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“One Big Queer European Family? Immigration in Contemporary Spanish Gay and Lesbian Films”

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the good father, etc.), and condemns and discriminates against the “gay outlaws” who, unlike Bersani’s account, are not just a literary mythology. Today being a “good gay” entails compliance to heterosexual norms, and by which gays and lesbians are supposed to behave according to their “appropriate” gender. The mainstream gay image is fully invested in putting an end to the “feminine” image associated with gay men, which recalls Eribon’s claim that “the obsession with masculinity” is one of the most visible features of an affiliation to contemporary gay culture.⁴⁵ As Eribon points out, there is a part of gay culture that takes its very form from an attraction to femininity, and certainly there is another part of that same culture that has a strong adherence to masculine values. One is not better than the other. The problem is the moral condemnation of the effeminate homosexual and the rendering of the masculine gay as the appropriate and politically correct image. In the end, the danger that assimilation might bring is becoming a form of self-effacement (119).

Heteronormativity will always demand marginal sexualities to refrain from displaying their characteristic traits and carry themselves in accordance to its set of norms. There will always be tension between choice and imposition, self-creation and social construction, subjectivity and objectification. What matters most is our project of self-definition as a *heterogeneous collective*. In this regard, it is crucial to resist stabilizing gay identity into a unitary and global discourse, and to refrain from trying to make singular what has always been plural. As another Brazilian writer, João Silvério Trevisan, wrote, a gay person is a subject that posits a doubt, somebody that affirms an uncertainty, opening a space for differences that become signs of contradiction (43). The task, then, is to preserve gay culture as a productive locus of conflicting and opposing subjectivities, of disagreement and heterogeneity, and where the local cohabits with the global.

ONE BIG QUEER EUROPEAN FAMILY? IMMIGRATION IN CONTEMPORARY SPANISH GAY AND LESBIAN FILMS

GEMA PÉREZ-SÁNCHEZ

Despite their many differences, the recent Spanish films, *My Mother Likes Women*, written and directed in 2001 by Daniela Fejerman and Inés Paris, and *Bulgarian Lovers*, adapted from Eduardo Mendicutti’s eponymous novel and directed by Eloy de la Iglesia in 2003, share a perhaps unexpected plot detail. In both films, autochthonous Spanish characters central to the main plot engage in same-sex relations with Eastern European immigrants—in one film from the Czech Republic, and in the other from Bulgaria.¹ The autochthonous characters are middle-aged, and their queer lovers are all significantly younger, undocumented migrants, which places them in a vulnerable position by making them dependent on their Western European lovers (which also renders them less threatening and more controllable from the perspective of the Spanish imaginary).² Furthermore, the family and friends surrounding the native queers freely display their intense dislike of the immigrant lovers—a dislike inevitably tinged with ethnic or xenophobic prejudices in addition to homophobia and sexism.³ It is noteworthy that the queer immigrant lovers in these films are Eastern European and not, as would be more probable based upon sheer numbers of migrants, Moroccan or Latin American.⁴ Why? How do these Eastern European characters facilitate or hinder the articulation of a pan-European queer identity within the Spanish queer imaginary? Do these characters challenge or secure traditional family structures? Do they subvert or reinforce dominant notions of ethnicity, nationality, and race? Do they function as a way to arrest any possible queer identification with disruptive *jouissance*? These questions require that I confront and negotiate a tense compromise between opposing tendencies in American queer theory and Spanish theories about the social construction of the “immigrant” and his or her representation in films. In what follows, I will address questions of Spanish queer identity formation in relation to complex imaginary articulations of European

identity from the position of an intersectionality that seeks to bring back the original impetus of the term “queer.” Ultimately, I will propose that in the context of Spain’s recent historical relations with the rest of Western Europe, the queer Eastern European immigrant in *My Mother* and *Bulgarian Lovers* enables the Spanish queer imaginary to play with the appearance of social and political transgression without actually challenging the heteronormative complacency it is required to accommodate.

In engaging with American queer theory, I find it helpful to shift between the different poles of the so-called anti-social debate—represented, on the one hand, by Lee Edelman’s daring 2004 polemic *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, and on the other, the special Fall/Winter 2005 issue of *Social Text*, appropriately entitled “What’s Queer About Queer Studies Now?” The publication of *No Future* spurred both fruitful and acrimonious debates, the most recent one taking place at the 2005 MLA convention and revisited in with additional commentaries in *PMLA* ([121.1] 2006: 819-28), under the title “The Antisocial Thesis in Queer Theory.” I do not wish to take sides in the debate here, although this essay will reveal my simultaneous appreciation of and discomfort with Edelman’s call for queers to embrace the space of abjection and the death drive. Like Edelman and other scholars, I am suspicious of the homonormativity and domestication that seems to prevail in mainstream gay and lesbian culture and activism today, particularly in Spain after the 2005 reform of the Civil Code that ushered in same-sex marriage.⁵ For this reason, I find compelling Edelman’s analysis of and attack on society’s attachment to the universalized figure of the Child with a capital “C”, as it is deployed across the political spectrum, and his refusal to relinquish queer culture, practices, and desires to the forces of homodomestication.

In particular, I find Edelman’s use of Lacanian psychoanalysis intellectually enabling as a way to explicate how Western politics today holds us captive to that logic of the Symbolic that propels a fantasmatic notion of historical teleology—that is, of the existence of an Imaginary past that leads to a fantasmatic “reproductive futurity.” This very heteronormative logic makes queers accept the corner into which we are forced: the space of a negativity that threatens to disrupt the illusion of progression and continuity—in Lacanian terms, the space of the death drive (Edelman 3). This political fantasy of progress towards an imagined positive future—a fantasy that denies the inevitable death drive—is articulated through pervasive allusions to the idealized, incorporeal Child, which, Edelman argues, “remains the perpetual horizon of every

acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention” (3). In his words,

[W]e are no more able to conceive of a politics without a fantasy of the future than we are able to conceive of a future without the figure of the Child. That figural Child alone embodies the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation’s good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights “real” citizens are allowed. For the social order exists to preserve for this universalized subject, this fantasmatic Child, a notional freedom more highly valued than the actuality of freedom itself....

Hence, whatever refuses this mandate by which our political institutions compel the collective reproduction of the Child must appear as a threat not only to the organization of a given social order but also, and far more ominously, to social order as such, insofar as it threatens the logic of futurism on which meaning always depends (11).

It is the queer and queerness that take on the negative force opposing and refusing reproduction and that threaten the social order; in other words, “queerness names the side of those *not* ‘fighting for the children,’ the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism” (3). Ultimately, Edelman’s most compelling insight—albeit his most controversial—is his call for queers to embrace “the place of the social order’s death drive: a place, to be sure, of abjection and stigma, sometimes fatal” (3). He suggests embracing the death drive as a way to resist domestication into a homonormativity that not only scripts and constrains representations of queer identity, but also that inflicts actual psychological violence on the queer self. Thus, queerly embracing the death drive exposes the logic of subjection and subjectification of the Symbolic order—a logic completely accepted by current notions of politics and the social order.

On the other side of the anti-social debate, timely (if unfortunately not new) critiques have emerged that problematize the way that many Anglo-American queer theorizations assume—as Edelman’s does—that the queer subject is always white, Anglo-American or Western European, and male, thus reenacting exclusions and erasures of both the imaginary representations and lived experiences of queers of color, particularly those subjected to forced migrations caused by globalization. In this regard, David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz’s collection of essays in *Social Text*, which responds to the pertinent question, “What’s Queer About Queer Studies Now?”, provides another powerful line of argumentation within American queer theory that I find particularly useful

for the study of queerness and immigration in Spain. One of the most relevant aspects of this collective intervention in queer theoretical debates is the editors' reminder of the multiple meanings that the term *queer* implies—a polysemantic value that has been lost in some recent uses of the word. Coined in the 1990s, the term “queer” originally included the very important notion that “sexuality is intersectional, not extraneous to other modes of difference, and calibrated to a firm understanding of queer as a political metaphor without a fixed referent” (Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz 1). Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz propose a renewed version of queer studies, one that “insists on a broadened consideration of late-twentieth-century global crises that have configured historical relations among political economies, the geopolitics of war and terror, and national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies” (1). *Social Text*'s special issue on queer studies thus challenges the limits of queer epistemology as it has been explored so far within the canon of white male queer theory. As a whole, this collection intervenes in debates about “a number of historical emergencies . . . of both national and global consequence” (Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz 1). Such “historical emergencies” include, “the pathologizing of immigrant communities as ‘terrorists’ and racialized populations as ‘criminal’; [and] the shifting forms of citizenship and migration in a putatively ‘postidentity’ and ‘postracial’ age . . .” (Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz 2).

Following the query initiated in this special issue of *Social Text*, I posit that a responsible study of *My Mother Likes Women* and *Bulgarian Lovers* and of how they perform and imagine a pan-European queer identity requires an intersectional analysis of ethnicity, race, class, age, immigrant status, and (homo)sexuality. Meanwhile, I also borrow from Edelman's theorization of how the fantasmatic, idealized figure of the Child and its foil, the *sinthomosexual*, mediate notions of citizenship, belonging, and “reproductive futurism” to gauge the pitfalls into which Spain's gay and lesbian films still fall when attempting to negotiate simultaneously representations of queer families and the increased presence of immigrants in the Iberian Peninsula.⁶

The protagonist of *My Mother Likes Women*, Elvira (Leonor Watling), is the second daughter of famous pianist Sofia (Rosa María Sardá), a middle-aged woman divorced from Carlos (Xabier Elorriaga), a Spanish medieval literature professor. On the occasion of her fiftieth birthday, Sofia decides to confess to her three daughters that she is in love with a much younger Czech woman. As the audience and Sofia's daughters learn at the climax of the film, Eliska (Eliska Sirova), the young lover, is also a talented pianist well known and very respected in the Czech Republic, but

now unknown and downtrodden in Spain. Because Eliska decides to stay in Spain with Sofia, she gives up a promising professional career and the Czech government's fellowship to study in Spain, which entails paying back a hefty sum of money. Sofia supplies that amount, rendering her unable to help her daughter Elvira to launch her career as a full-time creative writer. Sofia's daughters resent the drying up of their mother's financial well and suspect Eliska of being a conniving leech. In fact, we learn that they are the conniving ones when they develop an improbable, manipulative scheme to break up Sofia and Eliska—a plan that includes seducing Eliska away from Sofia, a task entrusted to the insecure Elvira. Ultimately, although Elvira makes a pass at Eliska and manages to kiss her, she cannot carry through with the absurd plan. Nevertheless, a misunderstanding does break up Sofia and Eliska. The latter runs away to the Czech Republic to join her family and to recover her life as a reputed pianist. Elvira and her sisters then take it upon themselves to fix the situation by traveling to Prague to apologize to Eliska and to convince her to come back to Spain to live as Sofia's lover. Given the genre of the film, all misunderstandings get straightened out (pun intended), and Eliska returns to Spain to join Sofia's family.

It is important to emphasize that the protagonist of this film is not the lesbian mother, but Elvira, her middle daughter. In spite of the sexual identity crisis that her mother's coming out and the clumsy plan to seduce Eliska provoke in her, Elvira's heterosexuality is firmly fixed by the end of the film when she manages to secure the love of the dashing writer, Miguel Bouzas (Chisco Amado), an idealized, fantasized version of a heterosexual Spanish man (perfectly non-sexist, good humored, and almost infinitely understanding, patient, and honest). Elvira is, thus, at the center of a film that follows, in an uninteresting manner, the conventions of Hollywood romantic comedies, with a touch of the urban neurosis so typical of Woody Allen's decidedly more intelligent films.⁷ Sofia and Eliska's lesbian relationship is nothing more than an excuse for the filmmakers to carry out a comic, safely contained exploration of current anxieties attendant upon the new configurations of families that a postmodern globalized society has brought about in traditionally Catholic Spain. Such anxieties are both familiar and familial because they replicate traditional sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic prejudices present throughout the second half of the twentieth century in Spain, but are now updated with a specifically queer twist. Ultimately, this film does not challenge Spanish patriarchal familial monogamic structures.

Jill Robbins has identified a similar pattern of normativization and containment of lesbianism's subversive potential in recent Spanish lesbian

fiction. In her essay "The (In)visible Lesbian: The Contradictory Representations of Female Homoeroticism in Contemporary Spain," Robbins argues that the lesbian, mostly invisible, works as an excuse to uphold and to celebrate the integrity of the monogamic family unit—whether hetero- or homosexual (the updated twist)—whose ultimate objective, I would add, is to secure the fantasmatic "reproductive futurism" that Edelman has criticized. Robbins thus exposes the complex relation between the visibility and invisibility of the lesbian and analyzes the way in which the simultaneous presence and repression of lesbianism ultimately reinstate essentialist gender and sexuality regimes.⁸ Specifically, her analysis of a low-brow lesbian novel, Marosa Gómez Pereira's *Un amor bajo sospecha* (*A Love Under Suspicion*), demonstrates that, in Spanish cultural products, lesbianism still functions as the locus where homoerotic affection can be explored at the same time that lesbian sex, in its complexity and diversity of acts, remains occluded (116; 118-20). Furthermore, Robbins adds in her analysis of Lucía Etxebarria's bestselling novel *Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes* (*Beatriz and the Heavenly Bodies*), when sexuality between women is explicitly represented, it is only for the voyeuristic pleasure of heterosexual readers (127-29).

Despite differences in medium, Robbins' final analysis of Gómez Pereira's novel can be applied productively to account for the end of *My Mother Likes Women*. Thus, both novel and film end

with all parties happy, well-adjusted and successful, the message clearly being that lesbianism is normal and should have no negative consequences within the family or in society. These institutions are, in fact, upheld in this . . . [romantic comedy], albeit in a format that accepts, accommodates, and even celebrates the productive, nurturing lesbian. (Robbins 120)

Similarly, in her brief analysis of *My Mother Likes Women*, Isabel Santaolalla—one of the few contemporary Spanish critics to address extensively the representation of immigrants in Spanish films—indicates, that

[t]he typical prejudices that Sofia's three adult daughters . . . have against Eliska . . . will turn, finally, into affection and even into the desire to use and abuse administrative structures to benefit the union between East and West through the marriage of one of the daughter[']s boyfriend] with El[is]ka . . . to avoid her expulsion from the country. (156)⁹

Nevertheless, Fejermán and París's movie refuses to represent the lesbian couple in a subversive or even innovative way. On the one hand,

this is because the lesbian relationship serves as an excuse to secure the protagonist's heterosexuality and to depict her as the savior of her mother's happiness and family harmony. This plot development allows heterosexual viewers who identify with Elvira to remain satisfied with their progressiveness and tolerance of lesbianism. On the other hand, the film's diffusion of the subversive potential of the lesbian relationship responds to the longstanding heterosexist impetus to erase lesbianism as a unique, complex sexual option for some women, as is evident in the scene when Elvira discusses her mother's coming out with her father. Frustrated by her father's lack of emotional reaction to his ex-wife's coming out, Elvira demands: "¿No te impresiona, no te afecta?" ["Doesn't it bother you; doesn't it affect you?"]. The father, characterized as a wise, detached professor, intellectualizes the relationship: "Bueno, el lesbianismo es una práctica bien documentada ¿Tú no has leído los versos de Saffo?" ["Well, lesbianism is a well-documented practice; haven't you read Sappho's verses?"]. But he subtly undoes his apparent progressiveness by adding: "Aunque, el amor de Saffo no es tanto el amor hacia las mujeres, como el amor hacia lo que representa lo femenino" ["Although, Sappho's love is not so much love for other women as love for what femininity represents"]. What femininity represents in this film is not explicitly stated, but implicitly it is clear that it comes to signify a civilizing principle that holds and perpetuates traditional family structures. Thus, the simultaneous representation and elision of lesbianism in this film ultimately work to fix all women—queer and straight—within the same patriarchal, constraining gender roles. Even if the film can now imagine the monogamous couple as a same-sex female one, it still forces the mother figure to serve her traditional function as a nurturing caretaker who sacrifices her desires and happiness to those of her children. In other words, as Robbins observes in the case of Etxebarria's bestselling success, this type of work

creates the illusion of transgressing societal norms without questioning their epistemological bases, thus appealing to Spanish readers [or viewers] who want to appear postmodern, but are not ready to forfeit the values of their own upbringing. (124)

Ultimately, *My Mother Loves Women* completely subscribes to the normative "logic of the Child" and the fantasy of "reproductive futurism" and refuses to let the queer occupy the anti-social space of the death drive—the space that would denounce the fantasmatic and violent impetus of the traditional family romance whose margins have been expanded to include, in a domesticated and non-threatening fashion, the lesbian couple.

According to the representation of gay male couples in *Bulgarian Lovers*, by contrast, Spanish gay men seem to come closer to embracing their role as *sinthomosexuals*. However, this film partially arrests the anti-social, subversive potential of queerness, too. In *Bulgarian Lovers*, a comedy with some dramatic elements, Daniel (Fernando Guillén Cuervo) is a middle-aged gay man who comes from a traditional Spanish family and lives a comfortable middle-class existence. He has an active gay social life, with other middle-aged gay men, with whom he hangs out in the bar scene that occasionally spills onto Madrid's Chueca neighborhood streets. He spends his free time either videotaping or picking up good-looking, young foreigners who must prostitute themselves to survive in the city's mean streets. One night, Daniel meets Kyril (Ditrán Biba), a hunky 23-year-old Bulgarian. Daniel's sexual infatuation with Kyril ostensibly renders him a pathetic instrument of his young lover's less-than-legal plan to strike it rich fast, which evolves into the illegal trafficking of radioactive materials from the former Communist block. Kyril's sexual orientation remains ambiguous and complex: he has a Bulgarian girlfriend, Kalina (Anita Sincovic) who eventually joins him in Spain and whom he eventually marries, but he has oral and anal sex—always as a top—with Daniel. The viewer must decide whether Kyril ever feels love or sexual attraction for Daniel or whether he prostitutes himself solely to ensure that Daniel will help him get his legal residency in Spain. While Frank Scheck indicates that “Kyril, despite whatever he might do with Daniel, isn't really gay” (par. 2), Kevin Thomas sees Kyril as an “affectionate lover” (par. 4) who “seems to care genuinely for Daniel” (par. 5). One might argue that the representation of gay Spanish men in this film is surprisingly self-loathing—although few of the American reviewers of the film seem to have noticed—at the same time that the immigrants are stereotypically constructed as criminal and untrustworthy, yet sexually attractive and available.¹⁰ However, De la Iglesia's clever metacinematic construction of the film allows for a more sophisticated analysis. Daniel's constant videotaping of his life functions both as an appropriate adaptation of the metanarrativity of Mendicutti's original novel and as a distancing device that allows this film to be more self-critical and self-conscious than *My Mother Likes Women*.

Daniel narrates the story retrospectively, by using a voice-over, after Kyril has left Spain and Daniel has endured all sorts of problems and brushes with the law because of his Bulgarian lover. In addition to Daniel's narrative voice-over, radioactivity and its attendant dangers, both real and metaphorical, structure the film. Radioactivity is evoked repeatedly through the synecdoche of smoke—both as cigarette smoke and

as the smoke of a nuclear explosion. The former appears prominently at the opening and the closing of the film, when, on a completely dark screen, the flare of Daniel lighting a cigarette suddenly illuminates the scene: billowing cigarette smoke then becomes the background of the title credits. When the narration begins, the smoke behind the title credits dissolves into a darkened street scene in which Kyril—at that point unknown to Daniel—asks for a cigarette. This is the beginning of their relationship. At the end of the film, it will be Kyril's cousin who asks Daniel for a smoke, which suggests that Daniel will again get involved in the circle of consuming or prostituting a young, undocumented Bulgarian immigrant to facilitate his legal stay in the country. The film visually associates cigarette smoke with an atomic mushroom cloud. While smoke suggests the fleeting character of Kyril and Daniel's liaison—a sexual arrangement that will go up in smoke before it can be domesticated—the image of smoke also suggests the idea that Kyril and Daniel's relationship is, literally and metaphorically, a radioactive connection.

This film flirts with the potential for the gay Spanish character to embrace the anti-social force that would disrupt normativization and containment of queer subversiveness. On one hand, Kyril represents the transgressive force in the film—the character who breaks the law, the one who literally threatens to disrupt Spanish familial bliss and fantasies of coherent meaning. This is nowhere clearer than when he and Kalina show up unannounced at Daniel's parents' country house. The stunned silence of Daniel's family over lunch (a silence only disrupted by the buzz of a fly) highlights their shock, awkwardness, and lack of understanding of Kyril and Kalina's perceived social misbehavior. For example, they are noisy, and they insist on filming the family while they eat and all the domestic objects that signify, in their perception, capitalist economic success. In an intriguing reversal of the patterns that Edelman analyzes in his work on Anglo-American culture, this openly gay film by an openly gay Spanish filmmaker marks the heterosexual couple (Kyril and Kalina) as *sinthomosexual*. This mark is not so much sexual as ethnic—ethnic and racial difference, and migrant status being dimensions of *sinthomosexuality* that Edelman neglects to analyze. By associating himself with the Bulgarian couple, by aiding them in their schemes, by paying Kyril to have sex with him, Daniel gradually comes to occupy the same disruptive anti-social position as Kyril and Kalina, even if he does so reluctantly because embracing such a transgressive role means a disruption of his idyllic extended family life.

Edelman argues that, in the cultural products he analyzes and in the collective heterosexualizing Western imaginary,

homosexuality is thought as a threat to the logic of thought itself insofar as it figures the availability of an unthinkable jouissance that would put an end to fantasy—and with it, to futurity—by reducing the assurance of meaning in fantasy's promise of continuity to the meaningless circulation and repetitions of the drive. (39)

If homosexuality represents a repetition of the drive, then, at the end of the film when Daniel picks up Kyril's cousin—in circumstances deliberately echoing those at the beginning of the film—he is abandoning himself to that most threatening activity of the *sinthomosexual* to which heterosexualizing narratives relegate him: “the meaningless circulation and repetitions of the drive” and “the unnatural access to jouissance” (Edelman 39, 132). He thus refuses the self-duping logic of the politics of reproductive futurism.

Furthermore, Daniel is aware of his participation in the sexual exploitation of immigrant young men and enjoys anticipating transgression. At a crucial moment in the film, Daniel's postlapsarian and proleptic voice-over indicates:

Sometimes the soul of a Spanish gentleman is as treacherous as that of a Slav in danger. . . . My soul filled with expectation and vertigo when I started to suspect that Kyril was getting himself into a dark and dangerous adventure. Something alerted me, rather it made me hopeful that, finally, I was going to savor the thrills of criminality.¹¹

The phonetic and etymological association between Slav and slave (“*eslavo*” and “*esclavo*”) is not lost here and might, in part, explain the choice of an Eastern European immigrant as the means through which the Spanish gay character articulates his gay identity as victim and victimizer of Kyril.¹²

Most significant to understanding the simultaneous embracing and rejection of *sinthomosexuality* in *Bulgarian Lovers* is another scene in which Daniel stares at his image in the bathroom mirror, his face covered with shaving cream which he slowly wipes off with his hand—an image that seamlessly dissolves into one of Kyril in the same place, in front of the same mirror, performing the same gesture. Daniel's voice-over intones: “¿Qué tiene de extraño que los fugitivos de la hecatombe quieran dinamitar ahora un paraíso que les es hostil? . . . ¿Qué tengo yo que reprocharle a Kyril?” [“Why should it be strange that the fugitives from the catastrophe may want now to blow up a paradise that is hostile to them? . . . Have I anything with which to reproach Kyril?”]. This enigmatic scene suggests that De la Iglesia is consciously exploring gay

European identity here by elliptically referring to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Communist Block as “the catastrophe.” The shaving cream (which recalls the mushroom cloud by the use of the same contours and shape used in the title credits) could be read as a mask that conceals identity, desires, and intentions; the gesture of wiping it off suggests that both men must remove this mask. The fact that they both face the mirror suggests a doubling of both characters at the same time that the dissolving of one into the other reinforces their similarities: Who is the master? Who is the slave? Who is the Slav? Who is prostituting himself? Who is trying to survive at all costs? Who is the original that mirrors the image of the other? Who is more European than the other? Are they not, after all, both marginal European identities—easternmost and southernmost edges of Europe, both nationalities having functioned in the central-European imaginary as the dangerous, orientaling fringes of Europe, both fraught with sexual and racial anxieties?

In this regard, I have argued elsewhere that a responsible approach to the specificity of contemporary cultural representations of recently arrived immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa to Spain must theorize other real and imaginary geographies in addition to the Atlantic, such as the Mediterranean, and, specifically, the Gibraltar Strait—whose mythical proportions for some Arab and African immigrants lead them to search for a supposedly better life across it, often losing their lives in a desperate voyage across the Mediterranean in fragile *pateras*. The Strait of Gibraltar (*Estrecho de Gibraltar*), thus, is literally filled with the bodies of dead immigrants who fail in their attempts to cross over to Spain. It is for them a strait of both hope and despair, whereas for the Spanish imaginary it is the space of anxiety and fear of an “invasion” of the so-called Moors. *El estrecho*, in Spanish, elicits contradictory meanings: it is the narrow gap that almost allows the two continents to touch, but it also evokes “un estrecho” or “una estrecha,” that is, a person who does not put out sexually, someone who does not yield to the sexual advances of another. In the context of the racist incidents in the town of El Ejido, in Almería, in 2000, references by the mayor of that town to the south of Spain as “la puerta de África” (translated as “the doorway to Africa,” but also suggesting “Africa's entryway to Europe”) further expose Spain's sexualized and racialized anxieties around immigration. Considering these anxieties and the connotation of *El estrecho* as a tight space, a sort of tight rectum, reluctant to be penetrated—a fantasy amply explored in Spanish literature, such as in Juan Goytisolo's masterful *Reivindicación del conde Don Julián* (Count Julián)—it is not far-fetched to discover in the Spanish imaginary and actual xenophobic reactions to the arrival of Moroccan

immigrants, in particular, a dimension of homophobic panic since “la puerta de África” through which these immigrants arrive is also a sort of south door, the rear of Europe (Pérez-Sánchez, “Theorizing the Rim/*Orilla*” n.p.).

Returning to the analysis of the mirror scene in *Bulgarian Lovers*, the presence of the reflective surface echoes the self-consciousness and meta-filmic quality of the work, which, in turn, interpellates and incorporates the audience into the scene: what is a film screen if not a sort of mirror onto which the audience projects its desires at the same time that it reflects back a fantasy of an un-fractured, seamless subjectivity? Thus incorporated into the film, the audience must ask itself the questions I pose above, and it must also examine the pleasure it derives from taking on either the master or slave/Slav position.

Whereas in *My Mother Likes Women*, Eliska’s inclusion into Sofia’s family eventually normalizes lesbianism and brings together the Spanish family at large, in *Bulgarian Lovers*, Kyril and Kalina’s intrusion into Daniel’s countryside family vacation is a literally radioactive presence that disrupts Spanish familial expectations. This is manifest when we later find out that Kyril has hidden in Daniel’s parents’ home a bag containing a canister of illegal radioactive material. Daniel fantastically associates the canister, in the shape of a hot rod, with the erect phallus of a horse depicted in one his childhood home’s engravings—an engraving in front of which he used to masturbate as a teenager. His desire for the radioactive Bulgarian phallus metamorphoses into an apocalyptic vision of nuclear fallout in which Daniel meets his death—his face decomposing from the effects of radioactivity. Ultimately, this vision of death shakes Daniel back into homonormativity and legality. He intervenes in time to save Kyril from serving jail time and thus avoids locating himself completely in the anti-social marginality of Kyril’s queer criminality and immigrant status.

It may seem that the reasons for choosing the Eastern European immigrant in these films as a queer love object remain largely unjustified. After all, any other nationality might have equally allowed Elvira in *My Mother* to appear as the savior of familial harmony, or might have permitted Daniel to flirt with anti-sociality and criminal queerness, since, in both films, the immigrant other is dramatically flattened out. However, as Santaolalla argues in her exhaustive book *Los “otros”: Etnicidad y raza en el cine español contemporáneo*,

the presence of Eastern European citizens in Spanish films nowadays contributes to that discourse that tries to confirm that Spanish citizens do belong to first-world Europe, that they are not, as they were for a long time, second-class citizens. (156)¹³

Furthermore, Santaolalla indicates,

From the perspective of Western Europe, Eastern Europe starts to be “a part of” but also is “very different from,” or rather, “unequal to,” hegemonic Europe. In this case, the inequality in the power hierarchy is marked not so much by somatic or cultural factors as by what is perceived to be a shared history of anti-modernizing communism, economic backwardness, and savage fratricidal wars, all of which have led to massive migrations and have contributed to identifying Eastern Europeans as second-class European citizens. . . . Therefore, the Eastern European immigrant is similar but different [to Spaniards]. (153)¹⁴

This interpretation of the function of the Eastern European immigrant is applicable to the two films I have been discussing, but it does not explain why the only *queer* immigrants present in Spanish films of the new millennium are precisely Eastern Europeans and not from beyond the European borders or from other countries in Europe.¹⁵

I would venture that this “sameness in difference” of the queer Eastern European immigrant functions as an extension of the allegory of the traditional monogamic Spanish family to a national space—a prevalent metaphor in twentieth-century literary and filmic Spanish traditions.¹⁶ The “European family,” to which Spain now fully belongs as a “first-class” member (while it was, until very recently, a second-class member) condescendingly welcomes these lesser-status members into its fold. But the overt expressions of superiority that haunt the representation of Spanish queer characters in these films, especially in *My Mother Likes Women*, unsuccessfully mask an internalized homophobic anxiety—an inferiority complex—that the Spanish queer imaginary has still not managed to shake off. This internalized homophobia underscores a painful truth: that queer Spaniards (and I mean non-normative queers who refuse to engage in “reproductive futurity” and to be domesticated into monogamic, reproductive family models) are still second-class citizens in Spain (if not legally, certainly socially and culturally), just as Eastern Europeans are unfairly treated as if they are “second-class” European citizens. Furthermore, as recently as the 1960s, Spain was sending desperately poor emigrants to Western European countries such as France, Switzerland, and Germany in search of better lives. These Spaniards were treated as poorly as the Eastern Europeans and other foreign immigrants are treated in Spain now.

Manuel Delgado Ruiz, a Spanish immigration sociologist, insists that, “aquel al que llamamos *inmigrante* no es una figura objetiva, sino más bien un personaje imaginario” [“him whom we call *immigrant* is not an

objective figure, but rather an imaginary character”] (13). In his summary of the cognitive and symptomatic role that the construction of the immigrant plays in Spanish urban spaces, Delgado concludes that

the one signaled as an immigrant allows the city to think its maladjustments—fragmentations, disorders, discouragements, decompositions—as the contingent result of an aberrant presence that must be eradicated: its own. (22)¹⁷

In this context, marking Sofia’s lover as a Czech immigrant in *My Mother Loves Women* and Daniel’s boy toy Kyril as Bulgarian in *Bulgarian Lovers* allows the Spanish gay and lesbian imaginary to admit that it has temporary “maladjustments” that are “the contingent result” of the Eastern European immigrant presence (the same but different than Spaniards) and that, eventually, those Eastern European immigrants must be reabsorbed into the fold of the “Spanish family” and, by extension, the larger European family. Thus, at the end of *My Mother Likes Women*, Eliska permanently detaches herself from her Czech family to live in Spain with Sofia; she is incorporated into the “happy family” that she will form with Sofia’s daughters, their heterosexual partners, and their father. In *Bulgarian Lovers*, although Kyril and Kalina leave Spain and are therefore not incorporated into the Spanish family, Daniel restarts the cycle of incorporation/introjection of the Eastern European other when he hooks up with Kyril’s cousin at the end of the film. At that point, Daniel has already been permeated by Bulgarian customs—he has, in a sense, been Bulgarianized. Borrowing from the typical Hegelian dialectic, the master has become the slave, and the Spaniard the Slav. This is demonstrated by the ring tone in his cell phone—a Slavic tune in a minor key—and by his use of the inverted Bulgarian nods: yes for no, no for yes. At the same time, as I argue above, Daniel has taken on, gladly and willingly, some of Kyril’s *sinthomosexual* character.

Nonetheless, I would argue that the presence of the *queer* Eastern European immigrant in these Spanish films allows the Spanish queer imaginary to think itself more transgressive than it really is, without challenging the heterosexual, patriarchal, normative complacency within which it must accommodate itself, safely domesticated.¹⁸ This hypothesis is corroborated when contrasting the use of Eastern European immigrants in these Spanish films with the portrait of a Spaniard as the queer immigrant in Icelandic director Baltasar Kormáku’s 2002 film *101 Reykjavik*.¹⁹ In it, the Spanish immigrant represents the exotic, dangerous, anti-social Southern queer other of the Northern European who must be introjected and domesticated. This is accomplished when Hlynur (Limir

Snoer Guonason), the male protagonist whose mother is in a relationship with Lola (Victoria Abril), the Spanish immigrant, gets Lola pregnant. In all of these films, the autochthonous characters attempt to control and to socialize the immigrant through a sort of introjection that approaches a simultaneous incorporation and neutralization of the other.²⁰ In this respect, I would argue that these films dramatize Spanish queer culture’s anxieties about being incorporated and neutralized by heteronormative culture, precisely around the time that the approval of same-sex marriage was imminent in Spain.

servindo-se dos demais à sua vontade, sem que disso dessem conta. Nem notariam a sua falta. O necessário mas incômodo intercâmbio com o lado exterior seria então algo de fora para fora, porque ele estaria emprestando-se para um alguém que, usando a estrutura do seu rosto e do seu corpo, todavia não precisava ser o ele que estava adentro" (199-200).

³³See Josefina Fernández, *Cuerpos desobedientes: travestismo e identidad de género*, (Barcelona: Edhasa; Buenos Aires: IDAES, 2004), 164.

³⁴See Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 11.

³⁵See *El lugar sin límites* by José Donoso; Pedro Lemebel's chronicles; *Laredo Song* by Joaquín Hurtado; *Marc, la sucia rata* by José Sbarra; to name a few. On Latin American transvestism, see Juan Pablo Sutherland, "Maquillajes masculinos y sujeto homosexual en la literatura chilena contemporánea," *Hombres: Identidad/es y Sexualidad/es*, edited by José Olavaria and Enrique Moletto (Santiago: FLACSO-Chile, 2002. 71-78); Nelly Richard, *Masculine/Feminine: Practices of Difference(s)* (Durham: Duke UP, 2004); and Roger Lancaster, "La actuación de Guto. Notas sobre el travestismo en la vida cotidiana," *Sexo y sexualidades en América Latina*, edited by Daniel Balderston and Donna J. Guy (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1998), 29-68.

³⁶"Não existe travesti no mundo inteiro, ao qual não sobre qualquer herança da machice anterior" (202).

³⁷"— Que horror, em que nojo de pessoa eu me transformei.

— Por favor, Nivaldo. Nós temos toda a nossa vida pela frente. Não se preocupe: voltaremos ao que éramos, reavendo o que a vida ficou nos devendo.

— Nem tenho coragem de olhar as minhas mãos, com estas unhas longas e esmaltadas, de sentir roçando no meu rosto este cabelo comprido e tingido, este... este horrendo busto implantado, este vestido... Sinto asco de mim, vergonha de saber que você está me olhando, me tocando e eu neste estado miserável.

— Me entristece, é verdade, vê-lo desse jeito, mas a gente... a gente resolverá tudo..." (223).

³⁸"— Começo hoje, nesta madrugada a voltar ao que era: cortarei os cabelos e as unhas; as sobrancelhas crescerão em um mês; amanhã irei à clínica para retirar os silicões; deixarei de tomar hormônios e em três meses os pêlos crescerão e o meu corpo voltará a ter características masculinas, o que ajudarei com ginástica; e deixarei definitivamente de me drogar" (223).

³⁹See David Le Breton, *Antropología del cuerpo y modernidad*, translated by Paula Mahler (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 2002), 79.

⁴⁰Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss (London: Routledge, 1991), 21.

⁴¹Michael S. Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity," *The Masculinities Reader*, edited by Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 266-87.

⁴²Leo Bersani, "Loving Men," *Constructing Masculinity*, edited by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995), 117.

⁴³"un territorio homosexual —una especie de minisionismo— que conforma no una subversión, sino una ampliación de la normalidad, la instauración de una suerte de

normalidad paralela, de una normalidad dividida entre *gays y straights*." Néstor Perlongher, "El sexo de las locas," *Prosa plebeya* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1997), 32-3. The English translations are mine.

⁴⁴Néstor Perlongher, "La desaparición de la homosexualidad," *Prosa plebeya* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1997), 85-90.

⁴⁵See Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, translated by Michael Lucey (Durham: Duke UP, 2004), 91.

One Big Queer European Family? Immigration in Contemporary Spanish Gay and Lesbian Films

I would like to thank my partner, Pamela S. Hammons, for being such a helpful reader of this essay. I would also like to thank the participants at Hofstra University's Symposium in Celebration of the new LGBT Studies Program, "What Does Gay Mean Today? Labels, Meaning, and Self-Identification at the Start of the New Millennium," and the audiences at University of Miami, University of California, Irvine, and Queen Mary, University of London, who listened to and commented on previous version of this article. In particular, Carolyn Dinshaw, David Powell, Jill Robbins, Robert Gillet, Parvati Nair, and Omar García were most helpful with their comments.

¹As far as I have been able to assess, there are only a handful of Western European films in which one of the lovers is an immigrant from a non-Western European country. The most recent one is the 2005 German film, *Unveiled* (dir. Angelica Maccarone), in which the undocumented immigrant who becomes involved with a German woman is an Iranian lesbian who must try to impersonate a man in order to receive asylum. The oldest film on this topic is the now classic 1985 *My Beautiful Launderette* (dir. Stephen Frears), which focuses on a first-generation Pakistani immigrant's relationship with a working-class Briton. A lesbian Eastern European lover also figures centrally in Jan Dunn's stunning 2005 Dogme95-style British film, *Gypo*. *Gypo* strictly subscribes to Dogme95's famous "Vow of Chastity": hand-held camera, location shooting, no special lighting, improvisational dialogues, no credit given to the director, etc. For more information on Dogme95 films, see its manifesto and its "Vow of Chastity" (Von Trier and Vinterberg). *Gypo* tells the same story three times from the point of view of the three main characters: working-class, middle-aged housewife Helen (Pauline McLynn), her bigoted and unfaithful husband Paul (Paul McGann), and young Czech Romany immigrant Tasha (Chloe Sirene). Tasha and her mother (Rula Lenska) await the arrival of their British passports while living in a British government-sponsored trailer park. The British papers will render Tasha and her mother immune to the persecution of their abusive male relatives who have traveled to England to force the women back home. Helen and Tasha meet when Helen's rebellious daughter, Kelly (Tamzin Dunstone), who attends vocational school with Tasha, brings her and other classmates home to socialize. An unlikely but passionate relationship ensues between Helen and Tasha, an affair that may or may not end well, depending upon the perspective of the character who narrates

different versions of the story at each point. A complex and compelling study of the intersection of queer desire and immigration woes in Europe, *Gypo*, nonetheless, is not immune to the stereotyping of Roma men as sexist, brutal and dangerous—a stereotype which, by the way, is also present in several Spanish films that explore the relationships between Spanish gypsies and Spanish *payos*, most notably, the 1987 lesbian-themed film *Calé* (dir. Carlos Serrano), in which the young Roma woman Estrella (Rosario Flores) runs to *paya* Cristina's arms (Mónica Randall) when she is persecuted by a brutal mob of male relatives after she poses in the nude for a billboard commercial. However, *Gypo* presents a much more nuanced and complex study of the lesbian relationship between the autochthonous protagonist and her younger immigrant lover than do the two Spanish films I discuss here. First, Tasha and her mother have requested asylum in Britain; they are not “economic immigrants.” In other words, they did not leave their country forced by economic necessity. Second, Helen, the “native” character, has a distinctive Irish accent and eventually indicates that her “people are not from [Margate] either.” In this sense, both lovers, Helen and Tasha, are displaced from their places of origin, and both feel alienated from their surroundings. Migration in this film, then, from my point of view, works also as a metaphor for both women's sense of alienation and distance from their true desires for other women—desires that Helen, in particular, had not understood or acknowledged until Tasha kisses her. Likewise, Paul, part of the trio of main characters, feels alienation and distance from his wife and children from the beginning of the film. In other words, migration in this film works as a metaphor for emotional displacement. The film is not so much, then, about actual migrants' (asylum seekers, in this case) plights as it is an exploration of emotional distancing and rapprochement.

Ferzan Ozpetek's 2001 film, *Le fate ignorante* (translated as *His Secret Life*), produced in Italy, has a few secondary characters who are Turkish immigrants, but the main sexual and love relationships are among Italian characters. Therefore, it does not respond to the symptomatically similar character configurations of the films I discuss here, and it is not authored by a Western European filmmaker. I thank my University of Miami colleagues Maria Stampino and Laura Giannetti for calling my attention to this film.

²Throughout this essay, I use the term “autochthonous,” instead of “native,” because the former is the preferred term in contemporary Spanish immigration studies and by immigrants themselves. See, for instance, Basil Ramsis film *El otro lado... Un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2001), for examples of this usage.

³The Spanish films I discuss here were all produced prior to the 2005 reform in the Spanish Civil Code that ushered in same-sex marriage. Nonetheless, they already struggle with how to negotiate impending forces of social normalization and domestication of queer anti-sociality. In this sense, these films are symptomatic of the anxieties that the approval of gay marriage has brought to Spain. The Same-Sex Marriage Law was approved by the Spanish *Cortes* (parliament) on 30 June 2005 and published in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* on 2 July 2005.

⁴In 2003, the largest group of legal immigrants living in Spain hailed from Morocco, followed by Ecuadorians, Colombians, and Peruvians, in this order (“La inmigración en cifras” par. 5). Undocumented migrants that were repatriated

included, in this order, Romanians, Moroccans, Bulgarians and Ecuadorian (“La inmigración en cifras” par. 7).

⁵See, for example, Michael Warner's *The Trouble with Normal* (New York: Free Press 1999).

⁶Lee Edelman coins the neologisms *sinthomosexual* and *sinthomosexuality* to name characters in cultural products (film in particular) that embody a negative, anti-social force that threatens to disrupt fantasies of coherence and meaning. For Edelman, *sinthomosexuality* “den[ies] the appeal of fantasy, refus[es] the promise of futurity that mends each tear . . . in reality's dress with threads of meaning,” *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 35. His most compelling analysis of a figure tinged with *sinthomosexuality* is the birds in Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Edelman emphasizes that he does not mean “to equate the birds with homosexuality nor to suggest that they be understood as ‘meaning’ same-sex desire. [Instead] the birds bear the burden of *sinthomosexuality*, which aims to dissociate heteronormativity from its own implications in the [death] drive, . . . the meaning of homosexuality is determined by what the film represents in *them*: the violent undoing of meaning, the loss of identity and coherence, the unnatural access to jouissance . . .” (132).

⁷Several film critics have identified *A mi madre's* homage to Woody Allen films. See Jonathan Holland, *Cineforum* 386, 34, col. 5; Luca Malavasi, *Cineforum* 432, col. 3; and José Antonio Navarro *Dirigido* 308: 21.

⁸I have explored elsewhere the complex relation between the visibility and invisibility of the lesbian in terms of silence vs. speech, voicelessness vs. talking back in my analysis of Ana María Moix's novel *Julia* in *Queer Transitions* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 12-35.

⁹“[I]os típicos prejuicios que las tres hijas adultas de Sofia . . . tienen contra Eliska . . . se convertirán, finalmente, en cariño e incluso en el deseo de usar, y abusar, de las estructuras administrativas en beneficio de la unión entre Este y Oeste, al casar al novio de una de las hijas con Elka [sic] . . . para evitar que sea expulsada del país.” All translations are my own.

¹⁰Neither Joe Brown, Stephen Holden, Stanley Kauffmann, Stephen Rebello, Frank Scheck, David Stratton, nor Kevin Thomas remark on the stereotypical representation of gay men and on Daniel's self-loathing behavior. However, Fox does perceive the potentially homophobic stereotyping of gay men in this film (“[De la Iglesia's] depiction of gay manners and mores belies age. . . . Daniel's screechy, Ava Gardner-adoring, tiara-wearing, popper-sniffing friends could have stepped right out of *Boys in the Band*”) and Jorge Morales notes the presence of “the obligatory screaming-queen best friend” in the film.

¹¹“A veces el alma de un caballero español resulta tan engañosa como la de un eslavo en apuros. . . . Mi alma se empezó a llenar de expectación y vértigo cuando empecé a intuir que Kyril se estaba metiendo en una turbia y peligrosa aventura. Algo me alertaba, bueno, más bien me esperaba, de que yo, por fin, iba a saborear las emociones de la delincuencia.”

¹²Obviously, it also evokes Hegel's famous dialectic of master and slave or *Herr/Knecht*, which most accurately translates into lord/serf or lord/bondsman. For a brilliant contextualization and analysis of this dialectic, see Andrew Cole, “What

Hegel's Master/Slave Dialectic Really Means," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34.3 (Fall 2004): 577-610.

¹³"[L]a presencia del ciudadano europeo del Este en el cine español de hoy en día contribuye a ese discurso que pretende confirmar que el ciudadano español sí pertenece a la Europa desarrollada, que ya no es, como lo fuera durante mucho tiempo, un europeo de segunda."

¹⁴"Desde la perspectiva de la Europa occidental, la Europa del Este comienza a ser "parte de" pero también muy "diferente a," o más bien, "desigual a," la Europa hegemónica. En este caso, la desigualdad en la jerarquía de poder no viene marcada tanto por los factores somáticos o culturales como por lo que se percibe como una historia compartida de comunismo anti-modernizante, retraso económico y salvajes guerras fratricidas, todo lo cual ha conducido a emigraciones masivas y ha contribuido a identificar al europeo del Este como un ciudadano europeo de segunda clase. . . . Así pues, el inmigrante de la Europa del este es similar pero diferente" (153).

¹⁵For example, in Spanish exploitation films of the 1960s that were directed at a heterosexual audience, Scandinavian, particularly Swedish, female characters (mostly representing tourists in Spanish beaches) arguably occupied a libidinal space for the heterosexual male imaginary similar to that which the Eastern European immigrant takes in the films I discuss here. For recent studies of the treatment of foreign tourism in 1960s Spanish film, see Justin Crumbaugh, "'Spain Is Different': Touring Late-Francoist Cinema with Manolo Escobar," *Hispanic Research Journal* 3.3 (October 2002): 261-76.

¹⁶See my discussion of this tradition in *Queer Transitions*, 61-112.

¹⁷"el señalado como inmigrante le permite a la ciudad pensar sus desajustes—fragmentaciones, desórdenes, desaliniaciones, descomposiciones—como el resultado contingente de una presencia aberrante que hay que erradicar: la suya propia."

¹⁸At the same time, it is worth noting that both films establish a disturbing association between queer desire and capitalist decadence and freedom, thus falling into the stereotypical vision of homosexuality as purely a Western construct. This further demonstrates, in my view, the homophobia with which *My Mother* and *Bulgarian Lovers* wrestle.

¹⁹I would like to thank Carloyn Dinshaw for bringing this film to my attention.

²⁰This introjection of the immigrant other into the Spanish self is only accomplished fully in *My Mother Likes Women*. The only immigrants depicted with a certain agency, who avoid being completely brought into the Spanish fold, are Kyril and Kalina in *Bulgarian Lovers*.

Queer Internationale: Pedagogy and Modes of Cultural Production in the 21st Century

¹ This paper took shape following discussions I had with David Powell regarding the development of the new LGBT academic program at Hofstra University. *The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Queer Culture* I edited had recently been

completed and served as a point of departure for the way I framed my thoughts for this essay. And, as always, thank you, Sally Milner, for the close read.

²Ian Christopher Fletcher, "The Internationale," *Radical History Review* 82 (winter 2002): 187.

³On the histories of Stonewall, see: Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993); David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004).

⁴Jonathan Kandell, "Jacques Derrida, Abstruse Theorist, Dies in Paris at 74," *The New York Times*, Section 1 (October 10, 2004): 1.

⁵Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 9.

⁶Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 37.

⁷Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 74, 76.

⁸Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 12.

⁹Joseph Litvak, *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory, and the Novel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

¹⁰Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Movies and Methods Volume Two*, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), 303-15.

¹¹See, for example, Teresa De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); and Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema," *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (London: Routledge, 1993), 9-19.

¹²Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

¹³*GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 1 (2006): 117-34.

¹⁴Michael Moon, *Disseminating Whitman: Revision and Corporeality in "Leaves of Grass"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

When Black Meets Queer

¹ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2002), 148.

²Lisa Keen, "Obama Criticized over Aids Test Remark," *Bay Area Reporter* 5 July 2007.

³In a forthcoming essay, I consider further the implications, from a Kenyan perspective, of the Kenyan-American senator publicly presenting his diasporic body within the framework of a racialized, global biopolitics.

⁴Of course, Obama's father was not an immigrant, but a foreign student, and genealogists have uncovered that Obama is indeed connected to the history of American slavery, through white slaveholders on his mother's side.

⁵Although a question regarding HIV/AIDS was asked, and although the candidates in their response addressed the challenge of homophobia, no question was directed to them regarding, for instance, same-sex marriage or adoption rights, the "don't ask, don't tell" policy of the U.S. military, or other lesbian and gay rights issues.