passed such progressive laws and what cultural and ideological transformations have made it possible...
for Spain to present itself as a model of modern democracy and egalitarian citizenship. In *Queer Transitions in Contemporary Spanish Culture: from Franco to "la movida,"* I anticipated (187) some responses to these questions by arguing that the processes of democratic transition in Spain cannot be understood without taking into consideration the contribution that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender cultures have made to those processes. I further argued (195) that queer novelists and artists living at the so-called margins were crucial to the consolidation of the contemporary Spanish democracy and that their works were central to understanding complex changes with regard to gender and sexuality that the Spanish imaginary has undergone. I would posit now that the spectacular legal gains obtained by Spanish gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender activists in the last decade could be read as a form of belated and overdue compensation, on the part of the progressive political class, for the suffering that LGBTQ individuals experienced under repressive laws such as the 1970 Ley de peligrosidad y rehabilitación social – a law that was in effect until 1978 and subjected gays, lesbians, transvestites, and transsexuals to "security measures" and internment in "rehabilitation camps." In fact, the legal figure of "public scandal" used to prosecute gays and lesbians was not removed from the Penal Code until 1988 (Platero Méndez, "From Transvestites" 4), well into the years of the democracy and the first Socialist governments. As Raquel (Lucas) Platero Méndez ("Outstanding" 46-47; "Transgender" 6-7) has extensively documented, recent legal gains are in large measure a result of vigorous queer and transgender activism dating back to the last years of Francoist dictatorship.

A more cynical view of the reasons behind the passing of these progressive laws is that they also respond to Spain’s desires to be recognized by the rest of Europe and the United States as sharing their values of modern citizenship rights and to obliterate and bury, once and for all, Spain’s repressive fascist past. What better way to prove Spain’s progress to its European partners than to pass gender and sexuality laws that are at least as, if not more, forward-looking than any others to be found in the European Union? In this regard, Spain joins other recent democracies, such as South Africa, in guaranteeing the civil rights of sexual minorities. As Brenna Munro has argued in her recent analysis of athlete Caster Semenya’s gender controversy, “South Africa’s post-apartheid democratic modernity is defined, both at home and abroad, by its promotion of human rights, including its ground-breaking constitutional enshrinement of gay rights” (5). Likewise, through its two new progressive gay and transsexual rights laws, Spain has guaranteed its perception abroad as a modern, liberal country, and it has secured an increased stream of LGBTQ tourism from abroad – not a minor issue in a country whose economy depends on tourism revenue.

Elsewhere, I assume this cynical view of the reasons behind the passage of these laws in order to question, along with scholars such as Silvia Bermúdez, how these homonormative laws that respond to the most mainstream,
normalizing gay, lesbian, and transsexual political agendas in Spain may have been passed at the expense of leaving behind many other pending fights for legal rights for other groups within the Nation-State. In particular, these laws overlook matters of racial equality – especially the integration of immigrants into the Nation-State as citizens with equal rights under the law – and the legal protection of non-homonormative queer and trans groups, such as transgender and transsexual prostitutes, gay bears, gender-queers, and other gender and sexual outlaws. One might ask if this new public focus on the legalization of same-sex marriage and certain transgender rights a smoke-screen for the unfinished business of confronting racism and other kinds of trans- and homophobia in Spain? It seems obvious that what has been left behind is the combination of important effects – both epistemological and legal – that an intersectional analysis of gender, sexuality, race, immigrant status, and national belonging would yield.

In this regard, I align my work with queer and transgender studies academics in the United States, such as David L. Eng, Jack Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, who in their 2005 special issue of Social Text “What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?” question the predominantly white, Anglophone, male focus of current institutionalized programs in queer studies programs. Here, however, I seek primarily to recover, to translate, and to disseminate in the North American academy the current queer and transgender hybrid work being done in Spain, namely: 1) activist and academic work in sociology and political science, and 2) creative work at the intersection of art and political activism in photography, installation and body art, and performance – all new, hybrid storied spaces. I am especially interested in understanding how new media affect the way we tell stories to each other, particularly in a context in which urgency is at a premium. These storied spaces emerge outside the literary enterprise, in part, because literature as we have traditionally understood it and as it has typically been transmitted (that is, in the form of printed books) – including politically engaged literature – has now become one of the slowest media to reach and to affect an audience. The multimedia storied spaces I analyse are, by contrast, disseminated more rapidly, reach more people, and therefore, more efficiently relate a particular life story than printed novels typically can. Thus, I am concerned with exploring how to narrate lives beyond literary or traditional filmic autobiographies, especially when those lives urgently need to be recognized as deserving, but are not yet receiving, basic human rights. The lives of which I speak inhabit bodies often treated as less than human – namely, immigrant bodies and/or transgender bodies.

These new creative platforms for narrating lives with great immediacy are put into circulation by a variety of people – some academic, some activist, some artistic, most blurring these very distinctions. Young activist-scholars such as Beatriz Preciado, Platero Méndez, Carmen Romero Bachiller, and Gracia
Trujillo; veteran activist intellectuals, such as Javier Sáez and Fefa Vila; and transgender citizens turned international activists and body artists, such as Moisés Martínez, have already engaged in effective intersectional analyses of the most recent LGBTQ-friendly laws and queer interventions. Some of the work of the younger scholars is enmeshed with that of major multi-disciplinary, transnational research groups – funded with European Union money – such as the Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies (QUING) and the “Multiple Meanings of Gender Equality: A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender Policies in Europe” (MAGEEQ), both housed in the Netherlands. Other cutting-edge work has emerged in Spain from the radical, subversive squatter movement (okupas) of the late 1990s in the mostly immigrant neighbourhood of Lavapiés in Madrid, such as the Eskalera Karakola women squatters collective. Yet other interventions come from the urgency that inhabiting a transgender or transsexual body gives a person to fight against legally and medically imposed obstacles to develop his/her identity: this is an urgent matter that requires new ways of telling the transgender autobiography (whether in literature – autofiction and autobiography – or film – fictional or documentary), which is too often reduced to a simplistic, predictable formula. Much of the impetus for this activism comes from the transnational contacts that globalization has made possible. For example, an exhibition of photographs by famous transgender American artist Del LaGrace Volcano in Barcelona, Judith Halberstam’s Female Masculinity, and the experiences of a Bolivian transgender activist energized Catalan transgender man Moisés Martínez’s activism and art in the early part of this century. How and to what degree is globalization, then, an enemy or an ally in the context of acquiring human rights for LGBTQ people? This question will frame my discussion, later in this essay, of a documentary film based on Moisés Martínez’s life.

My purpose here is twofold: first, to disseminate in the North American academy cutting-edge work produced in Spain by those queer, gender-queer, and transgender groups left out of the mainstream gay and lesbian political agendas; and second, to analyse two works of hybrid activist, theoretical, and artistic interventions produced by these gender outlaws. Specifically, I shall analyse an installation piece and demonstration pamphlet by activist group GTQ (Grupo de Trabajo Queer), “¿Documento Nacional de Identidad? Deconstrucción del DNI”; the documentary film about transgender Catalan man, Moisés Martínez, entitled “El camino de Moisés”; and Martínez’s own self-portrait series, “Falosinplastia” (loosely translated as “Phallus without Phalloplasty”). The hybrid storyspaces opened up by these works and by a combined reading of all of them allow the viewer to perceive simultaneously critical and utopian revisions of dominant Spanish narratives about identity, belonging, and citizenship that have been available under democracy. Furthermore, these works – when considered collectively – expose the current inadequacy of
traditional literary media and literary genres to intervene in those debates. While careful not to allegorize transgender and transnational “hybrid” bodies as merely standing in for a general cultural hybridity brought about by globalization, I do make the argument that new notions of self and new demands for extending civil rights and making certain bodies intelligible require new ways of telling stories. Finally, I hope to emphasize the importance of establishing transnational conversations—both literal and metaphorical—to bridge differences among migration, queer, and transgender studies in an international context.

The Ley 3/2007, de 15 de marzo, reguladora de la rectificación registral de la mención relativa al sexo de las personas has had many controversial and ambivalent implications for transgender and transsexual individuals in Spain. Platero Méndez (“Outstanding” 45-46) points out that, as progressive and unique as this law is, it only responds to one of the twelve requests that the May 2004 26th National LGBT Conference held in Salamanca presented to the government. The one transgender activist request to which the law responded is the “rectification of sex on certificates held at the Civil Register Offices,” a change reflected on the National Identity Card or Documento Nacional de Identidad (popularly shortened to DNI) (Platero Méndez, “Outstanding” 45). All Spaniards are required by law to carry this document—a leftover form of surveillance from the Franco dictatorship. When this identity document was created on March 2, 1944, only five years after the end of the Spanish Civil War, it was specifically intended to control political dissidents. Javier Caballero and Daniel Izeddin indicate that the National Identity Card was at first required only of prison inmates and those on parole (“libertad vigilada”); later, its reach was extended to traveling salesmen, then to male residents in cities larger than 100,000 inhabitants, and finally to the whole population. As Platero Méndez explains, “for a person to be able to change the details on their identity card is highly symbolic” (“Outstanding” 45). Romero Bachiller adds that, “objetos cotidianos y aparentemente aproblematizados como un DNI, un pasaporte o una tarjeta de residencia, resultan ser poderosos mecanismos de inscripción donde se actualizan y se materializan normatividades y ordenamientos múltiples” (“Documentos” 149). Furthermore, Romero Bachiller argues that in our current globalized regimes obsessed with regulating bodies and movements across borders (national, gendered, sexual, racial),

ciertos elementos “no-humanos,” en concreto los documentos de identidad/identificación, adquieren una preeminencia particular convirtiéndose en auténticas “extensiones protésicas” que permiten asegurar la legitimidad de los “cuerpos” y garantizan la posibilidad de que sean siempre reconocibles en los regímenes fijados. Los documentos de identidad/identificación pasan a convertirse en los habilitadores y garantes de la verdad “humana” de los “sujetos-cuerpo-ciudadanos” que los ostentan. (“Documentos” 141)
These virtual "prosthetic extensions," materialized through each category included in the identity card, are not only markers of identity, but regulating mechanisms of bio-power (Platero Méndez, "Transgender" 5). The categories still in use include name, last name, date and place of birth, name of the father, and name of the mother, in addition to other administrative categories. Although the category of gender was finally removed in the early 2000s from the DNI (but not from the Civil Registry), the burden of gender identity proof now falls on the first name of the individual. The new "gender law" has reaffirmed the existing requirements of the Civil Code by indicating that, "quedan prohibidos los nombres que objetivamente perjudiquen a la persona, los que hagan confusa la identificación y los que induzcan a error en cuanto al sexo" ("Ley 3/2007" 11253), when naming a baby or renaming oneself after transitioning to the opposite sex.

But as Romero Bachiller has demonstrated, even if through the DNI and other identificatory documents, such as passports and residence cards, specific individuals are reduced to those prosthetic extensions that "enrolan [a las personas] en regímenes concretos de cuerpos y objetos, que son reactualizados con cada interpelación a la identificación y con los reconocimientos que posibilita" ("Documentos" 153), these regulating regimes – that is, these forms of recognition and interpellation (just as in the Althusserian example of being hailed by the police and being interpellated into a particular kind of subjectivity/subject) – "pueden ser puenteados, cortocircuitados o revocados" ("Documentos" 141). Such forms of short-circuiting, evasion, or subversion break up the self-evident continuity "que liga un 'cuerpo-sujeto-ciudadano' con su documento," but they also point to "otros escenarios de regímenes de cuerpos que amplíen o desmantelen algunos de los elementos vigentes en cualquier documento de identidad/identificación" (Romero Bachiller, "Documentos" 141). In this vein, the activist and queer theory study group Grupo de Trabajo Queer (GTQ) prepared a poster-manifesto for Madrid’s June 28, 2003 Gay Pride parade that was later turned into an installation video piece by Fefa Vila and Catalina Quede in 2006 for the art exhibition, "cara (a) cara. Diálogos fronterizos: tránsitos feministas y reflexiones poscoloniales en un mundo globalizado," shown at the Centro Cultural Español de Miami between September 7 and October 23, 2007. 15

According to Romero Bachiller – who was a member of GTQ at the time – this gay pride 2003 pamphlet deconstructing the DNI:

Se trataba de una intervención que modificaba de forma irreverente todos y cada una de las categorías presentes en los documentos de identidad para cuestionar, precisamente, los regímenes normativos de frontera que implican. Ejerciendo una lectura queer interscencial esta intervención jugaba con lo grotesco para marcar aquello no marcado, pero que está dotado de enorme capacidad para ordenar y jerarquizar los cuerpos, las
According to Gracia Trujillo, another one of its producers, this pamphlet questions "las diferentes 'categorías' presentes en el DNI (sexo, género, nacionalidad, parentesco, etc.) evidenciando los mecanismos de regulación de las identidades y la 'naturalidad' y 'estabilidad' de esas categorías" (39).

Figure 1: Front of GQ's 2003 Gay Pride Pamphlet, "ZONDI" (in GQ, Eje del mal 40)
Figure 2: Back of GQ's 2003 Gay Pride Pamphlet, "ZONDI" (in GQ, Eje del mal 40)

The installation piece follows the pamphlet relatively closely, except that it does not include the explanatory, bilingual text in the Gay Pride Pamphlet. Approximately three minutes long and running on a constant loop at the exhibition, this video first shows the front and then the back of the Spanish DNI card and vandalizes its established categories in a series of alternating shots between the DNI and black screens with the word "RESISTIMOS" punctuated, letter by letter, through the percussive sounds of a snare drum that increases in speed as it spells the word. As these shots are projected onto a screen, the traditional categories in the DNI - including the photograph of the subject of the DNI - are gradually erased and rewritten in increasingly subversive, "identity-fucking" changes. At first, we observe the regular front of the DNI with a picture of a woman with no cosmetics and a frown. Is she a bio-woman or a
transgender woman? The piece immediately plays with the viewer’s gender assumptions. The categories in this first shot include the following:

ESPÁÑA
[FOTO]  Nombre: Carolina
       Primer apellido: Duele
       Segundo apellido: García
       [Número de carné]: 3486901-Q
       Ministerio del Interior

After the black screen I mention above is shown, the same front of the DNI appears with a super-title that reads: “Gestionamos y demontamos el DNI. Dragking No Identificado,” thus reshaping the gender identity of the person in the photograph. A series of rapid changes in the photograph follows, as his/her face looks directly at the camera, then appears in several frontal and profile gestures, interspersed with a photograph of buttocks and a quick image of the subject giving the finger to the camera. The photograph finally settles on the naked buttocks of a person, instead of a face. After another black screen with the word “Resistimos” and the snare drum sound effect, we see the front side of the DNI, this time only with the photograph of the buttocks and a super title that reads: “[Resistimos al] nombre propio y sus marcas de género.” At that point, the viewer observes, punctuated by the rhythm of the snare drum, how each of the responses to the categories in the DNI is struck out with a black marker and replaced with subversive responses. It now reads thus:

ESPÁÑA
[FOTO]  Nombre: Carolina: SUDORES
       Primer apellido: Duele IN
       Segundo apellido: García VITRO
       [Número de carné]: 3486901-Q
       Ministerio del Interior

The screen turns to black again with the word “Resistimos” across it, and we are treated to another view of the front of the DNI with the super-title “El sexo es una migración, somos migrantes en tránsito. Somos extranjeros. Somos extrangéneros [sic],” as it continues to undo the category of Nation State. Then, “Español” becomes “Apañar” in a humorous and complex critique of what it means to be a Spaniard. The Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española defines “apañar” as:

1. tr. Coger, especialmente con la mano. 2. tr. Recoger, coger con la mano frutos, especialmente del suelo. 3. tr. Tomar algo o apoderarse de ello capciosamente ilegalmente. 4. tr. Asicitar, asear, astaviar. 5. tr. Aderesar o condimentar la comida. 6. tr. Remendar o componer lo que está roto. 7. tr. coloq. Poner solución o remedio a un asunto precariamente,
And it defines the reflexive verb “apañárselas” as “loc. verb. coloq. Arreglárselas, componérselas, desenvolverse bien.” We might read GTQ’s change from “España” to “Apana” to signify simultaneously constraint and subversion – but it is clear to a Spanish viewer that the definitions of “apañar” the artists invoke here are those with colloquial connotations. Thus, although we might read their change of “España” to “Apañá” as a critique of how the Nation-State takes control “capiosamente e ilícitamente” (“craftily and illicitly”) of a person’s identity adjudicating to itself the power to make intelligible certain bodies and identities and to reject others (particularly immigrant and transgender bodies), it can also be interpreted as GTQ’s subversive way of “craftily and illicitly” taking back dominant markers of identity to resignify them. At the same time, their creative intervention in modifying the DNI “precariamente da a solución o repara en conveniencia” (Diccionario definition no. 7 above; my translation), and it “mends or fixes that which is broken” (Diccionario definition no. 6 above; my translation), first through breaking down the DNI categories themselves and then by reconstituting them in a humorous yet meaningful manner.

Thus, the installation piece dismantles categories through the interlacing of black screens with the word “Resistimos” and pictures of the front and the back of the DNI with superittles that indicate, consecutively: “Resistimos a la marca de género y sexo: nuestro sexo es S/M”; “Resistimos a la filiación, al padre y a la madre, a la pareja universal”; “Okupamos [sic] los espacios de asignación de género y sexo”; “Resistimos a la criminalización de l@s trabajador@s [sic] del sexo”; “cambio de sexo gratis ya”; and “Resistimos con multitudes y diásporas queer, con proliferación de identidades: ciberbollos, osos, camionerias, drag king-kong, punkfemmes, transgéneros, intersexuales, maricones...” Eventually, the back of the DNI is also deconstructed. First, it appears with its normative categories and answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nació en: PARLA</th>
<th>El: 20-11-1975</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincia de MADRID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijo de: ANTONIO/DOLORES</td>
<td>Sexo: M-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirección: CRTA LEGANES S/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localidad: PARLA</td>
<td>Equipo: 0020CE3D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincia: MADRID</td>
<td>0020CE3D1</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDESP3498539QSSSaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa</td>
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But after all the subversive modifications to the normative categories, the final product looks like this:

What is most remarkable about this piece is the creators' engagement with transnational conversations in queer, transgender, and migration studies. As Feva Vila, curator of the exhibition and member of GTQ indicates, with this intervention and through the art exhibition, they intended to start "una serie de diálogos y de relaciones a través de discursos que examinan los recientes debates sobre la interrelación de raza, identidad sexual, ciudadanía y globalización desde una perspectiva feminista" (10).

Another hybrid storyspace that highlights the importance of new forms of life narratives and reveals the crucial role of transnational conversations in queer, transgender, and migration studies is "El camino de Moisès" (2003), a short documentary film about a Catalonian female-to-male transgender man named Moisès Martínez. Directed by Chilean-Spanish filmmaker Cecilia Barriga and written by Marta Zein, the film was commissioned by a popular investigative news magazine, Documentos TV, for TVP-3, the national TV channel equivalent to PBS in the United States. The documentary was presented on Spanish TV in the context of the first debates over what would eventually become Ley 3/2007, de 15 de marzo, reguladora de la rectificación registral de la mención relativa al sexo de las personas. This documentary aims to create sympathy for the legal and medical limbo in which transsexuals lived in Spain before the passing of Law 3/2007 and to raise the most salient issues for female-to-male transsexuals. Thus, it documents the difficulty transsexuals experienced in their efforts to get their hormone treatments and surgeries (double mastectomies, phalloplasty, or metadiplasty) funded by Spain's socialized medical system. But even after the passing and implementation of Law 3/2007, many of Moisès' and his friends' problems still were not addressed. Platero Méndez emphasizes – among many other deficiencies in this law – that although it legalizes the change of gender in the Civil Registry without sex-reassignment surgery, it also requires the individual who wishes to change gender to undergo two years of medical treatment for gender dysphoria. This requirement in itself may mean surgery: "Medical treatment” may involve
hormone injections and surgeries, such as "breast removal [or] augmentation, facial feminisation surgery, voice feminisation surgery, tracheal shaves, buttock augmentation, [and] liposuction" (Platero Méndez, "Outstanding" 47). In other words, the law is contradictory. Hence, while this and the same-sex marriage laws may attempt to extend civil rights to citizens previously excluded from them (thus making intelligible certain bodies and desires previously treated as not quite human), as Platero Méndez emphasizes, these laws "are not designed to transform society in depth" and their "specific design ... constrains the scope of their impact. Such a perspective reminds us that public policies are not neutral: they are situated in a context of existing norms and understandings – those of heterosexuality" ("Outstanding" 48).

"El camino de Moisés" has several remarkable characteristics as a documentary on transgender and transsexual issues, particularly if one compares this film to other recent documentaries and fiction films about similar topics produced in the United States and Europe. On March 13, 2010, for example, CNN aired the feature-length documentary Her Name Was Steve, chronicling the transformation of Steven Stanton, former Largo, Florida city manager, to Susan. The film also documents Susan's loss of status, family, and employment, as she comes out as transgender and proceeds to undergo surgeries and hormone treatment. One of the most problematic aspects of this documentary is that Susan Stanton is depicted in complete isolation from an active, caring transgender and transsexual community. In fact, she is portrayed as having alienated that community. Furthermore, she is the object and not the active subject of her documentary. She is unfairly and cruelly constructed as a pathetically lonely, self-centered, freakish individual. Even well-intentioned fiction films, such as Transamerica or the quirky Danish independent film En Soap – movies which supposedly seek to empower and to present nuanced portraits of male-to-female transsexuals – depict their protagonists as isolated, alienated from their families, lonely, and devoid of any transgender or transsexual support community, thus constructing them as tragic figures deserving of pity and not as agents of their lives and future.

By contrast, "El camino de Moisés" is told in the first person by Moisés himself. The only voice off heard in the film is his own, reading directly from his journals. Furthermore, Moisés is always surrounded by a rich and diverse transgender, transsexual, and queer community of friends whose experiences are shared daily. This community – enriched also by a group of his supportive heterosexual and non-transgender co-workers – appears throughout most of the film, suggesting that Moisés' path is not a solitary one. The shared experiences of this support group allow Moisés to make an informed decision about his process of transition. In his case, he refuses to undergo phalloplasty and declares himself, instead, like his friend Álex, "un hombre con vagina" (00:21:30-00:21:33). Moisés is openly critical of what he calls society's
“falocracia o el culto a la polla” (“Mi cuerpo” 123) and concludes that “la cuestión es, o colocarse físicamente un pene (ya sea de carne o de plástico), o deconstruir el valor político-social de los genitales, asumiendo un cuerpo (querizado) y concediéndoles un valor propio, más allá de la mirada y del juicio del otro” (“Mi cuerpo” 126-27). This attitude is illustrated in his series of photographs Fatosinplastia, from which I discuss briefly two images here (fig. 3 and 4). In these self-portraits, Moisés celebrates his trans-male body without a penis and ridicules the above-mentioned “phallocracy.” In figure 3, Moisés flexed arm and closed fist stand in for the phallus that he has chosen not to have surgically implanted. Simultaneously a gesture of power and a sexually explicit provocation that points to and offers both vaginal and anal fisting, this photograph literalizes what Beatriz Preciado has termed “counter-sexual” practices that resignify the body.” Moisés’ arm and fist become a fleshy dildo, a prosthetic that suggests, as Preciado would put it, “que los verdaderos penes no son sino

Figure 3. A photograph from the Fatosinplastia series by Moisés Martínez (in GQ, El eje del mal es heterosexual 129).
dildos" (Manifiesto 63). Figure 4, with its playful diminution of the phallus to an index finger, in addition to ridiculing traditional societal concerns about penis size and Freudian "penis envy," functions also as an indexical sign (in the sense of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotical definition of such signs) of transgender maleness. In his photographs, as in Barriga's film, therefore, Moisés appears as the master of his own decisions, a subversive interrogator of the limits of the existing laws, and a critic of the many pitfalls and errors of the medical establishment regarding sex reassignment surgeries.

Furthermore, in the film, not only is his large community of friends a crucial ingredient in Moisés' path to self-actualization, but so are his transnational activist, personal, and artistic connections. Thus, he feels reaffirmed, represented, and validated when he first attends Del LaGrace Volcano's photo exhibit in Barcelona. In the film, Moisés explains:

Mi camino da un vuelco el día que me encuentro de frente con la obra de Del LaGrace Volcano - el fotógrafo de transexuales más famoso del mundo. Me veo representado en esos hombres que nacieron mujeres y respiran hondo. Están aquí transformados en obra de arte. Me emocionan. Me emociona comprobar que no se ocultan, que muestran con
But most important for him is his friendship with his Bolivian female-to-male transgender friend Joel. As Moisés again explains:

Joel siempre ha tenido la capacidad de hacerme mirar para otro lado. Le tengo junto a mí, observando el mundo, y me pregunta: "¿Cuál es realmente mi destino? ¿Hasta qué punto mi existencia tiene que seguir atada a la transformación de mi cuerpo? Quizás debiera de apostar por otro tipo de cambio."

His friendship with Joel allows Moisés to find a new life path: transnational transgender activism and coalition building. At the end of the film, Martinez sets off to Bolivia with Joel to found the first Association of Latin American Transsexual Men, while Moisés’s voice in off can be heard intoning from his diary:

La transexualidad no es un delirio, sino una forma diferente de estar en el mundo. Cuando me encuentro con alguien que quiere saber si me he operado, le contesto: “Eso no se pregunta. Se descubre.”

Quiero hacer lo que nunca he hecho: correr aventuras, estudiar otras culturas, seguir dando la batalla en otros países.

“El camino de Moisés” and the other works I have discussed in this article attest to how productive interventions can emerge from transnational flows of information, theory, histories of activism, and personal contacts. These works harness globalization’s potential for connectivity to combat its destructive potential to break communal and family ties, and to cause geographic, psychological, and identity dislocation of self. They resist these negative forces and produce, instead, transnational activist and artistic bonds that effect social transformation.

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NOTES

* I am grateful for the comments, questions, and criticisms I received on an earlier version of this paper presented at the “Trans Global/Global Trans Symposium” I co-organized with Brenna Munro, on April 1, 2010, for the College of Arts and Sciences’ Center for the Humanities at the University of Miami (www.humanities.miami.edu/symposia/transglobal). Suggestions from the symposium’s invited speakers – Judith Halberstam, Neville Hoad, and Jarrod Hayes
- were particularly helpful. I would also like to thank the graduate students in my Spring 2010 seminar, “Intersections: Queer and Transgender Studies,” whose lively participation in class discussion allowed me to work out some of my ideas for this paper. I am grateful to my colleagues and friends in Spain, Raquel (Lucas) Platero Méndez and Carmen Romero Bachiller, for their generosity in sharing their work and for being willing to talk about their activist and intellectual experiences at the forefront of Spanish LGBTQ thought. Pefa Vila has generously allowed me access to a copy of her art installation piece for the exhibition “cara (a) cara” that I discuss in this paper. Also, I could have not proceeded with my research on that exhibition without the collaboration and free access to materials from the Centro Cultural Español de Miami (CCE) and the help of its former Director, Maria del Valle. I thank Christine Henseler (Union College) and Debra Castillo (Cornell University) for inviting me to think about my research in the context of their concept of “hybrid storyspaces,” developed at the April 30-May 1, 2010 Cornell University conference, “Hybrid Storyspaces: Redefining the Critical Enterprise in Twenty-First Century Hispanic Literature” (see http://sites.google.com/site/hybridstoryspaces/). As always, my life partner, Pamela S. Hammons, read, commented on, and edited my paper; I am forever grateful for her help.

For an extensive discussion and analysis of this law, its antecedents, juridical commentaries about it, and activist responses to it, see Pérez-Sánchez (11-33).

Spain ranks second in the world in revenue from international tourism (España 51).

Bermúdez rightly points out that “The important social and political achievements for the LGBTQ communities cannot be trivialized, neither can the brutal immigration policies [Rodriguez Zapatero’s] government began enforcing more forcefully since the onset of the economic recession in 2008. The draconian measures include the implementation of weekly quotas for the police in Madrid and Barcelona to arrest illegal immigrants. In fact, profiling is at the heart of these quotas since, according to a leaked internal memo, police in Madrid have a weekly target of 35 arrests, with priority given to seizing Moroccans because they can be sent home quickly and cheaply” (Kern). In committing to a punitive stance that concentrates more on border patrolling, detention, deportation, and repatriation, Rodríguez Zapatero has abandoned regularization processes like the one promoted in Spain in 2005 that allowed 800,000 migrant workers without legal papers to achieve legal status. Spain’s current alignment with the EU policies – and dependence on the EU funds to deter migratory flows – jeopardizes any future regularization processes and offers a different image of the Spanish nation – much less progressive and egalitarian – than the one projected by the enactment of progressive policies on gender and same-sex marriage” (18).

My methodology in this paper is informed by intersectionality theory, as it emerged in US sociology and legal theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the activist work of African-American, working class, lesbian groups – such as the Combahee River Collective – and as theorized by pioneering scholars of critical race theory –
such as Kimberle W. Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins. For the foundational texts of intersectionality theory, see Crenshaw and Hill Collins. For the foundational documents of critical race theory, see Crenshaw et al. Most of the Spanish LGBTQ scholars and activists whose work I discuss in this article also engage with intersectionality theory.

I indirectly argue in this paper for a sort of new critical reading of diverse artistic and activists "texts," what Debra Castillo and Christine Henseler have labeled "hybrid storyspaces." For these critics, hybrid storyspaces include "the effects on narrative of new televisual and cybernetic media spaces (YouTube, blogs, Google maps, Yahoo Jukebox), new genres (videoclips novels, zapping fiction, docufiction, hypertext), new processes (mashups, sampling, remixing), and new pedagogies" (Castillo and Henseler). The new way of telling life narratives that the artists and activists whose work I study in this essay have produced requires that, as critics of Hispanic cultures we engage in a hybrid reading/viewing practice. For example, the simultaneous reading of both installation video art piece and gay pride pamphlet "¿DNI? Deconstrucción del DNI" requires on the part of the viewer an active, critical reconstruction of the serias de identidad (identity markers) both dismantled and invoked in both "texts," at the same time that it insists that the use-value of both products be considered in context (exhibition space vs. political demonstration). The virtual "prosthetic extensions" to identity (see below Romero Bachiller’s argument) that the DNI effects also suggest a particular kind of subversive reading and rewriting such as the one performed by Grupo de Trabajo Queer (cit?). Against what I would call practices of self-absorbed reading and consumption (prácticas de ensimismamiento) of new media – for example, the narcissistic self-exposure and celebration invited by some social networking sites – I emphasize here how subjects and bodies that are ideologically coded as "unintelligible" can collectively effect and demand intelligibility through a creative type of transnational, digital connectivity and a subversive use of new media.

For complex intersectional analyses of queer Spanish culture, see particularly the following essay anthologies which contain work by the above mentioned authors: Córdoba, Sáez, and Paco Vidarte; Platero Méndez (Lesbianas); and c.iq (Eje del nial). Romero Bachiller’s essay “Poscolonialismo y teoría queer” is particularly compelling.

Platero Méndez’s work, for example, emerges out of these collective, transnational research projects.

See particularly the radical work of the feminist collective, Precarias a la deriva (www.sindicominio.net/karakola/antigua_casa/precarias.htm), which emerged out of the Eskalera Karakola squatter movement.

Moisés Martínez is an example of a transgender artist challenging transphobic narratives through his art, his activism, and a documentary film on his personal choices during his transition from female to male.
For extensive engagement with the dangers of using transvestites’ and transsexuals’ bodies as mere allegories for national concerns, see Garlinger’s articles, in addition to Pérez-Sánchez (91–97) discussion of and engagement with Garlinger’s work. See also Judith Butler’s (*Undone Gender*) failed attempt at avoiding such allegorical colonization of the transgender body in her analysis of David Reimer’s case and the John Money–Milton Diamond scientific controversies that surrounded it.

According to Platero Méndez (summarizing Rebeca Rullán’s political document), Spanish transgender activists proposed twelve demands which included: “the right to sexual and gender identity regulated by an Integral Law on Gender Identity; the regulation of all transgender people’s access to the rectification of their name and sex in the Civil Register through an administrative procedure; the lack of compulsory requirement of sex reassignment surgery; inclusion in the public health system of the clinical treatment of sex reassignment (psychotherapy, hormonal treatment, plastic surgery, etc.); and positive actions by the Public Administrations and social agents to fight discrimination in the labour market. The platform also demanded the regulation of sex workers, separate from the measures for integration in the labour market; measures for creating social awareness, such as education about transgenderism. On the legal side, the organizations agreed on the need for: political asylum rights for transgender individuals persecuted in their country of origin; the criminalisation of ‘transphobia’ in the Penal Code; rehabilitation and compensation for victims of the repression and imprisonment under the old Francoist Laws on Vagrants and Idle Persons and on Persons Representing a Social Danger and their Social Rehabilitation; and finally they asked for support for transgender organizations.” (“Outstanding” 46). As is obvious from this extensive list, transgender activists in Spain have an ambitious, progressive agenda that addresses the effects of interlocking systems of oppression. It is also obvious that the government has only granted a token concession to this important collective, which is still in need of more significant political and legal representation. As far as I have been able to determine, this list of demands is similar to those demanded, but not obtained, by some transsexual activist groups in Quebec, as Viviane Namasté (82–85) has documented.

It was first removed in 1962 but was reintroduced in 1981 (Caballero and Izeddin).

The exhibition was curated by Félix Vila – a member of GTQ – and Marisa Maza – a Spanish visual artist who lives and works in Berlin. The exhibition included the piece by GTQ I analyse in this paper, in addition to several films and installation pieces by individual video artists, such as Coco Fusco (USA), Isabel Herguera (Spain/USA), Floy Krouchy (Bangalore/Paris), Lasse Lau and Felipe Zúñiga (Tijuana, Mexico), Marisa Maza (Berlin, Germany/Madrid, Spain), Ana Navarrete (Catalunya, Spain), and Carmen Navarrete (Valencia, Spain), and artist/activist collectives, such as *Mujeres públicas* (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and *Precarias a la deriva* (Madrid, Spain). The catalogue of the exhibition contains essays by curators
The DNI model used in this installation piece is the one available in 2003. The most recent official DNI design has been modified to include an imbedded microchip that contains most of the traditional categories of information in it.

In the context of discussing transnational intersectional dialogues on queer, transgender, and migration studies, it is important to refer the reader to Brad Epps’ engaging, intelligent, and thorough analysis of some of the most salient linguistic, theoretical, and political debates about the (mis)use of the term queer in the transnational context of Spanish and Latin American academic thought and activism. See his "Retos y riesgos."

Maria Cecilia Barriga Cabreón was born in 1957 in Concepción, Chile. According to the Internet Movie Database, "In the late 70s she moved to Madrid to study Image Sciences at the Universidad Complutense [of Madrid]. Shortly afterwards obtaining Spanish nationality. In 1983, she started working in cinema and, having made several documentaries and art videos, set up home in 1994 in New York, where she directed her first feature film. Time’s Up! premiered at the Donostia-San Sebastián Film Festival in 2000 as part of Zabaitegi and with which she won several international awards. Concerned about the world and curious to learn about other realities, Cecilia Barriga has lived in Chile, Madrid, New York and Havana. In fact, traveling is a constant part of her work, which encompasses several genres. Her most important documentaries for the prizes they have won are La herida de mi ojo (1994), shot in Cuba, Pekín no fue un sueño (1995), shot in China, El camino de Moisés (2004), shot in Spain, and Ni locas ni terroristas (2005), presented at the Donostia-San Sebastián Festival as part of the Rebels and Untamed retrospective. One of her more outstanding experimental and videoart productions is Meeting Two Queens, a cult work taken to several contemporary art museums throughout the world. She is currently working on her second feature film, El viento que regresa, and on the documentary Asia dónde vienes... Hacia dónde voy..." ("Cecilia").

See, for example, Preciado’s discussion of “fist-fucking” in her first, polemical book, Manifiesto (27), her illustration “Dildotopia” (Manifiesto 43), and her chapter on “Dildotectónica” (41-42). Epps has criticized Preciado’s first work as an example of what he terms the “utopismo de la ressignificación radical” (225) present in Spanish and Latin American misuses of Anglo-American queer theory. I agree theoretically with Epps’ critique of Preciado’s impulse and admire his thorough analysis of the loss of subversive signification that the term “queer” has suffered in its migration to “teoria queer” in Hispanic contexts. However, practically speaking, many contemporary lesbian, gay, and transgender activists and artists, such as Moisés Martínez, have already assimilated Preciado’s utopian transnationalization of queer theory, and some creative hybrid artistic products well worth analysing have come out of it. Furthermore, even if theoretically misguided in places, Preciado’s work, particularly her two latest books, Testo Yonqui (2008) and Pornotopia (finalist of
the Premio Anagrama de Ensayo 2010), deserve serious academic study and engagement because they have become very influential creative non-fiction pieces in Spain. Preciado’s own digital media and TV persona (see the many videos of her available on YouTube) suggest that a wider, more complex analysis of her work and public persona is required at this point.

Preciado argues that, “si el dildó es disruptivo ... lo es ... porque muestra que la masculinidad está, tanto como la feminidad, sujeta a las tecnologías sociales y políticas de construcción y de control. El dildó es el primer indicador de la plasticidad sexual del cuerpo y de la posible modificación prostética de su contorno. Quizás el dildó esté indicando que los órganos que interpretamos como naturales (masculinos o femeninos) han sufrido ya un proceso semejante de trasformación plástica” (Manifiesto 63). Martínez’s photographs not only mock Freudian “penis envy,” but they also extend the notion of dildó to various parts of the body – a resignification of parts of the body that transsexual men and masculine lesbians have used for centuries. See also Halberstam’s (Female 118) extensive discussion of these critiques and subversive practices. Preciado borrows liberally from Halberstam’s work in all of her books.

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